

of large numbers of men, particularly in a practically uninhabited section of country, they are responsible for making such arrangements that the men will be treated at least with common humanity; and I state most distinctly for myself, that when the House comes to examine that report, I think it will feel that there has been gross negligence. I want, before I sit down, to say . . . that if anything the House can do to place the legislation of this country in such a position that no such occurrence can possibly happen again, the Government will see that it shall be done, without any regard to parties or politics." Meanwhile we entirely concur in the view taken by the by the *Toronto Monetary Times*, that "if the suffering occasioned by the infamy of the Crow's Nest Pass fail to awaken public attention to the folly of granting subsidies of public money to enrich private persons, a striking object lesson will go for naught. To the Crow's Nest Pass Railway the princely subsidy of \$3,000,000 was given out of the public treasury of Canada. It must have gone far towards meeting the cost of construction, if it did not wholly suffice for that purpose. Yet the men, whose labour built the road, were paid wages which in many cases barely sufficed to pay their board, and in fact some times left them in debt. The families of the married men must have been left to starve. The millions paid in subsidy go to enrich the favoured company. The same financial operation is being repeated in a score of places. It is time to call a halt and abandon this improvident system, with its resulting corruption and demoralization. The controllers of the subsidized roads, in gratitude for favours received, aim in turn to become the masters of Parliaments and Governments. Political parties crouch beneath their sway, and are willing to go on making sacrifices of the public resources to obtain their good will. And so it will be to the end, unless the corrupting system of subsidies is abolished. Until this monster evil be attacked with a force sufficient to bring about its destruction, it is idle to talk of reform or to expect amelioration in railway finance."

Remarks such as the above, emanating as they do from perhaps the highest financial newspaper authority in the Dominion, indicate that the commercial mind of Canada is growing strongly adverse to the grant of lavish state aid to undertakings, the primary object of which is to benefit bodies of private individuals, composed of promoters, directors, bondholders and stockholders. Amongst these last the promoters too often carry off the bulk of the Government subsidy, a very small portion of it—sometimes indeed none—being applied in reduction of the cost of construction work. What the *Monetary Times* says to-day, the people of British Columbia will very probably say too, in the very early future. And already the fact that a *quid pro quo* to the Province has in one important instance been asked, in return for a Government subsidy offered—we speak of course, of the Yukon direct railroad scheme that is now apparently lapsing—is significant of a growing popular antagonism in British Columbia to the grant of Government bounties to new railroad projects.

It has been given out that there is still a probability of a charter being granted to Mr. Corbin to cross the international boundary and extend his railroad system into the Boundary Creek District. On the supposition, therefore, that this report is not

wholly groundless, it may not prove unprofitable to consider what benefits are likely to follow the operation of two rival lines of RAILROAD COMPETITION railway in this promising section of AT South Yale. In the first place it may BOUNDARY be premised that the defeat of Mr. CREEK. Corbin's Kettle River Railway Bill in the House of Commons last session was chiefly the result of skillful C.P.R. lobbying, backed up by appeals to the "patriotism" of members and promises from the Company that it would itself undertake to provide the district with transportation facilities, agreeing to build a road that would naturally be entirely within Canadian territory, and which would be completed within a specified space of time. Whether the Canadian Pacific really contemplated this step or not previous to Mr Corbin's application to Parliament for charter rights, of course, must remain a moot point, but it now transpires that the first estimate of cost of construction from Robson to Penticton of \$21,000 per mile was very much below the mark, and that owing to the engineering difficulties to be overcome, particularly in the vicinity of McRae Creek, the average cost of the road will not be less than \$29,000 per mile. *En passant* it may, moreover, be remarked that from present indications, certainly more than one year—the stated period—must elapse before the line is completed. Meanwhile, if when the road is in operation, the C.P.R. has no competitors for the traffic of the Boundary Creek District, it is reasonable to expect that a very high passenger and freight schedule of charges will be imposed by the Company to defray the large initial outlay, and to make a line so costly to construct and maintain, yield sufficiently big profits to satisfy shareholders. It may, however, be urged that the Government has authority to regulate the rates; this is quite true, but in justification of its charges the railway company would first enter the strong plea of the cost of the road, and if this failed to determine matters in its favour, the corporation is wealthy enough to refuse, if it chooses, to operate the line until the "bluff" had produced the desired effect. We do not say that all this will come to pass. It may not, and we trust it will not. It is nevertheless an interesting point, that while Mr. Corbin was anxious to build a railroad into this section of the country and submit to all the conditions or restrictions by which his powers would have been limited, he was refused the simple permission, and a corporation over which the Government has, as a matter of fact, little or no control, is subsidized to the extent of \$4,000 a mile to carry out practically the same undertaking. There still seems to be, as we have stated, a likelihood that the privilege of building a railroad to Boundary Creek will be accorded to Mr. Corbin, and this is the only hope that an effectual check on the C.P.R. will be supplied. As a rule, perhaps, railroad competition is little more than a name, and "mutual understandings" and "combines" take its place. But in this case the circumstances are somewhat different. Where the C.P.R. line is difficult and expensive to build, Mr. Corbin's is the reverse. He could afford to and would reduce charges to a minimum, the rival company being necessarily compelled to follow suit.

The Rothschild syndicate is making another attempt to secure Vancouver municipal aid for its long-mooted smelter project, the representative of the syndicate only asking on this occasion "civic moral support,"