

would have done had the enterprise been undertaken by the great capitalists of Europe. The necessary funds will be forthcoming, that is enough. The men at the head of the Syndicate are perfectly trustworthy; they are accustomed to act together, thoroughly familiar with the work to be done, and ready to commence operations at once. It will be strange if they do not soon add to the value of the government lands, by stimulating immigration, fully the three millions which constitute the difference between their money subsidy and that named by their rivals. Had the Government, instead of taking the course it did, formally put up the work to public competition, and accepted the lowest tender, it might have lost more in the character of the Company than it would have gained by the reduction of the subsidy. As to the intention of the Company to do the work there really is not the slightest room for doubt: if any misgivings are felt, a few months will set them at rest.

On the other hand, the duty of an Opposition is to oppose. It is in this way, according to the theory on which our political system is based—a theory from which we profoundly dissent—that, by the perpetual friction of parties, is ground out the public good. If there is to be a rhetorical prize-fight, in place of a deliberation, neither of the boxers can be blamed so long as he does not strike below the belt. The Government, if it wanted to be less mauled, had better have communicated the main conditions of the Agreement to the country some time before the meeting of Parliament, and given opinion time to simmer down. To publish the terms in a party assembly was to sound the trumpet for a battle. We cannot find fault with the leaders of the Opposition for prolonging the struggle, especially when they had reason to think that Blucher, in the shape of the Howland Syndicate, was at hand. The great error which they committed, or rather which was committed for them, was the premature condemnation of the Agreement, by which their moral position was ruined in advance. The Government was bound by the compact which it had signed, and so, according to the law of party, were the Government partisans;