

STILL MORE CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT.

The statement was publicly made at the time, that prominent Conservatives in Victoria, B.C., telegraphed Senator Macdonald, urging him not to move in the Senate, the resolution of which he had given notice, condemning the Government's arrangement with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company.

A reflection of this Conservative opinion in British Columbia, as in the other provinces, in support of the Government's railway policy, appeared in the *Colonist*, the leading Conservative daily paper of Victoria, on the morning of March 10th, 1904. It said:

Now that the shareholders of the Grand Trunk Railway Company have approved of the amended agreement with the Dominion Government, for the constructing and operation of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, the last obstacle to the carrying out of the enterprise may be considered as removed. From the reports of the meeting of the shareholders, in London, it appears that there was a strong and well organized opposition to the Grand Trunk Company undertaking any responsibility in connection with the project. It is not difficult to understand the reason for this opposition. While it is quite possible that the Vice-President of the Company, (Mr. Hays) was correct in his assertion that interested rivals had attempted to block the scheme, it is probable that another reason was what influenced many of the shareholders in their attempt to postpone the proposal to approve the agreement with the Dominion Government. The history of the Grand Trunk Company, for nearly thirty years, was a record of financial difficulty and disappointing results. * * * * * The General Manager of the Company, Mr. Hayes, did not hesitate to put the situation clearly before them. He pointed out that if the Company did not accept the Government's offer, there were other parties who would do so, and set up a competition with the Company, the results of which must be disastrous. With the settlement of Western Canada, any great Canadian railway system, must have its main line and feeders throughout the country, to secure the traffic which that settlement is developing. For the Grand Trunk Railway to be confined to the eastern provinces, would mean its practical exclusion from the great field of railway enterprise in the future. It would see its rivals gathering up the traffic in the West and carrying it to the eastern seaboard by lines paralleling the Grand Trunk system. When, too late, it was compelled to undertake the construction of western extensions, it would be impossible to secure Government aid, while it would have to compete with rivals that had already established themselves. Fortunately for the Grand Trunk Company's future, as we believe, and for the interests of Canada, especially the Western part of it. Mr. Hays' arguments prevailed and the shareholders approved the agreement. The management has lost no time in giving practical expression to that approval, and yesterday deposited in Montreal, cash, to the amount of \$5,000,000, as the security for the carrying out of the agreement, according to the stipulation to that effect. The Dominion Parliament meets to-day, and one of the most important matters that will occupy its attention at this session, will be the ratification of the amended agreement, between the Government and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company. There can be no reasonable doubt that this will be done. * * * * * The value to British Columbia, of a line opening up the northern part of this province, can scarcely be overestimated. That such a scheme was desirable was shown by the action of the Provincial Legislature three years ago, in voting millions of dollars as a subsidy in aid of such a project. Many people questioned the ability, of the Province to incur such an obligation, under its financial position, and held that such a work was really a national one, and not a provincial affair, and should, if aided at all, be assisted by the Dominion. By the agreement with the Grand Trunk Pacific Company, this is now being done without the addition of one dollar to the financial obligations of the Province, or the surrender of one acre of its lands. Nor can the people of Eastern Canada fairly object to this arrangement. While the aid will come from the Dominion as a whole, the people of British Columbia will contribute their share which is larger per capita of the population than the people of other Provinces contribute to the Dominion Treasury.