

I had made a similar application, and who, I am bound to say, did appear to appreciate the possible advantages very clearly, also intimated that he did not think that it was at all likely Sir Stafford could have carried the Cabinet with him at that particular juncture. Curiously enough, you will find in one of Trollope's novels, "Phineas Finn," I think, that the last effort of his hero before retiring from office was to propose and carry a bill to grant aid to just such a transcontinental road, and his remarks thereon shed a good deal of light on the way in which such a proposal would have been probably regarded by the average Englishman at that period. It is needless to say that if the British Government could have been induced to assist, even if it had only been to the extent of guaranteeing our loans, it would have greatly lessened our difficulties, as well as reduced the cost, and would have enabled us to have made a very much better bargain with any company which might have undertaken the construction. It is also needless to say that the very first thing any ordinarily prudent men would have done under the circumstances would have been to ascertain what the British Government were willing to do. So far as I know not even the faintest effort was ever made, at any rate till after the whole bargain was concluded. The fact was, and it ought to be much better known than it is, that the business as far as Sir John was concerned was simply a dishonest attempt to strengthen his political position without the smallest regard to the consequences involved. It is some little consolation to know that his action was strongly resented in Ontario, though by no means as much as it deserved, and that it did, in a measure, contribute to his defeat in that Province in 1872. (See Appendix.)