

October 23, 1873

(27) In that communication Your Excellency was pleased to express the opinion that the functions of the Commissioners were rather inquisitorial than judicial, and that the execution of them should not be such as in any way to prejudice whatever proceedings Parliament might desire to take, when it reassembled in October.

(28) The Commissioners coinciding with your Excellency in the view that the Commission do not require them to pronounce judicially on the evidence, consider that their duty will have been fully discharged when they shall have forwarded to the Secretary of State the accompanying depositions and document with this report in triplicate as requested by their instructions, unless a report of their opinion on the result of the evidence shall be specially requested.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed)

Charles Dewey Day

Chairman

(Signed)

A. Polette

Commissioner

(Signed)

James Robert Gowan

Commissioner

Royal Commission Rooms, Ottawa

October 17, 1873.

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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR GENERAL AND THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT

The following documents were presented to the House of Commons by command of His Excellency the Governor General:—

LORD DUFFERIN, the Governor General, transmits for the information of the Senate and the House of Commons the accompanying papers relative to the prorogation of Parliament on the 13th August last:—

“Government House,”

Ottawa, 23 October 1873

“No. 197, Canada, August 15, 1873”

“My Lord, I have the honour to state, to your Lordship’s information, that at half past three on the afternoon of Wednesday, 13th instant, I prorogued Parliament.

As this event is likely to be regarded with dissatisfaction by one of the great political parties in this country, and has been already animadverted upon in no measured terms by a portion of the Canadian press. I propose to give your Lordship a full account of the circumstances under which it has taken place.

Although I have already acquainted your Lordship from time to time with everything which has occurred in connection with the grant of the Pacific Railway charter, as well as with the proceedings in and out of Parliament, to which it has given rise, it may be well to preface my intended statement by a brief recapitulation of its previous history.

The scheme of a Canadian line of railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific first acquired a practical character in 1871, when its construction within ten years from that date became one of the conditions on which British Columbia covenanted to enter into the Confederation.

The first move towards the realization of the project seems to have been initiated not by a Canadian, but by an Englishman of the name of Waddington, who, after broaching his proposals in Toronto and elsewhere, apparently without success, eventually succeeded in obtaining the co-operation of a number of capitalists in Chicago and New York, most of whom, though not all, were interested in the Northern Pacific Railway, a United States line, connecting at London with the Continental system, which it is intended to carry across the northernmost States of the Union to a port on the Pacific, and which will consequently run parallel through at a lower latitude and over a wider area, with the proposed Canadian line.

A deputation from these gentlemen seems to have visited Ottawa in the autumn of 1871, and to have had an interview with some members of the Canadian Government, by whom they were informed that the time for entering into negotiations for the construction of the railway had not arrived. For several months no other proposition was received by the Government, but it is stated by Hon. Sir Francis Hincks in a letter, of which I append a copy, that, being in Montreal in the month of July of the same year, he met Sir Hugh Allan, and, giving him the names of some of the Americans who had made these advances, expressed his regret that a work of such importance should fall into the hands of foreigners. Acting upon this suggestion, Sir Hugh Allan turned his attention to the matter, and eventually, in conjunction with these Americans and some Quebec friends of his own, formed a Company for the work. But as the session of 1872 approached, it became evident that the admission of parties connected with the American Pacific to a share in the contract for the Canada Pacific was become unpopular, and Parliament appearing to share this feeling, it was announced by the Government to Sir Hugh Allan that no proposals emanating from an American Company would be entertained.