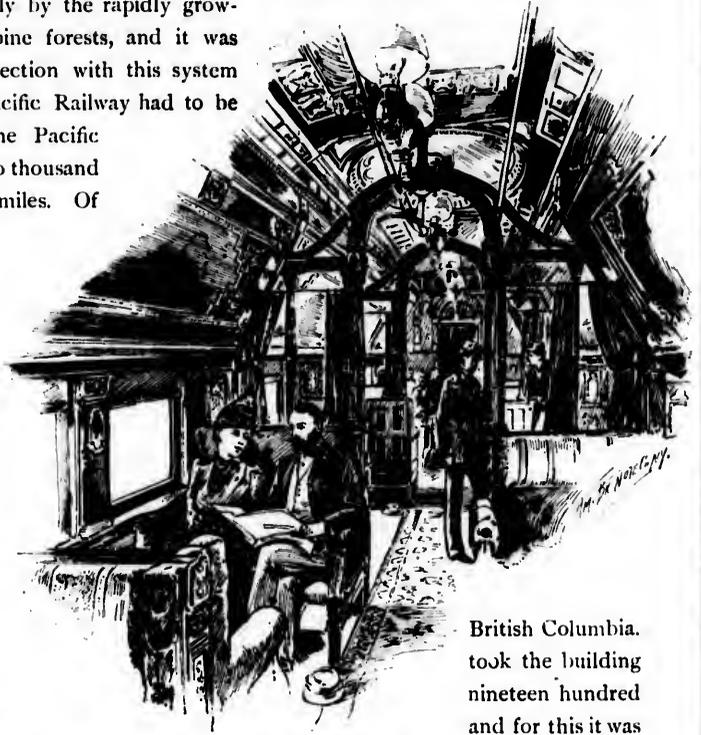


wealth. Thousands of people had settled on the prairies of the Northwest, and their success had brought tens of thousands more. The political reasons for building the railway were lost sight of and commercial reasons took their place, and there was no difficulty in finding a party of capitalists ready and willing to relieve the Government of the work and carry it on as a commercial enterprise. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company was organized early in 1881, and immediately entered into a contract with the Government to complete the line within ten years.

The railway system of Eastern Canada had already advanced far up the Ottawa Valley, attracted mainly by the rapidly growing traffic from the pine forests, and it was from a point of connection with this system that the Canadian Pacific Railway had to be carried through to the Pacific coast, a distance of two thousand five hundred and fifty miles. Of this, the Government had under construction one section of four hundred and twenty-five miles between Lake Superior and Winnipeg, and another of two hundred and thirteen miles from Burrard Inlet, on the Pacific coast, eastward to Kamloops Lake in British Columbia. The company under- took the building of the remaining and twenty miles,



British Columbia. took the building nineteen hundred and for this it was

to receive from the Government a number of valuable privileges and immunities, and twenty-five million dollars in money and twenty-five million acres of agricultural land. The two sections of the railway already under construction were to be finished by the Government, and, together with a branch line of sixty-five miles already in operation from Winnipeg southward to the boundary of the United States, were to be given to the company, in addition to its subsidies in money and lands; and the entire railway, when completed, was to remain the property of the company.

With these liberal subventions the company set about its task most vigorously. While the engineers were exploring the more difficult and less known section from the Ottawa River to and around Lake Superior, and marking out a line for the navies, work was commenced at Winnipeg and pushed westward across the prairies, where one