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## Need of Completion of Pacific Great Eastern Ry.

**Strategic Position of Railway in Opening Up the Province and Important Territory to Be Served Call for the Finishing of This Road at an Early Date.**

The recent sale of British Columbia bonds, the proceeds of which are to be used for the completion of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway from rail head to Fort George, where it connects with the Grand Trunk Pacific, calls renewed attention to the need of the country to be served with transportation facilities and the strategic position which this railway will hold in the future development of the Province. The problem of financing the completion of this railway now in the hands of the Provincial Government, is a very serious one, in view of the high labor costs, cost of rails, materials and equipment, and it might be questioned, in view of this situation, whether it is desirable or not to continue under existing conditions; but with a half completed road and with certain unemployment problems facing the Government and combined with the necessity of bringing this vast territory into transportation accessibility, these factors perhaps have outweighed with the Government the immediate high costs involved. To take this action has required considerable courage and the Government is to be congratulated on prosecuting the matter so energetically. It must also be candidly stated that the capital expenditure involved will not show capital returns for several years to come, and it is this forward looking Provincial development that contributed to the stand that the Government has taken.

The territory served by the Pacific Great Eastern Railway is mining territory of a very high order. There are known to be vast deposits of low grade gold, which has been precluded from development by reason of high transportation costs. Only gold that carried high value would stand the wagon haul. With railway transportation a large number of Cariboo properties and gold carrying sands could be profitably worked which will give a reasonable return to those engaged in this line of work, and afford a large measure of revenue to the railway through freights. This is true of the entire Cariboo country, such as can be served

by the railway, but which may later develop into a necessity for the construction of branch lines when the traffic demands. There is also a large quantity of timber with the possibility of a paper making industry being established on the line of, or tributary to the railway. From a development point of view, however, because of the larger number of people involved, land settlement, particularly with relation to soldier settlement, will likely play a large part. There exists within a reasonable distance of the railway at

various sections large amounts of lands which will assure good profit from agricultural development. These lands, while being in some cases in small tracts, and in other cases much more substantial in size, will be capable of sustaining a larger agricultural population than now exists in any part of the Province. To the west of the railway there exists the Chilcotin country, which is capable of a very wide expansion in live-stock production, and large areas of land which are capable of intensive agricultural production. The quest for land is insistent and growing and it is one of the prime objects of the Provincial Government to see that the available agricultural lands be brought into the realm of development at as early a date as possible. With an energetic and wise policy of emigration considerable progress can be made in this direction.

It is difficult to over-estimate the place of the railway in developing a country, but at the same time as a proposition for private initiative and enterprise, it is steadily growing more and more difficult. The severe disabilities with

which railways have operated during the past ten years, and the low returns which these private railways have yielded together with increasing encroachment of public regulations, have left the private individual very chary of making further commitments for railway extension and development. Where private funds cannot be obtained it is necessary for the Government to step in and prosecute this necessary development. In the operation of the railway when completed, the Government will have to take many lessons from the privately-managed roads for the development of traffic along its lines. Beyond question the Pacific Great Eastern Railway travels as picturesque a country as

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EASTERN RAILWAY

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