

tion across the great western plain might do for us what a similar process has done for New York. But from a railway terminus on the Pacific shore we could stretch our commercial relations over that great ocean, and bring all the treasures of the Orient to enrich our markets. Further, in establishing communication with British Columbia, we are not merely establishing a landing place on the Pacific, though this would be an inestimable advantage. British Columbia is in the mining point of view, one of the richest portions of the earth's surface. It is of more value acre for acre than any portion of the Eastern States or of Canada proper. In an appendix attached to a recent report on the Pacific railway, Mr. G. M. Dawson has collected some details as to the mineral wealth of this region. He mentions gold-fields yielding now more than a million and a half of dollars annually. In eighteen years British Columbia with only 10,000 inhabitants has exported gold to the amount of 40,000,000 of dollars; and it is no exaggeration to say that with a larger population and better means of conveyance this yield might be increased twenty fold.

Coal exists on Vancouver's Island and the neighbouring mainland in inexhaustible abundance, and of excellent quality, and represents the sole supplies of that mineral on the Pacific coast of North America. British Columbia might supply the whole Pacific coast and a vast interior region, and might produce many millions of tons annually.

Iron, silver and copper are known to exist in productive quantities, and there is reason to believe that mercury, lead, and platinum might be added.

In short, British Columbia possesses all that mineral wealth which has enriched California and the States adjoining it; and the opening up of communication between it and other parts of the Dominion would be the beginning of a series of events that would build up great and wealthy cities and populous seats of industry in a region now scarcely inhabited, and cut off from direct intercourse with the other provinces politically connected with it.

What the Intercolonial has begun to do for our relations with the Atlantic provinces, the Canada Pacific must do for our relations with the Pacific province; and if I could present before you in a prophetic picture all that would follow from the establishment of such a connection, and the trade of the great sea and lands beyond, which might flow through our country, you as citizens of a commercial city, as well as in the capacity of votaries of science and scientific art, would at once say that at almost any sacrifice this great work should be executed. The difficulties in the way are undoubtedly great—so great that this generation of Canadians should scarcely be called upon to overcome them unaided, but they are probably not insurmountable, and the mode of meeting them is certainly at present the greatest public problem that our statesmen have to solve. It is further