

son flows into the turbid Fraser, and the swollen torrent, deep, narrow, swirling, eddying, resistless, cuts its way through the granite of the Cascades to the sea. In this mountainous region, again, the farmer is no longer dependent on irrigation, and wherever there is soil anything can be raised. The Lower Fraser or New Westminster district is not only the most valuable in British Columbia, agriculturally, but the river is full of salmon and sturgeon, the country abounds with game, and the timber along the coast would furnish masts for all the admirals in the world.

But what will a railway get to do in this great sea of mountains? For along those five hundred miles of road on the mainland, constructed at so enormous a cost, the population, not counting Indians and Chinamen, is less than ten thousand. The British Columbians claim that a portion of the Asiatic trade will come their way, especially as the company that is building the road has announced its intention of putting on steamers to connect the Pacific terminus with the ports of Japan and China; and they also point to their fish, their mines of silver and gold, and their forests, as the complement of the prairies of the North-west. All their hopes and dreams cluster around the railway, and those whom it does not enrich will feel that they have a right to be disappointed. They ignore the fact that the people of the North-west or any other country can afford to pay only a certain price for fish or flesh, galena, gold, or anything else, and that if it cannot be supplied at said price it must be for them all the same as if it were non-existent. They fancy that the difficulty the province has to contend with is not the comparatively small amount of arable land, or the necessity for irrigation in districts otherwise good, or the intervening mountains, or the cañons that prevent river navigation, or the cost of transportation, or the great distances, but simply the presence of some thousands of industrious Chinamen. If Chinamen could only be kept out white people would come in, and wages would go up and keep up. Good prices would then be obtained for everything, and every one could live comfortably.

A most obliging merchant in Kamloops informed me that it would be as well for him to shut shop, because it was impossible to do business any longer. A few Chinamen had come to the place, and beginning as cooks, waiters, barbers, washermen, had at length opened some small shops, and were fast getting hold of the entire trade of the country. Nobody else had a chance with them, he said. I asked

why. "Oh," was the answer, given in perfect simplicity, "they are satisfied with small profits and quick returns, and they make no losses, for they refuse to give credit." He had not so learned business. His former customers, who were now buying goods at reasonable rates, agreed with him that it was a shame. I am sorry to seem to reflect on any of my British Columbian friends, or rather to reflect on their notions of commercial or political economy. They were kindness itself to me, as they are to all travelers. "They are a real nice people," said one of the engineers we fell in with; "they do cheerfully what you want, either for nothing or for an enormous price." That hits the mark. Their hospitality is beyond praise; but when they charge, you are likely to remember the bill. Three of us hired a wagon one afternoon. The boy drove us twenty-three miles in four hours, and the charge was thirty dollars. On another afternoon we engaged a man to row us in his little boat to a steamer on Burrard Inlet. It took him an hour, and we had to pay four dollars for the use of his boat and the pleasure of his company. A friend wished to negotiate for the removal of some lumber. Finding that the cost of a team was fifteen dollars per day, he preferred to do without the lumber. That such costs and charges put a stop to industrial development, that they are equivalent to total prohibition of intercourse or exchange, does not occur to the average politician. Abundance of labor is the one thing absolutely indispensable in British Columbia. Pretty much the only labor attainable on a large scale for many a year is that of Chinamen. Far from welcoming the labor, almost every one's face is set against it, even when necessity forces him to take advantage of it for the time. But this is not the place to discuss the Chinese problem. I have alluded to it simply because the railway has forced it upon our attention, and it presses for solution.

Since the Dominion was constituted the political life of Canada has centered about the Pacific Railway. Now that it is on the eve of completion, we see how great was the task that three millions of people set themselves fourteen years ago to accomplish. The work is imperial in meaning as well as magnitude, though the cost has been wholly defrayed by Canada. It is our contribution to the organization and defense of the empire. It has added to our public burdens, but our credit is better than when it was commenced. When we are told that it has cost fifty, sixty, or a hundred millions, what need one say but that it was a necessity, and that it is worth the cost?