

bridging such a flood as this,' observed Holt. 'No piers of man's construction could withstand the force that is in motion on the river to-night. I fear the promoters of the Victoria Bridge are too sanguine.'

'Well, I could pin my faith upon any engineering project sanctioned by Stephenson,' rejoined the other. 'We had him here to view the site, just a mile out of Montreal. He recommended the tubular plan—a modified copy of the English Britannia Bridge. And Ross, the resident engineer, has already begun preliminaries, with cofferdams and such like mysteries.'

'It will be the eighth wonder of the world if completed,' said Mr. Holt, 'and must add immensely to the commercial advantages of Canada.'

'My dear sir,' quoth the other impressively (he was a corn merchant in Montreal), 'unless you are in trade you cannot duly estimate the vast benefits that bridging the St. Lawrence will confer on the colony. For six months of the year the river is closed to navigation, as you are aware, and the industry of Canada is consequently imprisoned. But this noble highway which the Grand Trunk Railway Company have commenced will render all seasons alike to our commerce. Consider the advantage of being able to transport the inexhaustible cereals of the Far West, "without break of bulk or gauge," from the great corn countries of the Upper Lakes to the very wharves on the Atlantic.'

Mr. Holt was not surprised to hear, after this, that the speaker was a heavy shareholder in the Grand Trunk Railway, and placed unlimited faith in its projects. Whether, in subsequent years, its complete collapse (for a time) as a speculation lowered his