

If the original scheme of 1871 offered speculators any real advantages—which from our present knowledge of the country, appears doubtful—the proposition of to-day, while trebling the apparent inducements to capitalists, so far as the lands are concerned, will be productive of the most disastrous effects throughout the North-West.

Of course, but for the harassing arrangement of 1871 with the Pacific Province, there would be no necessity or excuse whatever for such measures as are apparently in contemplation, because the Dominion Government, were it at liberty to carry on the work in a common-sense manner, is perfectly able to build the prairie sections of the Pacific Railway as fast as necessary, without overburdening the tax-payers of the older provinces, while the construction of the British Columbian portion of the road could be deferred; but politics, and the Pacific Province being paramount over all other considerations, the entire North-West may shortly be sacrificed on that account, and find itself bound hand and foot under the domination of a gigantic and soulless monopoly, unless the people awaken to a sense of the impending danger.

Let us enquire for a moment into the consequences of transferring the only available choice lands of the North-West from the custody of the Government to that of a great corporation or body of capitalists. It is universally admitted that all land monopolies are a curse, and utterly subversive of a fair and liberal policy. To-day in Manitoba, as the result of an atrocious system on a small scale, what between the Hudson Bay Company and some large private proprietors, it is impossible to purchase lands either at or near Winnipeg, or along the line of the Pacific Railway, excepting at ridiculously high figures. To such a degree has the abominable system been carried, that recently arrived intending settlers have turned back in disgust to take up the equally good, but cheaper lands of Dakota and Minnesota.

What then will be the state of things when the whole prairie belt is controlled by a private corporation? The inevitable result will be to unfairly enhance the price of all lands within the limits of the railway grant, and to impede or totally prevent settlement of the soil by the poorer classes of colonists to whom we must look in a great measure for agricultural development. In the case of the Central Pacific Railway, Congress granted to the Company all the alternate sections on each side of the road, for twenty miles back, or an area of 12,800 acres for each mile built. The immediate result was to increase the price of the