

RAILWAY INTERESTS.

THE OLD AND THE NEW POLICY.

To any person who has read our articles on Railway Interests—Canadian—English and American, the question would naturally occur—why was the railway system of Canada of tardy growth? This is not a very difficult question to answer; and if the reader will follow us we shall show him why in our opinion, Canada has been comparatively backward in the construction of railways. In the first place, we would tell those, who habitually cry us down that it in no way arises from the apathy of our people, but simply from the fact that their energies were taxed in a different direction. The completion of a line of canals connecting the extreme west of Canada with the Atlantic sea-board, and thereby opening to the products of the West the markets of the world is mainly the reason why our railway interests made so little headway.

Until this grand canal system was accomplished our Government could not take up the great matter of railways, and it is well to remember here, that the building of canals has heretofore been regarded as exclusively a government work. This idea, not peculiar to us, gave them a paramount importance in the estimation of our rulers, who believed that the only means of perfecting our internal commerce was to complete them.

According to the prevailing notions of the time in relation to the productive employments of public moneys, in point of national works, the construction of our canal system marks a grand recognition of the principles of progress. And if one will only consider our thinly populated country, and the great sacrifices which the construction of these canals entailed, they will understand that if we but show as much spirit in the matter of railways, which has now come up before us, as was shown in the building of canals, within a very few years this province—this country will be covered with a thriving network of railways. (*Vide report of financial commission*)

The canal system was the grand achievement of old Canada. Until these were built she could enter upon no other undertaking, nor could anything be taken up until this work was accomplished, for there was that stubbornness in public opinion, that everything that tended to direct attention to railways, was considered to militate against, not the interest of canals merely, but the best interests of the country. While these ideas prevailed others were lost sight of, or only dimly seen: but one thing is always a source of distressing reflection to us that in the beginning more public money was not embarked in aiding domestic agriculture, because this would have enhanced

at once the productive powers of the land and the labor of the country.

The above facts we believe fairly account for the backwardness of Canada in railway matters. We had our great rivers and lakes continually before us and thought only of the means of connecting them, for commercial purposes. But the great utility of railways was not entirely lost sight of, for we find on referring to our Statutes, those witnesses of a people's doings, that by the 12 Vic., Cap. 29, a Railway Act of a general character in 1819 passed the Legislature of Canada. This is our first general Railway Act we believe. This Railway Act shows that the idea of a land grant did not enter into the heads of our statesmen; as one of its objects was to provide for affording the *guarantee of the Province to the bonds of Railway companies* on certain conditions. This shows our dependency in earnest—later, the land-grant system revealed a National turn of mind. The second part of the title of this Act reads, "and for rendering assistance in the construction of the Halifax and Quebec Railway." Now it does appear by this Act that our notion of railway building went no further than to authorize bonds and guarantee interest: and this recalls to our mind a citation made from *Herepath's* (London) *Railway Journal* "in relation to the Grand Trunk Railway," which is quoted in Appleton's Guide for August last, and which, when we read struck us forcibly. The quotation is as follows: "We suppose it is too late now to ask of the Canadian Government a land-grant for the Grand Trunk Railway. The line is made, and therefore the land could not be offered as a consideration for its construction, but it is doubtless unfortunate for Canada herself that she never made the Grand Trunk a land-grant. No better means of populating a country, and cultivating the soil, could be devised, and we want no better proof of this than the actual operations of the Illinois Central." Now what were these actual operations, as we know the figures we shall give them. The Company was given by the United States Government 2,595,000 acres of land, 2,000,000 acres of which have already been disposed of to numerous settlers who are busily at work cultivating the soil. In our articles on Railways we have given other proofs of the soundness of this policy, which is a truly national one. A company may borrow foreign capital on the land and utilize it, and cause its brisk circulation, which benefits the nation, but the government that borrows money to give to a company, does some good perhaps, but certainly harms itself and restricts its financial operations. The company besides having to pay the interest is forced to settle its lands, and the lender of the money is always interested that this should be done, and gives more assistance in this wise than we could readily explain. But while cap. Vic. cap.

29, 1819, provides to guarantee the loans on railways not less than 75 miles in length, it shows how early was understood the value of Artériel or Trunk lines, for it says: "Whereas at the present day, the means of rapid and easy communication by railway, between the chief centres of population and trade in any country and the more remote parts thereof, are becoming not merely a luxury, but essential to its advancement and prosperity; and whereas experience has shown, that whatever be the size of a country, its populous and wealthy condition, in those which are new and thinly populated, and in which capital is scarce, the assistance of government is necessary, and may be safely afforded to the construction of lines of railways of considerable extent." Then comes the assertion that the assistance is *best given* by loans guaranteed by government, an idea which we are happy to say has passed away. We hope these peculiar inquiries have not fatigued our readers, but it was fair that they should know why we were so tardy in railway enterprises, and that our energies did not lie dormant as many would make the world believe.

We think our local government in its Railway policy deserves great praise, certainly they are giving a direct and public opinion in all that concerns *Industrial Education*, which if backed by a scientific training of the youth of the country, in what concerns Agriculture, and the Arts and Trades, must indubitably, make the people of this Province, as practical and prosperous as any equal number of men on this continent. That the tendency of their legislation is in this direction is what men blinded by prejudice or spite may not be able to discern or willing to admit, but the fact is none the less true; and the results will prove that, our present systems of agriculture, colonization and railways are the stepping stones to increased happiness and increased trade.

THE TOBACCO DUTY.

Great discontent is manifested by tobacco merchants in this city, about the unreasonable Inland duty on the Canadian leaf, as compared with the duty on foreign growths. We state the grievance and believe if the matter be properly placed before the Finance Minister, concessions will be made to satisfy our dealers and the general trade of the country. The traders of this city suffer in many instances, because as a rule they do not adopt the means of bringing before the authorities the matters in which they sustain damage. If you would have the representatives of the city and the government alive to our interests, you must convince them that public opinion in our midst is alert, and intelligent. Our growing manufacturing industry is bringing this about and may hap a memorial from this quarter