

of a Company at all. A Company would have hardly taken the Line without the power to make the branches, or without protection against ruinous invasions of its commercial domain : it would hardly have consented to be placed in a worse position than that in which the Government itself would have been, had it proceeded with the undertaking on its own account. The only alternative, as far as we can see, would have been to form a Consolidated Company, so to speak, of contractors, simply for the construction of the whole road, and to lease the road when finished : but to this plan, too, there would, no doubt, have been grave objections. The North-West, as it fills will grow strong, conscious of its strength and alive to its own interests. It will compel the Company to satisfy its reasonable demands. If fetters are imposed on its growing frame, it will burst them with the vigour of a young Samson and with the freedom from moral punctiliousness characteristic of the West.

The Canadian negotiators are undeniably able, and thoroughly masters of the subject ; nor have we the slightest reason to suppose that they have not done their very best for the country. Their own position was staked on the result. It is suggested that they feared to fail in their mission ; but this fear must have been more than balanced by that of laying before the nation an agreement which it would condemn. We are inclined, therefore, to believe that this is the cheapest rate at which the country can, as people think fit to put it, accomplish a great national achievement, or get out of a desperate scrape. In private, we take comfort from the reflection that the subsidy is apportioned to the different sections of the road, while agreements, by consent of the parties, may at any time be revised.

One strong point the Opposition had, if they had only put themselves in the proper attitude. The nation had a right to be taken into council on a question which the Minister of Railways, in the opening of his speech, truly described as the most important that had ever engaged the attention of that Parliament. "The people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them," was the frank saying of an English Tory prelate,