

Petition of Legislative Assembly of British Columbia to the Queen, respecting Canadian Pacific Railway, March 25, 1881.

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN :

WE, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, in the Fourth Session of the Third Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty for the purpose of representing—

1. That the Province was mainly induced to enter into the Dominion Confederation in 1871, by the offer and agreement on the part of the Dominion, as appears by the Treaty of Union of that year, to construct and complete a Railway on or before July, 1881, through British Territory, connecting British Columbia with the Eastern Provinces.

2. That, on the 31st day of July, 1874, the Government of this Province presented a humble Petition to Your Majesty respecting the non-fulfilment by the Dominion of its Railway obligations towards British Columbia, as are contained in the Treaty of Union between the Dominion and British Columbia, assented to by Your Majesty in the year 1871.

3. That negotiations thereupon ensued, which resulted in Your Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies (the Earl of Carnarvon) signifying his decision on the question in dispute, which decision, it is important to observe, was assented to by the Dominion Government.

4. That the following, amongst other conditions, form part of this decision:—

(a.) "That the Railway from Esquimalt to Nanaimo shall be commenced as soon as possible and completed with all practicable dispatch.

(b.) "That \$2,000,000 a year, and not \$1,500,000, shall be the minimum expenditure on railway works within the Province from the date at which the surveys are sufficiently completed to enable that amount to be expended on construction. In naming this amount I understand that, it being alike the interest and the wish of the Dominion Government to urge on with all speed the completion of the works now to be undertaken, the annual expenditure will be as much in excess of the minimum of \$2,000,000 as in any year may be found practicable.

(c.) "Lastly, that on or before the 31st December, 1890, the Railway shall be completed and open for traffic from the Pacific seaboard to a point on the western end of Lake Superior, at which it will fall into connection with the existing lines of railway through a portion of the United States, and also with the navigation on Canadian waters. To proceed at present with the remainder of the railway extending, by the country northward of Lake Superior, to the existing Canadian lines, ought not, in my opinion, to be required, and the time for undertaking that work must be determined by the development of settlement and the changing circumstances of the country. The day is, however, I hope, not very distant when a continuous line of Railway through Canadian territory will be practicable, and I therefore look upon this portion of the scheme as postponed rather than abandoned."

5. That owing to the total disregard by the Dominion of these and other conditions contained in the Settlement so effected, the Legislative Assembly, early in the Session of 1876, unanimously passed an humble Address to Your Majesty, praying that Your Majesty would be graciously pleased to cause the Dominion Government to carry out the agreement above referred to.

6. That, in reply to the said Address, Your Majesty's said Secretary of State was pleased to advise the Province to submit to railway construction being deferred until the spring of 1878, in order to enable the Dominion Government, during the year 1877, to solve some doubtful points connected with the railway route; and that the delay mentioned was entered in deference to His Lordship's wishes, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the Province.

7. That the Dominion Government having, up to the month of August, 1878, failed to commence Railway construction in the Province, the Legislative Assembly, on the 30th of August of the same year, further humbly addressed Your Majesty on the subject.