

Policy, and is the practical outcome of a plebiscite, if any one likes to use the term, upon that question. Suppose another great issue happens to present itself between elections, why should not the nation have an opportunity of forming and expressing an opinion on this, as well as on the subject of the National Policy? It might be less necessary to stickle for freedom of national discussion, if Parliament were really what it is supposed to be—a perfect representation of the community, deliberating independently on all questions. But it is a very imperfect representation of those who do not attend party conventions; and, instead of its deliberations being independent, if the majority gives any signs of independence, it is at once taken into caucus, and brought back to discipline by arguments and inducements which do not even come to the knowledge of the public. The upholders of the treaty with British Columbia and of the construction of military railroads, have without doubt, good reason for deprecating plebiscites. They would hardly have obtained a plebiscite for their policy. The members of the Syndicate themselves must see that, if they contract, not only for the construction, but for the running of the road, their relation with the Government is likely to survive the present Ministry; and that this relation may prove uneasy, unless the consent of the country to the bargain shall have been deliberately given, so that the nation may feel itself morally as well as legally bound by the agreement.

The Pacific Railway enterprise, though commonly treated as one, is made up of three portions, each calling for separate consideration—the Prairie section, the Mountain section, and the section north of Lake Superior—while the entire road forms the western wing of a line of Imperial communication between the provinces destined to be welded into a North American Empire, of which the eastern wing is the Intercolonial. As to the Prairie section, there is no difference of opinion, supposing the road to be rightly laid out for commercial purposes; a query suggested by the fact that other than commercial objects have been mainly in view. The Mountain section has been designa-