

was unanimously adopted to the effect "That the three Governments of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, do renew the offer made to the Imperial Government on the 26th October, 1858, to aid in the construction of an Inter-colonial Railway to connect Halifax with Quebec, and that a delegation from each Province shall immediately proceed to England, with the object of pressing the project upon the attention of the Home Government, giving them the assurance that the Governments of the respective Provinces will endeavor to secure the necessary legislation at the next ensuing sessions of their respective Parliaments." The offer made in 1858 was in effect that the three Provinces should grant a free right of way, with land, &c. and provide and pay each of them £20,000 sterling, or collectively £60,000 annually, so long as it might be wanted, towards the charge of the guarantee required for the raising of the necessary capital.

Conformably with this resolution the Hon. Messrs. Vankoughnet (of Canada), Tilley (of N. Brunswick), and Howe (of Nova Scotia), were appointed to proceed to England as Delegates for the purpose of stating the views and wishes of the Provinces, and negotiating with the Government. They arrived early in the month of November, and having delivered their credentials at the Colonial Office, had every opportunity afforded them of discussing verbally and by written communication the object of their mission with His Grace the Secretary of State; but the all absorbing events, in connection with the Trent affair, soon afterwards occurring, they were reluctantly obliged, as their several Parliaments were on the eve of meeting, to return to their duties, without carrying with them any definite intimation of the views of the Government on the matter in question. Prior to their departure, however, it was resolved, formally to constitute a body in this country for the purpose of communicating with the Government, and a meeting was accordingly held, at which the Committee was appointed, on whose behalf I am deputed now to address Your Lordships.

The Committee, after full consideration of the whole question, are of opinion, that their first step should be to satisfy your Lordships as to the feelings of this country, as well as of the Colonies, on the general question of the imperfect nature of the existing Intercolonial communications, and the necessity, on commercial and political grounds, of establishing the Railway proposed; and with that view they have invited an expression of public opinion on the subject, the results of which will have been submitted to your Lordships in memorials, similar to that which I have now the honor to forward.

The numerous papers, which were delivered in to the Government by the Commissioners prior to their departure, render it unnecessary for me here to trouble your Lordships with any repetition of the arguments therein adduced in support of the necessity of the projected line, whether regarded from an Imperial or a Colonial point of view. The Committee earnestly desire to press these considerations upon the serious attention of the Government, and request me to state, that if their Lordships shall feel themselves justified in meeting the wishes of the Colonies, by recommending Parliament to take part in affording such aid to the construction of the proposed Railway as the circumstances may require, they will be prepared, on their part, either to leave the construction of the Railway entirely in the hands of the Government and the Provincial authorities, or to submit proposals of their own, if the Government should be of opinion that the enterprise should be placed in the hands of a public company.

As the Legislative Assemblies of the several Provinces are now in session, or about to meet soon for the despatch of business, the Committee trust that the subject will receive the early attention of the Government, and that the result may be communicated to them in time to influence the proceedings of the Provinces abroad as the circumstances may require.

I have the honor to be,

Your Lordships most obedient humble servant,  
R. W. CRAWFORD.

(Signed)

To the Honble.

THE LORDS OF THE TREASURY.