

proposed amalgamation, was any doubt expressed as to the possibility of fulfilling this time obligation. Had such a doubt existed, it is fair to infer that the Dominion Government would have requested the assistance of the Province to remove it. No such request was, however, made.

With respect to the statement before your Lordship that the chartered Company considered an extension of four years necessary to place the financial success of the enterprise beyond doubt, the Provincial Government are without any information save what is contained in, or may be inferred from, the last paragraph of section 8 of the Charter granted to the Company, which reads as follows:—"The Company "shall complete the whole railway within ten years from the said 20th of July, 1871, unless the last-mentioned period shall be enlarged by Act of Parliament, in which case the Company shall complete the whole railway within such extended period." Admitting, for the sake of argument, however, that such extension of four years was deemed necessary, the completion of the line would not have been deferred beyond 1885. The extract already quoted from the Engineer's Report, dated, as it is, about twelve months after the date of the Charter, and made after a further knowledge of the country had been acquired, tends strongly to confirm the views of the respective Companies that the completion of the railway was practicable 1881 or at the furthest in 1885.

The value of the above facts and correspondence is material as showing, in the first place, that it was considered all important that a definite period should be assigned for the execution of a work upon which Confederation hinges; and, in the next place, that 1881, or at most 1885, was a reasonable definition of that period.

The Province, after all her disappointments, above all things desires that the "prompt commencement, continuous prosecution," and early completion of the railway shall be definitely assured or, in the language of the letter, "be guaranteed." The Provincial Government, therefore, strongly, but respectfully, resist the contention of the Dominion Government that the commencement, prosecution, and completion of the line shall be left open to a doubtful and indefinite period.

The further opening statement in the letter that the Dominion Government are willing "to enter into additional obligations of a definite character for the benefit of the Province" may be said to have been disposed of, as the nature and character of these "obligations" have, in the analysis made of the offers, been already examined. I shall, therefore, pass on to what I have termed the admissions in the letter. The most important of these is an admission which may be inferred from the offer made by the Dominion Government to "commence railway construction immediately from Esquimalt to Nanaimo." Here it is admitted that the Dominion Government were in a position, at least in May last (the date of the letter), if not before, to have begun the railway in the Province. There is, and has been, therefore, no excuse for delay in pushing forward the work.

Of scarcely less importance is a second admission, which reads as follows: "to a country like British Columbia it is conceded, however, to be an important point that not only the prompt and vigorous commencement, but also the continuous prosecution of the work of construction within the limits of the Province should be guaranteed."

To these two admissions may be added a third and last: the Dominion Government, while conceding that railway construction should be commenced at the seaboard of the Province, consider it most important that every effort should be made by them to push forward the construction of the railway on the mainland, in order that the legitimate advantages of expenditure should as far as possible fall into the hands of the farmers and producers of the interior.

This is an object which the Provincial Government have much at heart, and strongly desire to see realized.

With the clear and just sense which the Dominion Government thus appear to have of what is due to the Province; with their full appreciation, on the one hand, of the wants of the interior, and, on the other, of the requirements of the Island, it might have been expected that they would, as "a Government responsible for the progress of both shores of the Continent," at least have given some more definite as well as some practical meaning to their expressions of solicitude for the welfare of the people of the Province.

I have thus dwelt upon the letter at considerable length, as your Lordship's attention has been specially directed to it in connection with the present case. I