

MEMORANDUM

ON RAILWAY PROGRESS IN THE DOMINION OF CANADA, AND ITS BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY, MORE PARTICULARLY IN THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES WEST OF LAKE SUPERIOR,

Bij the hon. Sir CHARLES TUPPER, Baronet, G. C. M. G., C. B.,

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA IN LONDON, FORMERLY MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS,
MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA, ETC., ETC.

(See the accompanying map of the railway system of Canada.)

The endeavour to trace in the history of the development of Canada the proportion of its advance fairly attributable, directly, to the extension of its railway system, is a matter of difficulty, in view of the exceptional facilities for communication by water which the country possesses, and which, even in the present day, must be regarded as a main factor of its commercial prosperity. A water way which extends from the mouth of the River St. Lawrence to Port Arthur at the head of Lake Superior, a distance of 2,260 miles (3,637 kilometres) made navigable by a system of canals, has constituted an independent element of advancement which must be considered in dealing with the general question, while immense internal rivers and innumerable lakes have borne in the past, and still bear, their share in the progress of the country. *The proximity of these water ways, however, formed the limitation to general settlement.*

It is not until the vast extent of territory west of Lake Superior is reached, that the paramount importance of railway communication, if these great fertile plains and valleys are ever to be utilized for the public good, is realized. The extent of this section may be understood from the single statement that it has required the construction of 2,237 miles (3,632 kilometres) of railway to span the distance between Lake Superior and the waters of the Pacific.

But though this generous and ready means of water communication exists, it exists only for the warmer portions of the year, and for the long winter months, from the end of November to the end of March, the whole interior of the country would be in a state of isolation, and trade would be dormant or paralysed were it not for the railways, which now, from east to west, with their ramifications to the north and south, pierce the country in every direction, collecting and distributing the products of the forest, the field, and the factory, through the length and breadth of the land, and giving ready access to and from all the centres of population; without heed to the restrictions and barriers of the winter