

lines, giving them a continuous road from Montreal to Toronto, and had laid plans for extending west to the Detroit River in case they could not secure control of the Great Western. Hincks was personally as well as politically interested in the Grand Trunk, and it may be said that the railway destiny of Canada was then in his hands. If the westward extension of the Grand Trunk had been made a part of the great federal scheme, a trunk line from the Atlantic to the upper provinces and eventually to the Pacific Coast under government ownership, the Canadian confederation might have been a fact and not an aspiration at this early period. Hincks used his influence to enable the Grand Trunk to extend as a private corporation, and because of the difficulty of raising large sums of money in those days his decision delayed indefinitely the Intercolonial scheme under government ownership. To what extent he was a voluntary agent in this or was used by others can never be known, and it is only fair to Sir Francis Hincks—who had good public work to his credit—to explain that the men composing the firm of Peto, Brassey, Betts & Jackson, with whom he got into touch, were the most influential in the railway-contracting field in Great Britain. More than one of the firm besides Mr. Brassey became a member of parliament, and they had strong influence with financial friends, both in and out of parliament, in connection with English railway enterprises, all of course under private control. As will appear when we come to the Intercolonial, all the influence of this firm was exerted to extend the power of private control in the railway system of Canada, and to thwart government ownership, which would lessen their chances of profit.

It seems as if Hincks himself was conscious of his breach in the spirit of the railway relationship with the other provinces, because when he concluded his bargain with the British firm the financial plans were so drawn up that while the railway would seem to be a government work it would in reality be under private control. Four years afterward it was discovered that Hincks had made a deal with the financiers and contractors by which they gave him stock to the amount of £50,400 in the new company in which he was already interested as a promoter, and that before he left England these shares were converted into cash at par. Meantime it came out that he and several of his colleagues had taken advantage