

# THE BULLFROG.

*Nec sumit aut ponit securus,  
Arbitrio popularis auro.—Hor.*

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## THE TRUMP CARD OF THE DELEGATES.

It is no exaggeration to assert that, so far as the lower Provinces are concerned, the Inter-colonial Railway is the primary cause of the proposed Confederation. All our statesmen arrived long since at the conclusion that free trade between the Colonies must follow closely upon its construction, and all our statesmen urged its completion as a proof to the Mother Country, that we meant to do something for ourselves towards the protection of British Empire in the West. Commercial advantages, which none can dispute, have been poured *ad nauseam* down our throats, and many who affect to despise the dollar and cent calculations of the Anti-federalists jump blindly at the very mention of a Railroad, which is to pour such golden treasures into their pockets. Some indeed go so far in their eagerness as to invent a panic from which this line alone can save us. They talk of "ominous times"—"threatened invasions"—and the like. They urge the danger of an absence of Railway communication with Canada at the present moment, as though a vote of our Legislative Assembly could construct the Railway in a day, and pour brave Nova Scotians into Upper Canada in a week. This sudden panic is, we fancy, born of the Delegates. As far as the Inter-colonial Railway and the scheme of which it is the prop are concerned, neither a vote for the former, nor a vote for the latter could at present tend to allay our apprehensions of danger did such really exist. If there were any call for an immediate effort against invasion at this moment, Nova Scotians could with equal effect show their loyalty and zeal now, as they will be able to do for the next year and a half, during which the Inter-colonial Railway must remain unfinished, or perhaps uncommenced. That the mass of Nova Scotians are not deficient in a large patriotism which includes all British North America as their country was amply proved on a former occasion, when their services really were in requisition. The fact is, that this panic is merely one of the many devices employed by the Federalists to hurry their scheme through the Houses. Nova Scotians, however, are not to be coerced by sudden panics and illusive assertions that all cause for a fear which does not exist must vanish if only this scheme be immediately adopted. The Intercolonial Railway has been, and still continues to be, the trump card of the Confederation pack. It is the great boon so long deferred, and now at last, by union to be obtained. Now, although none can be more anxious for the completion of this great work than ourselves, we wish to be convinced that (like some other promised railways in Nova Scotia and elsewhere) it is not to be employed for the political delusion of the Province, and that this promise means more than other railway promises. It is somewhat remarkable that the Delegates have observed a profound silence upon this matter. They have neither mentioned the route which the line will most probably take, neither has any definite time been fixed for its completion or even for its commencement. The mere promise of an assured line some day, is in their opinion enough to

fascinate Nova Scotians. They underrate, however, the inquisitiveness of their fellow countrymen, and the question is often asked—Are we to have the middle route, or the line by the St. John Valley? Is St. John to be the *de facto* terminus, and Halifax the termination of a circuitous branch? Are we to have a line such as that recommended by the Home Government as suitable for purposes of self-defence, or will the government of the New Empire be allowed to decide this question and build a line wherever it may please—in the St. John valley, or on the very confines of Maine? The silence of the Delegates on this subject renders a definite answer impossible. As to which route, however, the Federal Government, once constituted will incline, our railway history of the past twelve years affords us some enlightenment. The different value of these two roads—the St. John valley or the middle line—to the people of Nova Scotia, is evident from the following account of what happened in 1852, taken from "*Eighty years progress*" "Nova Scotia had no idea of standing a third of the cost, if the road should first *deboncho* on the Atlantic Ocean at St. John instead of its rival, Halifax. Canada acting as mediator and umpire finally proposed that as New Brunswick would decidedly gain by the adoption of the southern instead of the northern route, she should assume *five twelfths* and Nova Scotia *one fourth*, Canada taking her old proportion of one third." This new subdivision was agreed to, January 3rd, 1852. New Railways have been built since then and the Intercolonial scheme has gone through many phases, but it is still as important as it then was to the people of this Province, that Halifax should not be at the end of a wandering branch line. Such contingency however is more than probable if the future government at Ottawa be not restricted by the terms of our union bargain as to which line shall be constructed. This St. John Valley road would probably have been built long since, but for the refusal of the Home Government to assist in raising money for a line so dangerously near the frontier of the United States. Since, however, no intimation has been given us that the Imperial authorities are to be consulted on the construction of the railway promised by the New Empire, this objector vanishes, and it is more than probable that the obnoxious St. John River route may be adopted. It is the cheapest; and the shortest from Quebec to the Atlantic Ocean. It was approved of by Canada in 1852. It has long been the dream of New Brunswickers. It would open up the richest territories of that Province whilst the middle route would traverse a wilderness. It would connect directly with her long cherished European and North America line, and deprive us of one half the traffic which we should obtain were the middle road decided upon. For purposes of defence, the St. John route has been pronounced by the Home authorities as useless, but no pledge has been given to Nova Scotia that even on this point the defences of British North America are to be looked after. The delegates must speak out on this matter. The Confederation once effected, it will be too late to question the wisdom