

of that war, the British Government were desirous of removing large munitions of war that were in store at Quebec to the Crimea. The law officers of the Crown who were appealed to on the subject, gave it as their opinion that, inasmuch as the articles to be transported were contraband of war, they could not pass through the territory of a neutral power without a breach of the neutrality laws. The stores were, in consequence of this opinion, conveyed on sledges, at an enormous expense to Halifax, along the route of the proposed railway.

England has the military defence of her colonies to take care of. A war might break out during the winter time, in which it was necessary either to throw troops into Canada or to withdraw them from it. If the United States were either hostile, or in a position of armed neutrality, we could not, under present circumstances, effect our purpose at all. But if, on the other hand, this railroad were constructed, they would be on board ship in forty-eight hours after leaving their quarters in Canada, or concentrated on any part of the frontier within the same time of their landing at Halifax.

The danger above alluded to is not chimerical, for in 1837 and 1838 Canada was actually invaded by the Americans. Troops were indeed transported from Halifax to Quebec, but in small numbers, at a great expense, and with much suffering to the soldiers. It was found that military stores could not be conveyed at all in sufficient quantities. The misfortunes which would inevitably accrue, both to the commercial and the military interests of the country, if any rupture should, unhappily, take place with the United States, would be greatly enhanced, if there were no means of communicating with all the colonies at all seasons of the year. Looking at the question only in a military point of view, there ought either to be a large force always stationed in the provinces, or means should be provided to concentrate such a force on the required point at any moment.

In case of an American disturbance, the military base of operations would be in England instead of in Canada. The facility and rapidity of transport would economize alike troops, stores, and time.

Much has been said about federalizing the provinces. I express no opinion upon the advisability or possibility of such a plan; but it is right to note, while considering the imperial character of the undertaking, that it would be impossible to unite the three provinces politically, without first uniting them physically by means of this road.

It has long been a desideratum with the Imperial Government to have a military road through British territory,