

from at once obtaining the Government guarantee, was the uncertainty which both the right honourable gentlemen felt—which, indeed, they strongly expressed—as to the present intentions and feelings of the Colonial Governments.

Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Mr. Disraeli pointed out that the assistance promised by the three provinces was guaranteed by the Colonial Legislatures in 1849; that the negotiations then entered into had not been carried out; and that the Acts then passed, though not formally expunged from the statute-books, might not improbably be regarded as having fallen into disuse. It was true that since 1849 all three of the provinces had undertaken, and had carried to a forward state, great public works; and that during the last year, though their commercial institutions had nobly withstood the shock, they had experienced a crisis perhaps unexampled in the monetary history of the Western hemisphere.

Under these circumstances, the Directors determined that one of their number should visit British North America, and ascertain, from personal observation, how far the colonies would be disposed to ratify and renew the engagements made in 1849.

In consequence of this arrangement, I sailed for America in the early part of last October. During the last three months and a half I have devoted considerable care and attention to the subject. The result may be arranged under four heads:—

1. How far the Halifax and Quebec Railway is a matter of imperial concern; and if it be, in what manner the Government can most advantageously give it their assistance.

2. Whether Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia would co-operate with the mother country; and if so, to what extent and in what manner.

3. The probable cost of the construction of the road, the character of the country through which it must pass, and the best route for it to follow.

4. What trade already exists there, and what trade the line would be likely to create.

- I. The first and most important point to be considered is, upon what grounds the Company can demand the sanction and assistance of the Imperial Government.

If the reader will take a map of North America, and, from a point about the centre of James's Bay, will draw two semicircles, one beyond the other, towards the south—one with a radius of about 900, the other with a radius of from 1,200 to 1,300 miles—he will observe that the inner semicircle will follow the general direction of a line of hills that are usually