

public lands along the line of railway throughout its entire length in British Columbia, not to exceed, however, twenty miles on each side of said line, as might be appropriated for the same purpose by the Dominion Government from public lands in the North West Territories and the Province of Manitoba. In consideration of the land to be so conveyed in aid of the construction of the said railway, the Dominion Government agreed to pay to British Columbia from the date of the Union the sum of \$100,000 per annum, in half-yearly payments, in advance. The Dominion Government also guaranteed the interest for ten years from the date of the completion of the work, at the rate of five per cent. per annum on such sum, not exceeding £100,000 sterling, as might be required for the construction of a first-class graving-dock at Esquimalt. The Indians were taken under the care of the Federal Government. These terms took effect on the 20th of July, 1871, and on the 14th of February the Constitution Act was passed abolishing the Legislative Council and substituting in its stead a Legislative Assembly, to be elected once in four years, and to consist of twenty-five members chosen by twelve electoral districts.

That condition in the terms of confederation which was regarded as the most important and the one, the fulfillment of which alone could bind the new Province to the Dominion, was, of course, the construction of a line of railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. The value of such a railway had before this time suggested itself to the minds of both Imperial and Colonial statesmen, but the magnitude of the project to the majority of men was an absolute demonstration of the impossibility of its accomplishment. There were, however, a few dreamers, as they were termed, who clung tenaciously to the opinion that in order to preserve to England her possessions on the Pacific an interoceanic system of communication would have to be built. When the construction of the road was, by the terms of union, agreed upon, neither the Dominion nor Provincial authorities had any accurate knowledge of the difficulties which would have to be surmounted, but as it lay with the Dominion to accept or reject British Columbia with the railway as a necessary part of the conditions of federation, the Macdonald ministry took the chances of being able, with what aid they could obtain from the Home Government and English capitalists, to carry out the project. Their ultimate success is one of the marvels of the age.