

to hold out to Upper Canadians the great commercial gains to come from a line to Detroit. Both these lines were to be built by private capitalists, and if they were built with English money their construction would mean the defeat of the people's line, for the time at least. Without saying much on the question of whose money was to furnish the traffic after the private lines were built, he spoke of the vast resources of the contractors. In an open letter to this agent Howe wrote:

Put all your friends together, unite their entire fortunes and resources, and as our neighbors quaintly say, they could not "begin" to buy the homestead of New Brunswick. They could not purchase the property on a single river. Yet we are told that the people who own the whole cannot risk the construction of these railways which can easily be accomplished by those whose resources are insignificant in comparison.

After stating other objections, he concluded:

My last objection touches higher interests than pounds, shillings, and pence. Show me the state or province that ever willingly granted five millions of acres of its territory, with all its minerals and appurtenances, to a private association. Nova Scotia would not make such a grant if she never had a railroad. The man who proposed it would sit alone in our assembly. New Brunswick may be less particular, but such a grant once made to any association, with all the patronage, expenditure, and revenues of her two great roads, and a power would be created in her midst which would very soon control both her government and her legislature.

The terrible truth of the warning was to be revealed in after-years, and railway control of parliament was to reach that stage where the thing which Howe thought inconceivable—that the alienation of vast areas of the nation's best land for the enrichment of private individuals through railway franchises would be taken as a matter of course—occurred. Indeed, the time was to come when the despoilers would even be held up as the saviors of the national estate.

The "Trent affair" brought strength to the movement for the Canadian union, and the Intercolonial Railway was seen to be a necessity to this union. The British North America act, the charter of the confederation, came into force in 1867, and section 145 of that act acknowledged it to be the duty of the government to build and maintain the railway. Moreover, the resolutions of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick legislatures agreeing to the union made