

by ours; but of the objections which strike us at first sight some are found on a closer inspection to disappear. The exemptions of the company's lands from taxation does not follow them into the hands of purchasers, so that they are, in that respect, left on the same footing with those retained by the Government. Great expense will be incurred in selling them, and in bringing emigrants to settle on them, so that it would be hard if, at the same time, they were to be eaten up by taxes. The exemption of the Provincial line and buildings from taxation is not a very important item, and may be a necessary safeguard against extortion. The exemption of the materials from Customs duties has an invidious appearance, and knocks a hole in the fiscal policy of the Government: it might have been better to commute it into a sum of money, roughly calculated, and to have lumped it with the subsidy: but its value has been enormously overstated, one Opposition writer putting it at ten millions. The doubt as to the standard of construction has been cleared up, nor can there be any real misgiving as to the intention of the Company to build well the line which it is itself to own and run. After all, there are parts of the Agreement which will depend for their interpretation on events. The value of the land subsidy, for example, is uncertain: it can be settled only by the rate of immigration, and this, again, will be determined by occurrences in Europe, which it is impossible at present to foresee. Nor is the value even of money fixed: its tendency at present is to decline. Forecast fails, and we have had to indemnify the Company against the chances of a doubtful future.

The worst feature of the arrangement, as it appears to us, is the establishment in the North-West of a great Railway and Land Grant power, if not with a monopoly, certainly with a control, practically unchecked by competition, of the main lines of communication and the channels of trade for twenty years to come. It is difficult, however, to see how this could have been avoided, if the enterprise was to be placed in the hands