

MR. DE COSMOS TO SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.

"Ottawa, April 13, 1881.

"SIR,—I have the honor to state that on November 6th, 1880, I informed the Secretary of State for Canada that I had been authorized by an Order in Council of the Government of British Columbia to press upon the Dominion Government the importance of carrying out their Agreement to construct the Esquimalt-Nanaimo Section of the Canadian Pacific Railway,—and report the result from time to time to the former Government.

"On November 8th, I received a reply from the Under-Secretary of State acknowledging my letter, and stating that a copy of the Order in Council referred to had been received from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.

"Between the latter date and the 28th February last, I had several interviews with yourself, Sir Charles Tupper, Hon. J. H. Pope, and Mr. D. McIntyre of the Syndicate, respecting the Agreement referred to; but without reaching a final conclusion on the subject. Since then, the question has remained in abeyance.

"To-day I received a letter from the Hon. T. B. Humphreys, Provincial Secretary of British Columbia, in which I was officially informed that I had been appointed Special Agent and Delegate to London to support the Prayer of a Petition of the Legislative Assembly of that Province to the Queen,—a Copy of which is herewith enclosed.

"This Action of the Government and Legislative Assembly,—whilst it raises in the Petition new questions, and includes the former one, for the consideration of the Dominion and Imperial Governments,—has not, as I understand it, superseded my authority to press upon the Dominion Government the importance of carrying out their Agreement to construct the Esquimalt-Nanaimo Section of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I am, however, authorized to proceed to London to support the Prayer of the Petition; and, unless it is your desire to consider here, without undue delay, the questions raised in it, with a view to their final and satisfactory settlement, it will be necessary for me to complete my preparations to proceed to London at an early day. In case you should decide to consider, here, the Prayer of the Petition, of course, it will be understood as being done without prejudice to the Petitioners.

"I may remark that I have always held in the past, and still hold, that as a matter of sound Public Policy, any important matter in dispute between a Province of Canada and the Dominion Government, ought to be exhaustively considered by the representatives of the respective Governments at Ottawa, before presenting an appeal for the consideration and decision of Her Majesty's Imperial Government. Such was my advice, when Mr. Walkem was *en route* to England in 1874 with a Petition to the Queen; and such also were my views as expressed and reported in the *Hansard Debates* of the Session of 1876.

"In submitting this matter for your consideration, I trust that you may be pleased to favor me with a reply, at an early day.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

A. DE COSMOS.

"To the Right Honorable

"Sir John A. Macdonald,

"Premier and Minister of Interior, Ottawa."

SIR S. L. TILLEY TO MR. DE COSMOS.

"Ottawa, 16th May, 1881.

"SIR—Sir John Macdonald has desired that your letter to him of the 13th of April, on the subject of the construction of a railway between Esquimalt and Nanaimo, should be submitted to the Committee of the Privy Council; and I have to-day taken the opportunity of complying with his request.

"You are aware that every effort is now being put forward by the Government to construct the Pacific Railway from this part of Canada to the Seaboard of British Columbia; that the main line in that province will cost a very large sum of money; and that some of its most expensive sections are already under contract.

"With this evidence of the good faith, with which the Government is dealing with the question before them, we trust that the people of British Columbia will be satisfied; and that it will be recognized that the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway should be left over, for the present, as a work which is not essential to the connection of the Seaboard of British Columbia with the Canadian System of Railways.

"2. In the meantime, the Government of the Dominion will avail themselves of every opportunity of pressing the question of the construction of this Railway, as a