

# INTRODUCTION.

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The first official step towards the Canadian Pacific Railway was taken in 1870. On the 14th August, 1869, the Colonial Secretary addressed a despatch to the Governor of British Columbia on the subject of the incorporation of that colony with the Dominion of Canada. Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory being about to be incorporated in the Dominion, the main obstacle in the way of the Imperial Government entertaining the question had been removed. A legislature drawn from an extended area could hardly fail to deal with questions comprehensively and impartially. The interest of every province of British North America would be advanced by enabling the wealth, credit and intelligence of the whole to be brought to bear on every part. Especially was this true in the case of internal transit. The difficulties in the way of union, presented by distance, were in this respect an advantage, that they would render easy communication indispensable. A copy of this despatch was forwarded on the 16th August, 1869, to His Excellency the Governor-General. After some further correspondence a delegation from British Columbia came to Ottawa and conferred with the Privy Council. The result, an Order-in-Council passed on the 1st July, 1870, submitted certain conditions as a base of political union, amongst them being the following:—

*Clause 11.* "The Government of the Dominion undertake to secure the commencement, simultaneously, within two years from the date of the Union, of the construction of a railway from the Pacific towards the Rocky Mountains, and from such point as may be selected east of the Rocky Mountains towards the Pacific, to connect the sea-board of British Columbia with the railway system of Canada; and further, to secure the completion of such railway within ten years from the date of the Union.

And the Government of British Columbia agree to convey to the Dominion Government, in trust, to be appropriated in such manner as the Dominion Government may deem it advisable in furtherance of the construction of the said railway, a similar extent of public lands along the line of railway throughout its entire length in British Columbia, not to exceed, however, twenty miles on each side of said line, as may be appropriated for the same purpose by the Dominion Government from the public lands in the North-West Territories and the Province of Manitoba. Provided that the quantity of land which may be held under pre-emption right or by Crown grant within the limits of the tract of land in British Columbia to be so conveyed to the Dominion Government, shall be made good to the Dominion from contiguous public lands; and provided further, that until the commencement, within two years, as aforesaid, from the date of the Union of the construc-