

# THE BYSTANDER.

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APRIL, 1881.

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THE Session of Parliament which has just closed will be memorable, especially in the annals of the North-West, as that in which the sanction of the national representatives was given to the Pacific Railway Agreement. When the actors in this transaction stand before the tribunal of opinion in the future, upon one of the parties will rest the responsibility of having committed the country to the undertaking by the fatal treaty with British Columbia; upon the other party will rest the responsibility of having not only acquiesced in the undertaking, in deference to conventional opinion, but through its principal organ for years and till yesterday denounced as traitors all who tried to warn the people against the danger. Upon the Party System itself will rest the responsibility of having left the nation through the whole course of this momentous struggle without a single patriotic and fearless counsellor. Partisans of the Opposition will, no doubt, take exception to the last assertion, and contend that its leaders did patriotically and fearlessly struggle to prevent the ratification of the Agreement. Patriotically, perhaps, but not fearlessly. Had they been fearless they would have avowed that the object of their hostility was not merely the Agreement but the enterprise itself, at least so far as the unproductive portions of the road were concerned. But upon that subject deference to Imperialist sentiment sealed their lips and constrained them to confine themselves to attacks upon the terms of the Agreement and the composition of the Syn-