

the Conservative government of Sir John A. Macdonald and the late Sir George Cartier, with the greatest recklessness, enticed British Columbia into the Confederacy by the promise of the building of a railway to the Pacific—through what the Hon. Edward Blake, the leader of the opposition at Ottawa, graphically describes as “a sea of mountains”—within ten years, viz., by 1882. Not one of the ministers had set foot on the prairies, or seen the Pacific, even by the American road, through a much milder and pretty well settled region. Only a few Hudson’s Bay officials, adventurous sportsmen, zealous missionaries, and some of the half-breed population of the Red River, had any knowledge of the soil, climate, and general characteristics of the Canadian North-west. Even at present an army of surveyors is at work in the territory, a very large portion of which is enshrouded in darkness as thick as overhangs the center of Africa. It is true that, at an expenditure of several million dollars, large tracts near the Canadian Pacific Railway, and farther north, as also in British Columbia, have been opened up to settlement; but a large outlay must yet be incurred to make the Saskatchewan, Peace River, Athabasca, and other immense tracts even moderately known. Now, admitting, as I cheerfully do, the incalculable value of much of this northern region in an agricultural point of view, I much regret, as a Canadian who would like to see his country prosperous, its great cost and the perilous obligations connected with it. The Canada Pacific Railway will probably cost to Canada in money, land, and completed railway, one hundred and ten million dollars, in return for which the Syndicate is to expend not more than forty-eight million five hundred thousand dollars. The Toronto “Globe,” from which I have taken the above figures, says, in reference to this,—“a bargain which places the whole North-west at the mercy of a monopolist corporation!” This is paying dearly for a trans-continental railway, even though one-third of the price is land, which would be of no great value without it. Unquestionably the new railway is being rapidly constructed, at the rate of two or three miles a day, and there is good prospect of its reaching the Rocky Mountains by the end of the coming year. Considering the impracticable nature of the country, fair progress has been made in British Columbia, on the Ocean and Fraser River sections; but the most difficult and expensive sections, through the mountains, across the Rockies,