

nal sun the grasses, instead of withering, dried into natural hay. The early explorers, too, had brought back reports of noble rivers, of fertile prairies, of great beds of coal, of belts of fine timber. But what cared the Company for these? The rivers, it is true, were valuable as being the homes of the otter, the mink, and other fur-bearing animals, and furnished fish for their employés, and highways for their canoes. For the rest they had no use. At last, in 1870, seeing that they could no longer exclude the world from these fertile regions, the Hudson Bay Company sold their territorial rights to Canada, which now began to see its way to a railroad across the continent, to link the colonies from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. The Company received in return a million and a half of dollars, a reservation of land around their forts, and one-twentieth of the lands within the fertile belt. It is not necessary for us to follow the quarrelling, the wire-pulling, the attempts to harmonize conflicting interests, that followed the attempts of the Government to inaugurate this scheme. To the Pacific Railway at least one administration owed its downfall. Finally, in 1881, after public money to a vast amount had been expended on surveys, and some of the road actually constructed, a bargain was concluded with an association of capitalists, called "a syndicate," to complete the undertaking. The syndicate agreed to complete a railroad of the standard gauge from Lake Nipissing, near the north-east shore of Lake Huron, to Port Moody, on Burrard Inlet, in British Columbia, nearly opposite the south end of Vancouver Island, by May 1, 1891, and to maintain and operate the same forever. In return they were allowed to charge certain tolls, had liberal exemptions from taxation, were given \$25,000,000 in cash, 25,000,000 acres of land, and about 700 miles of railroad already built or contracted for by the Government, valued at about \$30,000,000 more.

In short, the Government was only too glad to get clear of the whole scheme, and give a royal bounty to any one willing and able to finish it. It is said that \$3,000,000 had been spent on surveys alone, and that 12,000 miles of different routes had been actually surveyed with instrument and chain. No doubt the Government hoped, by entrusting the enterprise to private hands, to hasten both the completion of the railroad and the settlement of the country, as it was manifestly to the interest of the syndicate that their lands should be sold and settled as rapidly as