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The Fulfilment of a Prophecy in Transportation.

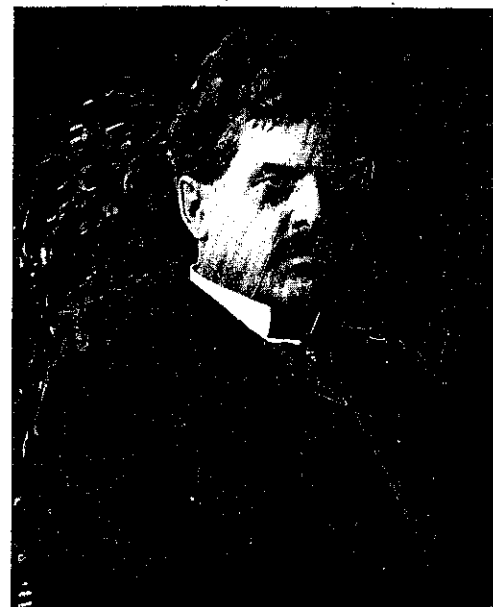
BY HON. H. R. EMMERSON, MINISTER OF RAILWAYS.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject, "The Fulfilment of a Prophecy in Transportation," Hon. H. R. Emmerson, Minister of Railways, said:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—Notwithstanding the pleasure I feel at meeting the members of the Canadian Club of this industrial centre of Canada, I confess some feeling of embarrassment at the necessity of attempting to deal with a large subject in a short space of time. As a result I shall seek to discuss it with directness and no attempt at embellishment.

You will, perhaps, bear with me while I recite a bit of history. The first discussion of transportation problems of this portion of America was brought to the notice of the public by a Scotchman. In Canada they have been first every time. In 1851 Henry Fairburn proposed to connect a point at St. Andrew's, New Brunswick, to the shores of the St. Lawrence at Levis. He wrote an instructive article in an English magazine, and appeared before the Legislatures of the then Quebec and New Brunswick, with the result that a company was incorporated, capital subscribed, and the railway commenced. His scheme to connect the Atlantic with the inland cities meant adopting a route through a portion of New Brunswick. Then our American neighbors to the south got the idea, which they seem very often to get, that what we claimed was theirs by right. The result was the Maine war and the Ashburton Treaty. The route was transferred from Canada to United States territory. It spelled failure because of the loss of territory to New Brunswick.

Not until 1850 did the enterprise take life again. Hon. Joseph Howe, that great Canadian poet, litterateur and statesman, became actively engaged in the construction of a railway between Halifax and the inland cities. He visited the Old Country and secured from the British Government a loan of £7,000,000 sterling to aid in the construction of a railway from Halifax to St. John, thence to connect with the American



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lines at the Maine boundary. He also projected another from Halifax to Quebec and thence to Montreal. It was a grand scheme and Howe returned elated. He visited Toronto and made a speech; he visited Quebec and Montreal and all the centres of British America.

The prophecy that I have to deal with is the prophecy of Joseph Howe, and I am going to quote from his celebrated speech as reported in the city of Halifax in May, 1851. There had been held previously a convention in Portland with representatives from Canada and the State of Maine, the object being to secure a winter port for Canada.

There were other causes for perplexity. The advocates of the Montreal-Portland scheme were very powerful. They did not look with a friendly eye upon Mr. Howe's policy and proceedings. They desired to make Portland, an American port, the seaport of Canada, and to draw all the Provinces into friendly connection and ultimate political harmony with the United States.

Mr. Howe desired to create a North American nation, watchful of republican America, even while pursuing common objects, but in perpetual friendship and alliance with the British Islands. Mr. Howe was content to make the shore line through the Maritime Provinces either as part of a great scheme or by itself, but he desired to keep that portion of the railway which ran through British territory under British influence and control, and he had labored to give to the Provinces a great intercommunication between the Atlantic and the St. Lawrence, which, even if it could not compete for the traffic of Western Canada with the Portland line, would in peace and war be of inestimable value to the Empire, and ultimately secure to eastern seaports the trade of all that noble country which lies between Quebec and Nova Scotia.

