

propounded, and among the reasons advanced for its adoption, none certainly had equal force with that which declared an Inter-colonial Railroad would be built, without which stipulation Confederation could not have been accomplished. Now that the Union has been consummated, one of the most important questions the present Government and Parliament of Canada will have to settle, is the route of this railway. In the decision of this question is involved the most important consequences,—not only the prosperity of the Dominion, but even its future safety. A number of conflicting sectional interests are at work, each striving to secure to itself the greatest advantage, without much regard to the general welfare. There can be no doubt that these conflicting claims should give way to the general good, that the route which offers the greatest benefit to the whole Dominion, and secures the greatest good to the greatest possible number of its inhabitants, is the one that should be adopted.

Up to the time of the publication of Mr. Fleming's Report, little was known of the several routes projected and supported by these rival interests.

That surveyed in 1848 by Major Robinson, of the Royal Engineers, was the only one respecting which anything like reliable data had been obtained. This survey was made in the most thorough and scientific manner, with the assistance of a staff of experienced practical engineers. It occupied nearly three years, and cost about £30,000 Sterling. Accurate working plans of every section were made, and no means were overlooked to have the results perfectly reliable. Mr. Fleming's Report, published in 1865, was the result of a very hurried examination which occupied but a few months; many portions of the various routes he describes were never explored, but merely guessed at from the general nature of the country, and though his labors were confessedly not of the character of a thorough survey, they threw some light on a number of routes both Southern and Central, but the result of his labour proves that he has failed to find a route which presents anything like the advantages that will be secured by a modification of the line carefully and accurately surveyed by Major Robinson.