

Once built, the difficulty of operating the railway in winter will be found just where construction threatens to be most difficult—the western slopes of the two great mountain chains in British Columbia. “Except in these localities, it will have on an average considerably less snow than existing railways have to contend with.”

By the time it is built, let us trust that a population shall have entered our North-west sufficiently large to ensure enough traffic to pay working expenses. The prospect is good; but should the prospect not be realized, the Canada Pacific—irrespective of the cost of construction—would be a white elephant of portentous dimensions to Canada. “The first construction of a railway through the interior of British America is even a less formidable undertaking than that of keeping it afterwards open in the present condition of the country.” At present the Dominion has a population of about 900 for every mile of railway constructed, and that is found to be anything but a paying average. But on that basis, our North-west should have a population of one and a half millions by the time the line is opened from the Pacific to Lake Superior. Of course the safe policy would be, not to begin construction from the Pacific side till a million of people had actually settled in the North-west; and it is a question whether more liberal terms might not be offered to British Columbia than have yet been suggested to obtain the delay. It cannot be the true interest of any member of the body that the whole body should suffer, and even run the risk of destruction. This policy is all the more reasonable in view of the fact already indicated, that it has not yet been found possible to determine whether a southern, central, or northern terminus on the Pacific should be selected. The respective merits and demerits of the best central and southern termini are now known; but the northern terminus of Port Essington—hitherto a kind of “dark horse”—is being brought to the front, and it may yet be the favourite. But, in

any
twee
tion
In
gatio
be le
they
is, W
On th
four y
a rap
ence
way o
they v
The
one ca
tleme
proved
conten
then e
tended
wish
“Prai
is to g
review
The
Territo
days o
River
1818.
the Ea
1818, 1
next in
From 1