In New Brunswick there were powerful interests opposed to the Northern line. As surveyed by Major Robinson and Captain Henderson, it did not touch Fredericton, the political capital, or St. John, the commercial metropolis of New Brunswick. Mr. Howe had foreseen that unless by combining the two roads in a general scheme, it was hopeless to expect the guarantee of the Imperial Government for the road to Portland alone, and equally hopeless to anticipate that New Brunswick would spend her resources upon a national highway, which sacrificed to Imperial or intercolonial interests the hopes and fair claims of her most influential and important cities. Before he arrived in America, the influences which dominated in the southern sections, combined with those which the Port-

land convention had created by the appointment of agents in New Brunswick, had placed the Legislature in a position of antagonism to the Northern road and of course to the general policy propounded by Mr. Howe.

Certain extracts from the speech of Mr. Howe at that time I am going to read you. They unfold a prophecy of what was to be and what now is, that is certainly marvelous:

"The Imperial Government, with a magnanimity which does honor to the British people, sustained by that unanimity of sentiment among the great leaders of public opinion at home which promises a long continuance of the honorable relations existing between us, has offered to the three British North American Provinces seven millions of pounds sterling, at the lowest interest at which money can be obtained in the world. This money is offered for the purpose of enabling them to complete in an incredibly short space of time, and with security and ease, great internal improvements which their advanced condition renders so desirable; which will bind them together into one prosperous community, animate them with new hopes and aspirations, and ultimately elevate them from the colonial condition to that of a great and prosperous nation, in perpetual amity and friendship with those glorious islands to which we trace our origin, and to which, through this great boon, so much of our material prosperity will in all time to come be traced.

"Halifax has been formed by nature, and selected by the dictates of sound policy, as a common terminus for these great intercolonial railways. Three hundred and thirty miles will connect us with Portland, and all the lines which interlace the American Republic and bind together the prosperous communities of the South and West. Six hundred and seventy miles more, opening up the central lands and settlements of New Brunswick, will not only connect us, as we originally contemplated, with Quebec and the St. Lawrence, but passing through one hundred and eighty miles of settlements on that noble river, will place us in communication with the populous city of Montreal, which will soon be in connection with Portland on the other side; the circle will be thus complete, and chains of intercommunication established, easily accessible, by shorter lines, to all the rising towns and settlements which that wide circuit will embrace.

"But when Montreal is reached, shall we stop there? Who can believe it? Who can think so lightly of the enterprise of Western Canada as to apprehend that she will not continue this iron road, link by link, till it skirts the shores of Ontario

and Erie, and draws its tributary streams of traffic from the prolific regions of Simcoe, Superior and Huron. Already municipalities are organizing and companies are forming to extend this railway for six hundred miles above Montreal. Once completed to that city, how will those interior lines advance? How many interests will combine for their extension? The British Government and people will take a natural pride in the continuation of this great national work. The success of the lower lines will be promoted and insured by extension. British capitalists and contractors, lured into this boundless field, will seek further employment for their capital and labor; and millions of industrious people will flow into Provinces where employment is certain and land is cheap. This is the prospect before us, sir, and the duties it imposes we must learn to discharge with energy; the destiny it discloses we may contemplate with pride. England foresees, yet fears it not. She relies upon our resources and upon our integrity to repay her money. She believes in the existence of the old feelings here which are to strengthen with our strength, and bind us to her by links of love, when pecuniary obligations have been cancelled. She virtually says to us, by this offer, there are seven millions of sovereigns, at half the price that your neighbors pay in the markets of the world; construct your railways; people your waste lands; organize and improve the boundless territory beneath your feet; learn to rely upon yourselves, and God speed you in the formation of national character and national institutions.

