

## The Weekly British Colonist.

Wednesday March 23, 1870.

## The Railway and Coach Road.

The discussion upon Sections 9 of the Government Confederation Programme occupied the greater part of Wednesday and Thursday. The discussion was in no sense devoid of interest. It was marked by ability. The language of the section is that 'No real union can exist between this colony and Canada without the speedy establishment of communication across the Rocky Mountains by Coach Road and Railway.' On this proposition the House was somewhat divided. The right wing held that although such communication was essential to a prosperous and satisfactory union, yet 'real union' might exist without it, and the case of California and other States and Territories on the Pacific was allowed to in support of the position. The left wing went beyond the language of the section itself, and declared that no union, and of course no real union, could exist without railway communication. Representing this view, Mr Wood moved a resolution asking the Governor to make the construction of the railway a sine qua non of negotiations, and not to submit any conditions to the people for their acceptance which did not include it. This resolution was objected to upon various grounds; chiefly because it proposed suddenly to hamper the Governor in concluding negotiations, and because it was taking a House of Assembly representative to arrogate to itself the right of pronouncing a verdict which the people alone had the right to pronounce. It was for the Governor to obtain the most favorable terms from Ottawa that would be granted and submit them to the people for their acceptance or rejection, and should these terms not include the immediate construction of the railway, very improbable contingency, it would be for the people, not the government, to decide what would be done. The amendment was agreed to in the House, and with little favor. The amendment moved by Mr DeCosmeas caused considerable division, but received little support. To make it a condition that an interior section of the railway shall be the initial section, in all likelihood ultimately to beat the relation of a branch instead of an integral part of the great trunk railway, was a proposition at once so unreasonable and absurd as to render it difficult to believe that it was made in sober earnest. That single consideration of expense in moving materials from the seaboard to the proposed place of construction would alone put the scheme out of the question. As was so clearly pointed out, by the Chief Commissioner, the railway condition was advisedly couched in the most general terms, as it must be left to those who supplied the capital to select the best site for the line as well as for its terminus. The opinion of the Chief Commissioner upon such a subject is entitled to no little weight; and it was more satisfactory to hear that gentleman state that he not only believed the Canadian Pacific Railway to be dominant and Imperial necessity, but that he regarded it as an eminently practical undertaking—one which would be pushed to completion much sooner than most persons appeared to think, and moreover, that the cost of its construction would not exceed two-thirds of that of the Union Pacific. Whilst it was decided opinion that the railway would follow down the valley of the Fraser, he still held that it would be highly improper to attempt to bind the Dominion Government to any particular route or terminus. In these views the house very generally concurred, and hence the section was sustained and passed, accompanied by only one amendment, and that was the recommendation moved by Mr Bishop, asking the Governor to have that link of the great trunk road of the colony lying between Yale and New Westminster included in the coach road which the Dominion Government is required to construct within three years from the date of the admission of this colony. That the recommendation will be complied with by the Executive may reasonably be inferred from the large sum of support received in the House. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how reasonable a proposition it is to expect that it is surely not less important that a connecting link in the very centre of a continental nation should be supplied than that the trunk road should be extended beyond the present confines of the colony. The broadest and communication between the seaboard and the interior is a great evil. How much worse would it be under the new conditions represented by pending changes. To supply that want, link would appear to be necessarily considered as a project apart from the immense local development which it could not fail to promote. The construction of that section of the great trunk highway would open up and develop a rich agricultural district,

capable of contributing greatly towards supplying the demand created by the larger Dominion, and the rest of the continent. No one should be regarded in a local light. Essentially a part of the trunk road from the seaboard to the other side, it lies, in all probability, on the back of the railway, and should be a grave misfortune to leave it out of the conditions. It must not be forgotten that navigation between Yale and New Westminster is indifferent at best, and absolutely suspended during four or five months in the year. It would never do, therefore, to render dependent upon water communication at a time when large public works are being carried on both on the seaboard and in the interior.

Tuesday, March 19.

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, March 17th, 1870.  
COACH ROAD AND RAILWAY.

