

take stock in the Toronto narrow gauge roads, should not the land grant of the Canada Central (which is certainly of more value than these bonuses) induce the same class in Montreal and the Ottawa Valley to do likewise with regard to their railway.

In my former letters I referred to the commercial prospects of this road, and its importance to Montreal, and shewed that the enhanced value of the timber and mineral lands, the lumber traffic, the connection with grain elevators on Lake Huron, and the future connection with American lines, as well as with the Nor'-West, were reasons why we should make an effort to retain the now important provisions of our land grant charter.

St. Paul, Minnesota, is in about the same latitude as Montreal, and the shortest railway route to it, by over an hundred miles, will be through the Ottawa Valley and Sault Ste. Marie.

I also shewed that it was in the interest of the Grand Trunk and all its Northern branches as well as of the whole of Ontario, that the Ottawa Valley should be opened up and settled, and that our military strength would be greatly increased thereby. I believe it possible to unite the Montreal and Toronto interests in a joint extension from Nipissing towards Red River, in which the sympathies and material aid of the Ontario and Dominion Governments and possibly of the Empire may be enlisted.

With your permission I will, in another letter, consider the political importance of a Canadian Pacific Railway, the first section of which we have in the Canada Central an opportunity to start under the most favorable auspices. If the present land grant be allowed to lapse through inaction, neither Montreal nor the Ottawa valley can hope in any future day to have sufficient influence in the Ontario Legislature to renew the same, nor would a future renewal be of much value as the lands will ere long be taken up by other parties.

THOS. C. KEEFER.

Ottawa, 1869.

SIR,—The commercial prospects of a Canadian Pacific Railway, however promising, however essential to its financial success, are nevertheless of secondary importance to the political necessity which exists for a continuous railway to the Red River—that is for winter as well as summer communication through our own territory. We have made railway connection with our maritime provinces a part of the new constitution, and our only explanation for not doing the same with regard to the West, must be a confession of poverty. Can we afford to make that confession? Are we not strong enough for the place? No doubt our federal resources are fully taxed to complete and consolidate confederation, but if confederation only serves the purpose of absorbing all our means, there is neither novelty nor virtue in it. We have been two years a nation (and two years makes the calf a cow) and we have made no sign. In those two years our neighbours laid over one thousand miles of their Pacific Railway. While in the forum and in the press we are “whistling to keep our courage up,” there is a well known undercurrent of apprehension, as well as

bewilderment with regard to the course which we are steering or drifting.

We have been led to the altar of confederation as dutiful children, not that we have been particularly enamoured with the match, but because we did not like the alternative—annexation. We have accepted confederation as the price of British connection and British protection, emphasized by the Trent and Fenian affairs.

There is no half way house between Westminster and Washington; and while probably no serious effort would be made to prevent our going from the one to the other, if so inclined,—it is yet more certain that no attempt will be made to *drive* us in that direction. The parent state, which has so much responsibility for what we are and where we are, though puzzled what to do, has not yet discarded us; and, as the highest patriotism has been defined to be the highest selfishness, we may take our own course within the constitution, in the full confidence that she will not abandon us before we have abandoned her. The election is with us, and if we decide to march westward instead of southward, we know that we march with the Empire at our back. Let us go, then, as becomes our position, not borrowing a ride from our neighbour,—nor on the dog sledge of the Esquimaux.

If we go into the American Union, we become, commercially, “hewers of wood” under a plutocracy on the Atlantic seaboard. The fertile belt would be penetrated from Minnesota, and our shorter transit lines would be stifled as rivals to New York and Boston. It is only through the influence of the fertile belt and our own political and geographical position that we can ever hope for a railway around the north shore of Superior, and without such a railway we cannot become a nation. Without it, Montreal cannot hold her own with the American seaports.

Comparatively, we approach the definition of a line,—“length without breadth,” a “thin red line” confronting the solid columns of the Union. Our St. Lawrence canals, as well as our only through railway, are commanded by batteries on foreign soil. We have no base line, no alternative route if our frontier one is broken by a Fenian raid. Whatever view we may take of our future, this ought not to continue. If we cast in our lot with the States of the Union, we do not join a “happy family,” and we know not how soon we may be forced to take care of ourselves. In such an event, we certainly have the best position, one which could not be turned—without a resetting of the North Pole.

We have been pressed to arm, to drill, to organize; and we have done so. We have been urged to fortify, and we have hesitated. We cannot fortify a continent; and fortifications involve a standing army. The strongest fortifications we could possess would be a railway located beyond an enemy's reach, and yet in communication with all our stores of men, material and provision. Such a railway, connecting the arsenals of the East and the granaries of the West, would not only be a productive instead of an unproductive fortification, but, while paying its own way, it would add immensely to our strength in the population and wealth it

would introduce. The best security against attack is known ability for defence.

We are told that we need not expect to be assisted by a guarantee—although the Indian railways were only secured in this manner,—and we can shew that a Canadian Pacific Railway would add to the importance of the British Empire as much at least as a local Indian railway. We have the best engineering, the best agricultural, and, for through traffic, the best commercial route for a Pacific Railway on this continent. We can take passengers and mails between England and China in at least ten days less time than by Suez, and by a cooler and healthier route. Considering that the application for this guarantee has not yet been made,—that our paper has never been protested, and that therefore the mother country has never lost anything by endorsing for us,—the warning may be termed at least premature; but the fact of being warned argues an implied obligation, as a logical consequence. If it were intended that the guarantee which extends over the Intercolonial was for the purpose to fairly launching us as a confederacy, and of stop there, we should not have been encouraged to take in tow a derelict requiring so long a line as Assiniboia. If the Indians of the North West were as numerous and productive as those of Asia, there would be less objection to the guarantee.

In 1841 we commenced our Confederation under the auspices of Britain by the Union between Upper and Lower Canada, and this was accompanied by a proffered guarantee of one and a-half millions sterling, with which our canals were constructed. We embarked in a competition for Western trade nominally with New York, but really with the Union, which subsequently was extended to our railway system. The struggle has been an unequal one,—three millions against thirty,—and we have had little commercial sympathy from “home.” On the contrary, our canals were projected under the influence of the old Corn laws in England, and when there was a differential duty in our favour on wheat, &c., exported by the St. Lawrence, and the very year in which our canals were completed, the premium was withdrawn.

Again, we are invited to a commercial joust for the Pacific trade with the great Republic; but neither the guarantee nor the prospective preferential traffic accompany the invitation. We have accepted the territory, and with it “the situation.” It would be the most senseless thing, politically, to hope to maintain our jurisdiction in the North-West without a continuous railway on our own ground, as it is the most indefensible thing commercially to build the Intercolonial which we are building, except as part of a Canadian Pacific Railway. If we can get the road constructed by granting the lands to the builders we do not require the guarantee; and if we give or obtain the guarantee we must expect to meet it from the lands, and this we ought to be able to do unless we mean to transplant the free grant system to the prairies, and give away lands which a company would sell into better hands for a sum sufficient to build the railway.

We have set apart one million acres for educational purposes, and founded a fund thereon. If we choose we may set apart one hundred million acres for a guarantee