

pointing to Alaska:—"We are to make this part of the United States; and now, don't you think, my dear sir, that it would be for the interest of all, if that which intervenes should come in too?"

He seemed disappointed at my answer; for already the resources of our great North-West were beginning to be known to the statesmen at Washington; and when, during the same visit, I was asked to give some facts regarding it before the standing Committee on Railways, then discussing the charter asked for the Northern Pacific line, I found a full appreciation of the possible benefits to accrue from a trade from here to different parts of the projected line.

Seward was no friend to England or to Canada; but he was truthful enough to declare his error in the forecast he had made of our political future from the Capitol steps at St. Paul in 1860, in a memorable speech he afterwards made. He had indeed obtained Alaska by purchase, but he had had time to reflect on the bitter lessons of the war for the Union of North and South, the failure of which meant the disruption of East and West as well; and he frankly acknowledged his early prophetic error in these words:

"Hitherto, in common with most of my countrymen," he said, "I have thought Canada a mere strip, lying north of the United States, easily detachable from the parent state, but incapable of sustaining itself, and therefore ultimately, nay, right soon, to be taken by the Federal Union, without materially changing or affecting its own condition or development. I have dropped the opinion as a national conceit. I see in British North America, stretching as it does across the continent, from the shores of Labrador and Newfoundland to the Pacific, and occupying a considerable belt of the temperate zone, traversed equally with the United States by the Lakes, and enjoying the magnificent shores of the St. Lawrence, with its thousands of islands in the river and gulf, a region grand enough for the seat of an Empire, in its wheat fields in the west, its broad ranges of chase at the north, its inexhaustible lumber lands, the most extensive now remaining on the globe: