

worst public scandal in the country's history, bringing the downfall of a great administration and casting a deep shadow on the public record of one of our ablest statesmen. Of the latest transcontinental railway, the Canadian Northern, it is sufficient to say that the parliamentary lobbying by which the public resources were jockeyed from the nation by the promoters of the road has not been surpassed in shamelessness in the railway annals of any country.

Let us now consider the Intercolonial Railway. This, though the chief, is not the only railway of Canada under public ownership. There are two other publicly owned lines in Canada, each operated on different plans and forming a political experiment of great interest to the rest of the world.

The first noteworthy feature of the Intercolonial Railway was that it was created for a public and national service and not to make money out of its operation. It was designed as a bond of political, social, and economic union for the British-American provinces as then existing and yet to be brought into being, and when the movement for the federal union was under discussion we find in the great confederation speeches scarcely a reference to the question of profit in the railway which was to be the medium of the union. We know that with statesmen whose purpose was great enough and whose vision was wide enough to found a new nation there would have been no Intercolonial and no Dominion of Canada as we know it today if the problem of confederation had been narrowed down to the probabilities of a profit in running the road.

As soon as George Stephenson's inventions assured the success of railways the idea of connecting the British-American provinces began to take shape. It was advocated in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from 1827 onward, and it was not many years before the British government became interested, Henry Fairbairn having in the *United Service Journal* called attention to the value of such a railway for colonizing and commercial purposes and as a means of defense. The last-named aspect seemed more to move the imperial mind, for the preliminary surveys were made in districts far away from the United States border, and it was only because the "Trent affair" threatened war at the very moment when a delegation of the colonial statesmen was in London seeking a subvention for the