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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CONTINUOUS

LINE OF RAILWAY FROM CANADA TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN

ON BRITISH TERRITORY,

BY SANDFORD FLEMING, ESQ., C. E.,

Engineer to the Northern Railway of Canada.

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TO HENRY YOULE HIND, ESQ., Professor, &c., &c.

DEAR SIR,—According to your request, I have much pleasure in submitting the following observations on the construction of a highway, within British territory, from Canada to British Columbia.

Opening a communication for commerce between the western and eastern shores of North America, through the great basins of the St. Lawrence, the Saskatchewan, and the Columbia, has for nearly two centuries been a dream of the enthusiast. So far back as 1679 Robert Cavalier de la Sale formed to himself the magnificent scheme of opening a way to China and Japan through the Lake regions of Canada; and curious enough, the rapids and village of Lachine, near Montreal, took their names, either in honor or in derision of La Sale's project, when he set out on his grand enterprise. About fifty years later Charles Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor of New France, projected an attempt to communicate with the Pacific, and in pursuance of which Pierre Gauthier de Varennes set out in 1731 and was the first to reach the Rocky Mountains.

Of late years the project has been brought prominently before the public in England and in Canada by many writers, amongst others,