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many years, and a putrifying disease was to reach that stage where the condition which Howe had thought inconceivable—the alienation of vast areas of the nation's best land for the aggrandizement of a few private franchise holders—would be taken as a matter of course. Indeed the time waster come when these despoilers of the na-tional heritage would be held up by not a few as angels of light whose sole mission was the advance of the people to economic freedom.

It is important here to recall the set that the local railway lines of oth Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which, at confederation, went to form the Intercolonial system, were projected and built under provincial ownership, and that these lines and the Intercolonial main line were carried thru without any public scandal, or the fraudulent construction work which marked the history of the Grand Trunk and other Canadian lines under privte ownership. The frightful deathshead held up by private railway interests, showing what might happen if the nation came into possession of its own rights, vanishes like mists before the morning sun, if we examine the matter in the light of our own past railway history.

By a sure intuition Howe put into

sun, if we examine the matter in the light of our own past railway history. By a sure intuition Howe put into a single sentence the proper duty of a state to its railways, when he said, in one of his Halifax speeches: "It is the first duty of a government to control the great highways of the country." By an equally sure instinct his audience endorsed his definition, as recorded by a public man who heard the speech: "We never saw anything like the unanimity and enthusiasm with which the new policy thus propounded was received by this great meeting. Men who had not spoken to Mr. Howe for years were loudest in their expressions of approbation, and his friends were of course gratified at this new proof of his holdness and sagacity." Sir John Harvey, the hero of the battle of Stoney Creek, then governor of Nova Scotia, reported to Downing Street his entire approval of the policy of making the railway a government work, as the "highest and most legitimate functions of a vigorous executive."

Intercolonial Public Utility

It was, no doubt this clear statement of principle which kept the route of the Intercolonial on its original lines, and decided the Imperial Government to decline aid to the privately owned road to Portland. Hincks himself thought it wise, in arranging his deal for the western extension of the Grand Trunk, to cover up his defection from the principle of government ownership by subtly changing the conditions of his bargain with the contractors, so that while the road should be financed by government bonds, instead of the company's bonds as first planned, the railway should yemain none the less under private confrol.

What Howe foresaw of the surrender

der private control.

What Howe foresaw of the surrender of public rights in Canada, Lamartine foresaw in France. That scholar and statesman, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies in 1838, said: "What will be our condition when, according to your imprudent system, you shall have constituted into a unified interest, with industrial and financial corporations, the innumerable stockholders of the five or six billions which the organization of your railways will place in the hands of these companies? You, the partisans of the liberty and enfraffichisement of the masses—you, who have over thrown of the liberty and enfranchisement of the masses—you, who have over-thrown feudalism and its tells, its privileges of the past, and its boundaries—you are about to allow the railways to fetter the people and divide up the country among a new feudality. Never a government, never a nation has constituted outside of itself a more oppressive money power, a more menacine and encroaching political power, than you are going to create in delivering up your soil, your administration and the five or six billions of securities to your-private-railway companies. I prophecy with certainty that, if you do this, they will be masters of the country in ten years."

France realized her danger and de-

France realized her danger and de livered herself, after a long struggle, which might have been avoided had Lamartine's warning been heeded.

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