

or in quarantine or the hospitals on arrival—a grim proof of the statesmanship of private ownership.

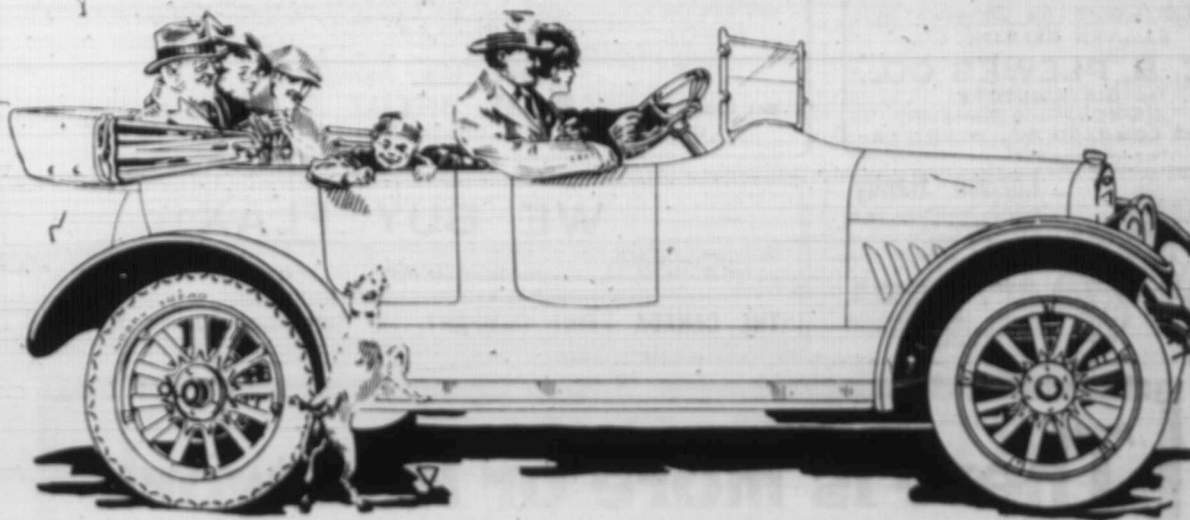
Why Howe Opposed Confederation

To many students of Canadian history it seems mysterious that Joseph Howe, after devoting his splendid gifts to the unification of British North America, and after having advocated a railway to this end from a date as early as 1835, should have become the strongest opponent of confederation, and have created in his own province an antagonism that lasted for more than a generation. It was due, in the writer's opinion, to the treachery of Sir Francis Hincks to the principle of public ownership of the railways. "I believe that many in this room," he said, in a speech in 1851, "will live to hear the whistle of the steam engine in the passes of the Rockies, and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific in five or six days." The man who foresaw this so clearly also saw that if the railways to the west were to be delivered over to private corporations a heaven of corruption would be spread which would make confederation a step to be averted if his own province was to have a wholesome development.

While Howe was working for imperial aid for a system of provincially owned railways extending ultimately to the Pacific, Hincks was feathering his own nest at his country's cost, by throwing aside the inter-provincial railway plan in favor of the extension of the Grand Trunk to Detroit under private ownership. While in London working out his selfish schemes, Hincks gave out the story that he had taken up the Detroit expansion because Howe had failed to keep an engagement to meet him in London. Howe denied that he had ever made such promise, and it is evident he was already aware that Hincks was plotting to defeat the policy of national control of railways. When Archibald, an agent of the English railway contracting firm in league with Hincks, was in Canada working up a movement in favor of a privately built line to Portland, Me., and in Upper Canada in favor of the Hincks' scheme to Detroit, Howe showed with relentless logic the difference between public and private control. "When I succeeded," wrote Howe, "and it was known that so large a sum, advanced or guaranteed by the Imperial Government, was to be expended in the colonies, the question 'who should spend it' became deeply interesting. It is deeply interesting now. The interest we have in it is this: Having got the money cheap, to make it go as far as possible. Assuredly it is not to embarrass ourselves with companies and associations who shrink from us in our extremity, but who appear very anxious to aid us, now that we can do without them! . . . If they come as contractors I see no reason why they should not expend, for their and our advantage, the whole seven millions. If they come as co-partners we shall be at their mercy, and involved in complications which I desire to avoid." Then, addressing Archibald as to the case of New Brunswick, he wrote: "Put all your friends together, unite their entire fortunes and resources, and, as our neighbors quaintly say, they could not 'begin' to buy the homestead of New Brunswick. They could not purchase the property on a single river. Yet we are told that the people who own the whole, cannot risk the construction of these railways which can easily be accomplished by those whose resources are insignificant in comparison." After stating other objections he concluded: "My last objection touches higher interests than pounds, shillings and pence. Show me the state or province that ever willingly granted five million acres of its territory, with all its minerals and appurtenances, to a private association. Nova Scotia would not make such a grant if she never had a railroad. The man who proposed it would sit alone in our assembly. New Brunswick may be less particular, but such a grant, once made to any association, with all the patronage, expenditure and revenues of her two great roads, and a power would be created in her midst which would very soon control both her government and her legislature."

The terrible significance of this warning was to be revealed before

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