Mr DeCosmeas in a very elaborate speech reviewed the railroad scheme proposed by the Government, complimenting its indefiniteness and stating his own opinion that the road should be built as soon as possible, and starting from the coast as far as possible. He thought that the route through which this road would pass possessed less favorable facilities for its construction than did the Pacific and Atlantic road constructed through the United States, and that the cost would reach 150 million dollars. He further spoke at some length on his proposition to embrace in the Terms the commencement of a railroad from Yale to Kamloops Lake to be completed in 5 years.

Mr Holbrook supported the motion of the hon members for Victoria District. He thought the expenditure of one million dollars on a road east of the Cascades would be of much greater advantage to this Colony than to commence at the seaboard.

Mr Ring said he thought the Council were discussing the desirability of having a railroad from Canada to British Columbia; he was not aware that they were discussing an engineering scheme. He approved of a simultaneous construction at both ends and also a simultaneous survey, but he now apprehended that they were discussing the topography of the route. He thought discussions of a political nature were of little value at the present.

The Chief Commissioner said he thought the road should perfectly clear in his statement yesterday. He seemed however to be misunderstood by the hon member for Victoria District. The scheme proposed was to have a single road laid out. The belt of survey over which the road would pass being four or five hundred miles wide, anything like locality was avoided. He did not expect the Dominion Government would undertake directly its construction. It is not the way such works are now done. The most natural and proper way is to assign a company. Such works by a government were looked upon as a salary. Why should we state that the road should commence at Yale when we don't know that the road will go to Yale at all. He would not go so far as the hon member for Victoria City and yesterday is saying that the Government scheme was a railway.

Dr Holbrook.—That was my own private opinion.

The Chief Commissioner—I am glad to hear that it is not the mind of the government to impose any heavy task upon us. He (the Chief Commissioner) understood that an impressive and bold task upon the public mind that the paltry sum of one million dollars a year would take a long time to build the railroad. If the road was taken hold of it would not be one million's year but, perhaps, twenty odd. Could it be supposed that the parties who undertook to build this road would prolong it a great number of years? The road would not pay anything until it was completed. The one million a year was a mere nominal sum to secure a commencement.

Mr Bots in sum one objection to commencing the railroad at Yale would be the cost and difficulty of transporting the material from the seaboard. A great portion of the year the navigation of the river would be closed to steamers.

Mr Drake said the clause was the pivot of the whole scheme. He hoped his members would remember that he desired that the cost of its construction would not exceed two-thirds of that of the Union Pacific. Whilst it was decided opinion that the railway would follow down the valley of the Fraser, he still held that it would be highly improper to attempt to bind the Dominion Government to any particular route or terminus.

In these views the house very generally concurred, and hence the section was sustained and passed, accompanied by only one amendment, and that was the recommendation moved by Mr Bishop, asking the Governor to have that link of the great trunk road of the colony lying between Yale and New Westminster included in the coach road which the Dominion Government is required to construct within three years from the date of the admission of this colony. That the recommendation will be complied with by the Executive may reasonably be inferred from the large sum of support received in the House. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how reasonable a proposition it is to expect that it is surely not less important that a connecting link in the very centre of a continental nation should be supplied than that the trunk road should be extended beyond the present confines of the colony.

Mr Drake said that would do. He thought there was no room to guarantee such a sum as this. She had to go to England for guarantees of £300,000 to pay for the Northwest Territory. It had been said that the Canadian statements were of unbounded ambition, and he did not know how far that unbounded ambition might carry them.

Mr Holbrook said he would not condescend to the suggestions put upon him by the members of the opposition. Such remarks could only come from those who knew least about the men they maligned. He was a Canadian, and was proud of being one, but in the matter of making terms of union he would be as exacting as any member of this Council. He would have all the conditions well redacted, and would have them put in black and white. He would ask no endorsement from any other source. When this agreement is completed between British Columbia and Canada, we would have the endorse-

ment of the Queen by her proclamation. It was not true that if Canada repudiated we would have to remain in the union. The Imperial Government would never permit such gross wrong and violation of the conditions of its own scheme. If we had not the guarantees of the Imperial and Canadian Governments we might listen to such expressions of doubt. The remarks about the seaboard to the other side, it lies, in all probability, on the back of the railway, and should be a grave misfortune to leave it out of the conditions. It must not be forgotten that navigation between Yale and New Westminster is indifferent at best, and absolutely suspended during four or five months in the year. It would never do, therefore, to render dependent upon water communication at a time when large public works are being carried on both on the seaboard and in the interior.

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