

in which their case has been presented for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

It was, as I had the honor to mention at my first interview, with a strong feeling of regret, that the Government of the Province felt themselves under the necessity of seeking the advice and intervention of Her Majesty's Government in this matter. The Provincial Government desired to work in harmony with the Dominion Government, and I may safely say that such intervention would not have been sought, had a sufficient effort been made by the Dominion to comply with the spirit of the Railway Agreement.

The key to the general policy of Her Majesty's Government, in relation to British North America is, so far as I understand, to be found in the preamble of the Act of Confederation, which briefly declares that "Union would conduce to the welfare of the Provinces * * * * * federally united * * * * * and promote the interests of the British Empire." The Imperial policy thus declared has also been the policy of Canada. British Columbia likewise has endeavoured on her part loyally to follow it. It is from a due regard for the principles laid down in the Confederation Act, and from a natural and, I hope, proper desire to protect her own special interests as a Province, that British Columbia has protested against the non-fulfilment by Canada of the Railway Agreement of the Terms of Union.

This Railway Agreement, while purposely and in part framed, as I shall hereafter show, to promote the interests of British Columbia, is not an agreement for the construction of a railway within merely provincial limits, for simply provincial purposes. It is an agreement of a much more comprehensive character designed, in fact, mainly to advance, and indeed to effect, a real Union and consolidation of the British Possessions on the Continent of North America. In the attainment of this great end, British Columbia is, owing to her present isolation, especially interested.

A short reference to a few facts which led to the Union of the Province with Canada will best explain her true position.

In pursuance of the general Confederation policy declared in 1867, Her Majesty's Government in 1869 addressed a despatch to the Governor of British Columbia, expressing a desire that British Columbia should be incorporated with Canada. This despatch not only restates the principles set forth in the Confederation Act, but also shows in what respect they are peculiarly applicable to British Columbia. The following is a quotation from the despatch:—

"Her Majesty's Government," writes the Secretary of State, "anticipate that the interests of every Province of British North America will be more advanced by enabling the wealth, credit, and intelligence of the whole to be brought to bear on every part, than by encouraging each in the contracted policy of taking care of itself, possibly at the expense of its neighbour.

"Most especially is this true in the case of internal transit. It is evident that the establishment of a British line of communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans is far more feasible by the operations of a single Government responsible for the progress of both shores of the Continent, than by a bargain negotiated between separate, perhaps in some respects rival, Governments and Legislatures. The San Francisco of British North America would, under these circumstances, hold a greater commercial and political position than would be attainable by the capital of the isolated Colony of British Columbia.

"Her Majesty's Government are aware that the distance between Ottawa and Victoria presents a real difficulty in the way of immediate Union. But that very difficulty will not be without its advantages, if it renders easy communication indispensable, and forces onwards the operations which are to complete it. In any case it is an understood inconvenience, and a diminishing one, and it appears far better to accept it as a temporary drawback on the advantages of Union, than to wait for those obstacles, often more intractable, which are sure to spring up after a neglected opportunity."