

digested system by which her Colonial Empire is now held together must soon be put to its severest test.

English Colonies were once governed by an absolute executive. Her colonial governors, like the Roman pro consuls, exercised Imperial authority in the name of the Crown. The Saxon blood asserted its right to share the authority in making laws, and Provincial Parliaments have grown into use wherever the Anglo Saxon race has planted its feet. Concessions from time to time have been granted, till the recent experiment has been attempted in British North America of "RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT." This principle is now asserted in all British America, and the model of the English Constitution is copied—with this difference,—an executive holding place by Imperial appointment instead of hereditary descent. The difficulties of the system are already apparent in the constant interference of Imperial with Colonial interests. Canada sought to protect her iron manufactures by a discriminating duty, and the despatch of Earl Grey informed the Governor General of Canada, in 1848, that it would interfere with the interests of the Scotch iron masters, and was therefore against the interests of *the people of the Empire*. New Brunswick has just granted a charter for the E. and N. A. R. R., and Earl Grey requires the charter to conform to Imperial wishes and necessities. In other words, the Colonies may legislate for their own interests, when in the opinion of the English Ministry they do not jeopardize Imperial interests. These Imperial interests are not defined by any written law or constitution, but depend for their importance upon the ministerial idea of the hour.

A conflict of interests must sooner or later come up. The interests of the North American Provinces, with their abundant natural resources, are more in unison with our own, than with Imperial, European policy,—and nothing short of a total surrender to the Colonies of the management of their local, financial and commercial affairs, or an incorporation of the Colonies into the nation itself, as an integral part of the Empire, will satisfy the advancing spirit of progress and free opinion in British North America.

In abandoning the principles of responsible government, and yielding to the Imperial demands, *Mr. Howe* will find in the carrying out of his Railroad schemes full play for his versatile and imaginative powers. He now assures us, in the strongest terms, of the certainty of bringing the iron locomotive, by rail, from Halifax to the boundary of Maine, as soon as we can give it a similar track from the eastern boundary of Maine to Portland. But if he fails in bringing the discordant elements of Canadian legislation into harmony with that of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, he will then renew his pledges to the Portland Convention scheme, build the road as we must build ours, through private exertions, and join us at the same time and place at the boundary.

With these assurances before us—with the correspondence of the British Government in our hands, showing their appreciation of the scheme—with the testimony on all hands of the practicability and paying qualities of our whole line, will not the people of New England and the United States generally contribute in the form of subscriptions to the stock, the *one million of dollars* which we require to secure this great work?

Our course must be dependent upon the action of the Provinces. While expressing freely my own convictions, and those of the committee, I do not mean to question the right, or the wisdom of that policy in the Provinces, which shall most readily secure the means. If the British Government will give them the money at 3 1-2 per cent., on such terms as they can bear, they will of course readily take it. But before the money is thus obtained, I think they are destined to undergo delays, if not, in the end, suffer disappointment. But when they will satisfy us of their readiness to bring their line to our frontier the interests of Maine will secure our portion of the route.

I speak thus confidently, for I am certain that the people of Maine appreciate,