

position of Canada, of which we talk proudly as stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and considering that Labrador, which most people suppose to be a part of Canada, really belongs to Newfoundland, and remembering how much we have lost by unfortunate arbitrations with our American neighbours, that a time like this, when the mother country and France are on the best possible terms, is the most favourable time for the settlement of that vexed question. It is a matter of regret that the government have not only not referred to this subject in the speech from the Throne, but, so far as we know, have done nothing to bring about what every one would admit to be a most desirable consummation—the rounding off of this confederation by bringing into it the sentinel standing at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. We all hope that the government will show readiness to take up this matter, and do all they can thus to complete our Dominion, which can never fulfil the purpose designed for it until it includes within its territories what is now known as Labrador and Newfoundland.

Then, no reference is made in the speech from the Throne to the subject of granting autonomy to the Northwest Territories. Surely a reform government, after six or seven years in existence, should have found something to reform. Surely hon. gentlemen opposite should be ashamed to come down year after year, and have to admit that they can find nothing to reform, and thereby admit the wisdom and statesmanship of their predecessors. Those who have been to the Northwest and who have heard the complaints of the people out there, as I have done, must feel that they are justified in considering it a hardship that they should be treated as children and as wards of the government, while those in other provinces are treated as adults and allowed to manage their own affairs. And I trust, Mr. Speaker, that among the subjects which have not been referred to in the address, but which we are promised will be brought up later, will be a Bill to grant autonomy to the Northwest Territories.

Of course, we find in the speech from the Throne a reference to the Grand Trunk Pacific, but it would be out of place to occupy now any time discussing that measure, which in a few days will be submitted to the House. I would ask permission, however, to draw attention to one or two general principles, which may fitly be referred to here. Hon. members, Sir, will remember that last session, when the contract between the government and the Grand Trunk Pacific was before the House, it was submitted to us as a holy thing on which no one should dare lay a hand. We were told that we had no power to change that contract in any respect. The people of Canada were as powerless as were the people of Newfoundland or of the United States to vary that solemn agreement come to between

the Crown and the Grand Trunk Pacific. But although the Canadian people were powerless, no matter what might be the objections urged, yet, when that contract was laid before the Grand Trunk Railway shareholders, they had every power to change it, and they exercised that power just as freely as the original parties to the agreement could have done. I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Canada will feel that an injustice was done them when their representatives were deprived of the right and power which the shareholders of the Grand Trunk Railway were allowed to exercise so freely. We have not yet a full account of what took place at the meeting of the Grand Trunk shareholders, but I have in my hand a number of the Toronto 'Globe,' which contains a telegraphic report of the proceedings, and according to that report, it is perfectly clear that the shareholders of the Grand Trunk Railway were almost unanimously opposed to a ratification of the agreement made with this government. I find that Sir Rivers-Wilson was unable to persuade them to confirm that agreement, and it was only when Mr. Hays pointed out, not that the agreement was what they wanted—because he had not a word to say in its favour in that respect—but that the exigencies of the railway were such that, unless the shareholders accepted what was offered, some other rival organization would come in and accept what they rejected, and that such an event would be very detrimental to the interests of the Grand Trunk Railway—it was only when Mr. Hays pointed this out, that the shareholders consented to ratify the contract submitted to them. But when that contract comes back to this House, and when it is found that not one concession is made in the interests of Canada, but that every change made is in the interests of the Grand Trunk, and when it is found that the Grand Trunk Company itself is given what it did not ask, and would rather be freed from the onerous obligations of the contract, we may call on hon. gentlemen opposite to lay aside party prejudices for the time and see whether a better bargain cannot be devised and parties be induced to undertake to build the road for commercial reasons.

The main reason given for introducing the Bill last session was that it would bring about a reduction in the rates of freight. It was intended to help our friends in the west to get their goods to market more cheaply and expeditiously. But, Mr. Speaker, it must be evident that the only effect of building such a road as the one submitted will be to burden our people with heavy taxation, a part of which must be borne by the people in the west, by loading up that road with a tremendous amount of obligation, including debentures and stock both common and preferred, on all of which interest and dividends will have to be