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INCORPORATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

REPORTER. After the close of the Red River expedition was there any immediate change in the situation?

SIR RICHARD. Not much outwardly, but it was plain that Sir John was much disturbed. It had become clear to him that he was in danger of losing his hold in Ontario, and it would have been gall and wormwood to him to have found himself once more dependent on the vote of Quebec, even supposing that it could have been retained in its full strength, of which he had doubts. In an evil hour for himself and for Canada he bethought himself of incorporating British Columbia.

REPORTER. I thought you approved of that measure?

SIR RICHARD. The thing itself was good and desirable if it had been done at the proper time and in the proper way. But done as it was in frantic haste and utter ignorance of the country and of the extent of the obligations we were about to assume, and for no better reason than to draw a red herring across the trail and provide a catching cry for the next election, it was a colossal blunder, if not a colossal crime. Sir John's conduct in this matter was very much that of a despot who should elect to plunge his country into war to prevent discontent with his rule taking form and shape.

REPORTER. What were your chief objections?

SIR RICHARD. They were not mine alone. They were shared by every independent-minded man in the House, and even by some of Sir John's own colleagues. We knew that we had undertaken a tremendous task in attempting to open up and colonize the North-West. We knew that we had to bridge more than a thousand miles of rocky wilderness, as yet unsurveyed, before we could reach the Red River, and we had at that time very little reliable information as to what might be beyond. We knew that we might