

the neigh of the demon horse, which has destroyed the cow of the widow Murphy and is on the track of the parliamentary jersey of the widow Stephen. Such is the interpretation which I place on the speech of the hon. gentleman. I do not believe that he is a seer or has the gift of second sight. I am more disposed to adopt the generous, enterprising policy of the hon. member for Northumberland than the cool and cautious one of the hon. gentleman. I am disposed to give reasonable assistance to the widow and to cast in my lot with the orphan. During the month of November last, I went over a portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and I have been requested by some of my friends to give my impressions of it, and of what has been termed our magnificent heritage in the great North-West. I may state my visit was of a very brief and hurried character, and that consequently I could only see a small portion of the country and study to some slight extent its general features and outlines. You will recollect that during last Session there was much discussion concerning the North-West generally, and the railway particularly. Among others, the hon. member for Lisgar delivered a speech characterised by great force and power and eloquence, in which he pointed out the marvellous resources of that marvellous land. It was thought by many that his picture was painted in too gorgeous and glowing colors, its hues more resembling those of a California sunset than the cool gray tints of our northern skies. I remember telling that hon. gentleman that if, instead of devoting his fine talents to speculative purposes, he had turned his attention to imaginative literature, Canada would have boasted a great writer, superior, in many respects, to Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray and the great masters. But I must make an amend to the hon. gentleman. I must confess, from what I saw in my brief visit to the North-West, that he was right and I was wrong. Although somewhat skeptical, I was bound, as a patriotic Canadian, to believe that we had in that country a veritable garden of Eden. Yet I must confess that I started on a journey with much misgiving, feeling that, like Blanche Amory, in Thackeray's "Pendennis," I should be awfully disillusioned. As you are well aware, it was considered by many that, in taking possession of the northern portion of this continent, the Canadian Government assumed a terrible responsibility, and incurred such gigantic obligations, that if the fruition did not realise the anticipation, the result must be of the most disastrous character. It was thought we had taken a leap in the dark and that it was doubtful whether we would land on safe and solid ground or be plunged in some Serbonian bog, some bottomless quagmire, which would swallow up the prosperity, the credit, and the future of the inhabitants of the older Provinces. I must confess that I was somewhat of a pessimist, and while I was prepared to face the inevitable, yet I could not but watch the solution of this problem with much anxiety. Well, time passed, and the destinies of the Dominion were being moulded into the shape which they now assume. It was agreed on all hands that a railroad from ocean to ocean was absolutely necessary, in order to link the Provinces together. When, at last, this policy assumed definite shape, and the arrangements with the Canadian Pacific Railway were finally concluded, a change came over the spirit of our dreams. We had entered upon a new phase of our national existence, and it was necessary that we should assume the garb as well as the proportions of manhood. You will remember the old fable, which tells us of what occurred in a pleasant meadow, when a frog, animated by a laudable ambition, wished to rival the proportions of an ox which was grazing near it. Well, we commenced the process of inflation, and then, as a natural consequence, came the great boom, that marvellous sirocco of speculation which swept over the land and produced such singular results. Our

Castilian castles assumed the most magnificent proportions. We had entered into the pleasant land of Beulah, a land of corn and oil, of milk and honey. We had discovered the El Dorado, and, in all its pomp and pride, the New Jerusalem dawned upon our vision. It was the syndicatorial heaven; it was the land of Paradox. The colder the climate the warmer one became; the frost was to the North-West what the irrigation of the Nile was to Egypt; by a wise dispensation the Chinook winds played on land, the roll of the gulf stream on the ocean, and gave a balmy and spring-like atmosphere to the bleak regions of the north. It was a land of gold and silver and precious stones. The cattle upon a thousand hills are ours. Millions upon millions of the richest prairie, pasture and wheat lands of the world had come into our possession. The wildest dreams of the great Irish satirist had been more than realised. It was an agricultural Elysium. If you tickled the land with the hoe or the plow it laughed with a harvest. The cool mountain streams on their way to the ocean ran over shining pebbles of gold and silver, and rubies and other precious stones; and we have the authority of one of the most practical members of this House, who assured the people of England only last fall, that everywhere through the great North-West, wealth could be had for the picking up. As Dr. Johnson said of Thrane's brewery, it was the potentiality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. The excitement of that period of national insanity produced hallucinations not unlike the delusions of the opium eater. The lessons of the past and the perplexities of the present were forgotten, and we launched our bark boldly on the sea of speculation. It became our business to trade in the difficult and dangerous wares of the future. Well, we had entered into a very pleasant paradise; but the trail of the speculator was over it all. The dream was a very gay and gorgeous one, but alas for the hour of awakening! The banquet had been very gay and brilliant, but when the flowers faded and the lights were extinguished and the chill and gray morning dawned, our sensations were not of so pleasant a character. We had to learn the stern lesson that the doctrine of compensation obtains in public as well as in private life, that action is followed by reaction, stimulation by depression. It is the ancient doctrine of Nemesis, which keeps watch in the universe, and lets no violation of law, either physical or moral, go unpunished. We had the feast and we must have the famine. We had gone up like a rocket and we must come down like a stick. As the country was unduly exalted so it was unduly depressed. The optimists had their innings and the period of the pessimists was to set in. Then came the saturnalia of the croakers and the cowards and the descendants of doubting Thomas. All the creeping, the crawling and crouching things which fatten on the dead forms of nobler creatures flocked to their unholy feast. It was the old, old story over again, they said; history was repeating itself. It was the Darien scheme once more which lured the sober Scots to their ruin; it was the South Sea Bubble in another time and clime; it was the Mississippi Madness, with which Law deluded the Frenchmen of the regency to their destruction. The land, they said, was not an agricultural Elysium but an abomination of desolation; it is well called the "Great Lone Land," for it was never intended for human habitation; it had been intended, they said, for the *feræ naturæ*, the fur-bearing animals; it was a happy hunting ground where the Nimrods of the north and the nightly hunters of muskrats might indulge in the pleasures and secure the profits of the chase in security; it was a veritable Siberia, an Alsatia, a Cave of Adullam, into which all who were in debt and difficulty, all the outlaws from human justice and humanity might, in their exile, find congenial companionship; it was a land of blizzards, cyclones, grasshoppers and syndicators. What the locusts spared, that the syndicate devoured. The cold was