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RAILWAYS.

The manner in which railways are proposed, constructed and worked in British North America is very peculiar. Although railways can be built in these colonies at an average cost of £10,000 per mile, one third the cost of such undertakings in Europe, there is more agitation over a short line of railway in these colonies, than has ever been provoked by the tens of thousands of miles already constructed in Europe and the United States. The reason of this is obvious; the Governments alone can construct our railways, and that these alone have this power, is an evil inseparable from our thin population and lack of capital. When we consider the utter failure of such railways as were propounded and commenced in Canada without any assistance from the Government, and the comparative failure of other later and more matured schemes, largely assisted by the Government, but originated by private Companies, the conviction is forced upon us that on the Government alone devolves the power of creating railways in these sparsely populated Provinces. We hold however, that such being the case, railways should be constructed with a view to the future benefit of the whole Province, and not of any particular part, county, district, or town. If our railway system is one of our greatest political issues, as it undoubtedly is, it should be treated by our leaders in a statesmanlike manner. Unfortunately for Nova Scotia, railways have hitherto been made tramways to political popularity. Should one Government propose a railroad the opposition opposes it as a swindle and a vile party job. The same opposition on coming into power finds that some railway scheme is necessary for its continuance in office. It adopts probably with a few modifications, the same plan as its predecessor, and on retirement in its turn from office, again pronounces the whole scheme extravagant and dangerous to the financial prosperity of the Province. Then come recrimination, abuse, and all those vile nameless things so well known to the readers of our parliamentary debates. Hence the turmoil which attends the proposal of a railroad. Be it to Pugwash, be it to Annapolis, be it to Pictou, there will always be an opposition ready to cry down any scheme favored by the Government—not so much perhaps because the railway itself is undesirable, as because the members of the opposition abhor the proposer of the road. The cause of the opposition directing itself more at the men, than the measures which they propose is very easily discernable. The opposition knows well enough that the measures will end in smoke, but a public man's broken word is worth a great deal of political capital to his opponents. Although at the next Session our Legislature will have to consider higher questions than our local railway squabbles, it will doubtless afford to the laughing portion of the community a fair mean amount of quiet fun on railway matters. First and foremost will figure the Annapolis promise, and besides this we shall have many pleasant bickerings about the round about route selected for the Pictou railway. With the latter we have nothing at present to do. Let us think of Annapolis and its apple orchards. The promise which was made to

that city must be redeemed. This promise was made when Federation being in view, Annapolis might justly, *without a definite promise* begin to despair of her railway. This promise was made at a moment when the Government knew that if its larger scheme were successful, the smaller of necessity must fall to the ground. That such must be the case the Government knew right well when its leaders were preaching Union and the Inter-colonial railway in Halifax and a subordinate member working for electioneering purposes upon the simple inhabitants of Annapolis Royal. The promise however, was made and the Government must either redeem its pledge, or eat the words of its Solicitor General. Of the former contingency we have no fear. Should Nova Scotia resolve upon Union of any kind, the great railway must be built and Annapolis will have to wait some years for its promised boon. The proposed Confederate Government will not build it, and such works we are told will be in the hands of the Confederated authorities. The fair valley will doubtless willingly postpone for a short time its own pleasures, for the interests of the common weal. The other alternative remains. The unpleasant, though by no means novel sight of public men eating their own words, eating indeed very humble pie, will then be presented us. As such gastronomic feats are not new to the Halifax public it is highly improbable that the Province Building will be crowded on the occasion. There is one however who should be present at the performance. A member for Annapolis should, by that time be elected, that he may give an account of the operation to his disappointed constituents. We pass now to a far more important matter than the Annapolis railway. Our Union, all agree, cannot be achieved without an Inter-colonial Railway. In fact as our contemporary the *Citizen* remarks, we should like to see the railway first and let the Union follow if it please. However this may be, the recent interchanges of hospitality will have produced but mean results indeed, if the importance—nay, the immediate necessity—of this great work is still unfelt throughout the whole of British North America. It is almost certain then, that some definite plan for carrying out this railway will be concocted before the spring. The present Government will probably regulate the contracts, the survey, and the general mode of constructing such sections of the line as lie within this Province. They may do it well, they may do it badly. One thing however, if we are to judge by their past conduct, appears certain, viz: that, if it comes in their way, political capital will be made out of the transaction. Such is the nature of our public men that we cannot expect it to be otherwise. We ask our readers—is it to be supposed that a Government which (with the certainty of detection before their eyes) wilfully pledged themselves to a scheme, whose carrying out they saw only in the dimmest future, for the sake of one vote; will suddenly become honest when any amount of political power is to be obtained, and that moreover without any fear of detection. The Annapolis railway scheme was before the public. The public judged wisely that the whole thing was a hoax and two thirds of the Province would have protested