

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, OCTOBER 1, 1888.

THE HUDSON'S BAY RAILWAY

The latest mishap which has befallen the Hudson's Bay Railway project is the refusal of the Dominion Government to render any further assistance thereto and the decision is a heavy blow to the promoters of the road, for their hopes have been high of late, and they looked for some additional assistance from the Dominion, not only for the value of such assistance in itself, but also for the incentive it might be to the Provincial Government to come up to the scratch. Undoubtedly the road stands a poor chance of being constructed under present circumstances, and some radical change is necessary before its prospects improve much. The alleged reasons of the Dominion Government for refusing the aid sought for, are certainly not flattering to the Provincial Government. The refusal, it is said, is only a following up of the apathy on the question which the province through its present rulers displays. That the reason is advanced with the most hypocritical intentions is obvious, for the project is not a purely provincial one by any means. It is in no way astounding, however, that such a reason should be advanced, and our local Government are indirectly, if not directly responsible for leaving room for its advancement. No sane or unbiased Manitoban believes otherwise, than that the present Dominion Government are more anxious to block, than to further the Hudson's Bay railway project, and indeed we can look for no Government at Ottawa, which will be anxious to hurry its completion. Eastern influence is too powerful there, and too strongly arrayed against the construction of a road, that would divert much of the traffic to and from this country through other than eastern channels. The action of the local Government is therefore very opportune for the Dominion authorities, and furnishes them with a very plausible subterfuge under which to impede the opening of this, to us, all important northern outlet.

Had Manitoba never offered any greater assistance, than is now offered by the present Government, there would be no pretext available for the present action of the Dominion, which could be based upon

the action of the province. There is certainly strong ground for argument in favor of the assumption, that the \$2,500,000 guarantee is all that the present resources of the province will warrant, and had that been the highest offer ever made the Dominion authorities would have had to hunt for an argument elsewhere, if they were determined to make use of one. But Manitoba having at one time offered a \$4,500,000 guarantee for the construction of this road, when there was no hope of further aid from Ottawa, furnishes the strongest possible proof, to parties looking for a negative argument, that provincial anxiety for a Hudson's Bay outlet was now much less than it was a year or two ago.

We hear a great deal of argument in favor of the stand taken by the local Government, based upon the changed circumstances of the province since the guarantee of last year was given, some of which is scarcely worth the designation of argument. But it must be remembered that the Dominion Government can also make use of this argument of changed circumstances, and when our provincial guarantee is reduced nearly one-half, it is not too great a stretch of reasoning, for outsiders to assume, that the people of Manitoba are satisfied for the present with the abolition of the late C. P. R. monopoly, and are content to wait a few years longer for the construction of the Hudson's Bay road. The provincial Government will find, that our Ottawa rulers are not the only parties who will construe their action into such an argument; although there is not a member or supporter of Mr. Greenway's administration who will dare to assert that the people of the province are satisfied with such delay.

We have no partizan motives in thus criticising the actions of Mr. Greenway and his colleagues, and we still give them credit for acting honestly and to the best of their judgment. We must confess, however, to having a very poor opinion of the judgment. They have struck, and we believe unintentionally, too, the most staggering blow the Hudson's Bay railway project has received, since the first application was made for a charter for its construction. Doubtless they have formed a clear and decided policy, for Mr. Greenway and his colleagues have shown their ability to form opinions and enforce them. Like other men, however, they are liable to form mistaken ones, and they have made a huge mistake upon this Hudson's

Bay railway question, one they would do well to rectify even yet, although too late to repair some of the damage it has caused. It is not at all impossible that if the mistake is persisted in, they have applied the mattock to the foundation of their own tenure of power.

We dislike very much the style of argument adopted by party journals, in raking up the pledges and avowals of the members of a Government made before they went into power, but the tenacity with which Mr. Greenway and his supporters stood by the Hudson's Bay railway project, while they were in opposition, contrasts strongly with their treatment of it now. It is safe to say that not one of their outside supporters ever suspected them of the course they have now adopted. Even the faults and shortcomings of the Hudson's Bay Railway Co., which the Attorney General takes such pains, and goes so far out of his way to show up, were never mentioned in Legislative debate, but were carefully hidden and ingeniously condoned by the opposition leaders during Mr. Norquay's last year of power. Now they seem to have discovered every essence of evil in the company, and very little to call for any legislative effort or consideration in the project itself. With others who contributed to the elevation of Mr. Greenway and his colleagues to power, we confess our disappointment as well as our astonishment at the course they now pursue towards this great project.

TRADE INTERCOURSE WITH AUSTRALIA.

By the round about way of London, England, the news reaches us that at Ottawa overtures have been received from the Australian Government suggesting negotiations for closer trade relations between that colony and Canada, and the probability is that the news is true, as it is a very natural move for either of these Colonial Governments to make, and the wonder is, that some move of this kind has not been made long ago. Of course there is a class of gushing imperialists who may be tempted to look upon it as a step towards the closer political union of portions of the British Empire hitherto distinct and separate, if not as yet antagonistic or discordant. The commercial economist may not be prepared to entertain any such prospect, but taking the most sordid view possible of the question, the value to both colonies of closer trade relations is beyond question. Each can use quite a proportion of the products of the other, and in return find a market for much of its own products.