

John Macdonald has solemnly declared from his place in parliament that he has received no proposition from the C. P. R. Syndicate asking for a further loan or anything of that nature, it has been evident for some little time that the preliminaries have all been cut and dried months ago, and that the object of the Premier was to leave its announcement off until near the close of the Session and then spring it upon parliament and rush it through before it could be thoroughly ventilated.

That this view is correct is amply borne out by the following despatch to the government's chief organ here, which by the way was completely surprised to receive such a confirmation of its own astute prediction:

"Hon. J. J. C. Abbott, the legal advisor of the Canadian Pacific, said to-day that the directors of the road were about to make a proposition to the government to the following effect: (1) That the lien of the government upon the line and all its belongings for the \$80,000,000 loan, be changed into first mortgage bonds for \$80,000,000. (2) This done, that the government accept lands in lieu of \$15,000,000 of these bonds, the remaining \$15,000,000 of bonds to be disposed of by the company, and the proceeds applied to the completion and equipment of the line. "By complying with this offer," said Mr. Abbott, "the government will not have to contribute any more money. Every dollar realized by the sale of the bonds will be applied to the completion of the road and its equipment, thereby enhancing the security. This will also advance the price of the stock, as the government will have no preference. The line from Winnipeg round Lake Superior to this city will be finished in three weeks and opened shortly after."

This despatch we think lets the cat pretty thoroughly out of the bag, and shows plainly to the Canadian tax payer what they have to expect in the near future. It is about as cool and cheeky a demand as could well be formulated by any company, unless they absolutely owned every acre of Canada, and were entitled to the earnings of every man in it. Cheeky and all as this proposition is, we have not the slightest doubt that it will be accepted by the present parliament before the session closes, and once more the interests of a gigantic monopoly whose strength will soon be a menace to our commercial freedom will outweigh the rights of the Canadian public out of whose pockets the entire expense has got to be met.

So far as our humble judgment goes

we think the government should not grant the C. P. R. Syndicate one single concession more. They have already drawn out of the venture in the shape of dividends on stock almost as much as they ever put into it, and if it is just one half as good a thing as they would have people believe, they should not hesitate to put their own money into it in real earnest and thus show their faith by their works. As long as they can coerce the government into giving them all the money they like to ask for they will never risk any of their own, and their position in regard to the country now is, and always has been, pretty much like that of the fellow who wanted to toss his comrade for a drink on the understanding of "heads I win, tails you lose." What the country really wanted and what the company started out to build, was a trans-continental railway, which in conjunction with the Intercolonial Railway, owned by the government, should stretch from ocean to ocean, and not only link our scattered provinces together in the pursuits of commerce, but exercise a beneficial influence in building up that spirit of nationality without which no country can be either contented or prosperous. This was the original idea and it was for this that the people's money was voted. The original idea has not been carried out however, and the money thus entrusted to this company has been utilized by them in gobbling up existing lines of railway for the purpose of crushing out the Grand Trunk. Had the money voted the first time been as fairly and honestly expended as would have been done had the Syndicate been paying for the work out of their own private means, it would, we think, have amply sufficed to complete the road, and we should never have heard of the second call, let alone this new demand to stand and deliver.

In the face of all this, we think the duty of the government is plain, and it is what the country will expect of them. They should refuse any farther aid to the C. P. R. Syndicate, and if the latter refuse to go on and complete the work the government should foreclose their mortgage, take immediate possession of the road and at once vote a sum of money sufficient to enable them to push it to completion themselves without any delay. The country would then at least own the road, and what is more, they would know that it was being built at something like its real cost and not have its contracts

filtered through the sticky fingers of a construction company composed of its owners. If there were any jobs in connection with its construction by government a parliamentary investigation would bring them to light; as things are at present the C. P. R. Syndicate refuses either to show their books or to make any authentic statement in regard to the cost of construction that the public can have the slightest chance to verify.

Sir John Macdonald by a firm stand in the interests of the country at the present time has it in his power to render an immense service to the people, and to assure his party of victory at the next general election. On the other hand if he neglects this chance of putting country before monopoly he may find that the Canadian Pacific Railway may a second time prove the means of hurling him and his party from power and relegating them to the cold shades of opposition for years to come.

With all Canadians who put country before party, we trust that the Premier will take a firm stand in this matter and see that the people have justice done them, no matter what the Syndicate threaten or do.

Selected Matter.

DEAD IN THE DESERT.

*Frederick Gustavus Burnaby, killed in Egypt,
Jan. 17, 1885.*

"Close up in front, and steady, lads!" old Stewart cries, "They're here!"
And distant Cheops echoes back our soldiers' answering cheer:
One moment's pause—a year it seems—and swift the Arab horde
Pours forth its mingled tide of hate and spear and scythe-like sword:
As demons fight, so fight the children of the desert plain.
Their naked breasts defy our steel again and yet again:
But steady as the granite cliff that stems a raging sea
Above the van of battle looms our "Bayard"—Burnaby.
Broken! The square is pierced! But only for a moment, though,
And shoulder-strap to shoulder-strap our brave lads meet the foe:
And on this day the Bedouin learns, in the Mehdi's shatter'd might,
With what a God-like majesty the island legions fight.
But, oh! the cost, the bitter cost! for ere the set of sun
The bravest heart of Alba's isle its earthly course has run.