

the building of the railway a specific condition of that agreement. It was nowhere provided that if the road did not yield a dividend the union was to be abrogated.

The various sections which had already been built as government works were taken over and continued as federal government works, under Sir Sandford Fleming, and the line was opened in 1876. As railways went in that time, the line was not only substantially built at a moderate cost, but the construction record of the sections already built by the provincial government, and the record of the Intercolonial system under Sir Sandford Fleming, stand out in conspicuous contrast with the history of the roads in the western provinces under private ownership. There was not a single scandal in the railway work of either provincial or Dominion government of the character that marked the régime of the private-charter monger and of the promoters who built roads for the avowed purpose of making a personal profit out of a national function. It is true that in later years frauds were perpetrated in government railway work, in which the criminals had the assistance of equally guilty members of parliament, but these frauds were sporadic and not general, and, measured with the frauds and public robberies by the private corporations, they were only the doings of a counter sneak thief compared to the operations of a bank robber or a train bandit. We will have to admit that the later frauds in the construction of the National Transcontinental line are truly of the train-bandit magnitude, but it must be borne in mind that this road, though built under government auspices, was an adjunct to the privately owned Grand Trunk, which controlled the Grand Trunk Pacific, and the Transcontinental was intended to be transferred to that system. It was built in the last days of an administration which had become corrupt, and by a parliament that had long been subservient to private railway interests, the main stream of the defilement of parliamentary life being due to these very influences. The National Transcontinental was a bastard offspring of the illegitimate influence of private railway owners on parliament, for it was a scheme to preserve to the Grand Trunk the expected profits of the Grand Trunk Pacific in the fertile prairie regions while getting the government to pay the cost of