"But, sir, daring as may appear the scope of this conception, high as the destiny may seem which it discloses for our children, and boundless as are the fields of honorable labor which it presents, another, grander in proportions, opens beyond; one which the imagination of a poet could not exaggerate, but which the statesman may grasp and realize, even in our own day. Sir, to bind these disjointed Provinces together by iron roads; to give them the homogeneous character, fixedness of purpose, and elevation of sentiment, which they so much require, is our first duty. But, after all, they occupy but a limited portion of that boundless heritage which God and nature have given to us and to our children. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are but the frontage of a territory which includes four millions of square miles, stretching away behind and beyond them, to the frozen regions on the one side and to the Pacific on the other. Of this great section of the globe, all the Northern Provinces, including Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, occupy but four hundred and

eighty-six thousand square miles. The Hudson's Bay territory includes two hundred and fifty thousand miles. Throwing aside the more bleak and inhospitable regions, we have a magnificent country between Canada and the Pacific, out of which five or six noble Provinces may be formed, larger than any we have, and presenting to the hand of industry, and to the eye of speculation, every variety of soil, climate, and resource. With such a territory as this to overrun, organize and improve, think you that we shall stop even at the western bounds of Canada, or even at the shores of the Pacific? Vancouver's Island, with its vast coal measures, lies beyond. The beautiful islands of the Pacific and the growing commerce of the ocean, are beyond. Populous China and the rich East are beyond, and the sails of our children's children will reflect as familiarly the sunbeams of the South as they now brave the angry tempests of the North. The Maritime Provinces which I now address are but the Atlantic frontage of this boundless and prolific region; the wharves upon which its business will be transacted, and beside which its rich argosies are to lie. Nova Scotia is one of these. Will you, then, put your hands unitedly, with order, intelligence, and energy, to this great work? Refuse, and you are recreants to every principle which lies at the base of your country's prosperity and advancement; refuse, and the Deity's handwriting upon land and sea is to you unintelligible language; refuse, and Nova Scotia, instead of occupying the foreground as she now does, should have been thrown back, at least behind the Rocky Mountains. God has planted your country in the front of this boundless region. See that you comprehend its destiny and resources—see that you discharge, with energy and elevation of soul, the duties which devolve upon you in virtue of your position. Hitherto, my countrymen, you have dealt with this subject in a becoming spirit, and whatever others may think or apprehend, I know that you will persevere in that spirit until our objects are attained. I am neither a prophet, nor a son of a prophet, yet I will venture to predict that in five years we shall make the journey hence to Quebec and Montreal, and home through Portland and St. John, by rail; and I believe that many in this room will live to hear the whistle of the steam engine in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific in five or six days. With such objects in view,—with the means before us to open up one thousand miles of this noble territory; to increase its resources and lay bare its treasures, surely all petty jealousies and personal rivalries should stand rebuked; all minor questions of mere local

interest should give way. The smoke of past contests has perhaps at times clogged my own mind; like an old chimney, the soot of controversy may have adhered to it after the cooking of constitutions was over. But the fire of this noble enterprise has burnt it out. I come back, after six months' absence, prepared to co-operate with any man who will honestly aid me to work out the prosperity of our common country; and I am glad to discover that a reciprocal and cordial feeling is manifested by those whose opinions differ, on other subjects, from my own."

My purpose is to attempt to deal briefly with the realization of this wonderful prophecy. Within twenty years there was a line of railway connecting Halifax with the American border; within a quarter of a century Halifax and the St. Lawrence were connected by the Intercolonial. Every word was fulfilled. There was a marvellous conception in the breadth and scope of the prophecy. It provided for the Intercolonial, the Canadian Pacific, and the lines of steamships to the Isles of the Sea and the Orient beyond.

Yet Canada has only six million people; we have not yet advanced in population as we should. But Canada can do what many countries cannot do. Our neighbors to the south never had an uninterrupted transcontinental road until the last few months, when Harriman succeeded in securing it.

There was, however, a period between May, 1851, and the completion of the railway connecting the Atlantic with the St. Lawrence—a time of anxiety. In 1864 differences had arisen in Upper and Lower Canada and racial and national antipathies were evidenced. One September morning it was that John A. Macdonald and George Brown bethought themselves that they would consult their brethren down by the sea. They took steamer from Quebec to Charlottetown. There a convention was in progress, a convention of the Maritime Provinces to discuss maritime union. When the steamer sailed in the gentlemen attended the convention. They brought the message, "Join us. Let us have a grander confederation. Let us take in the whole of British North America." The convention adjourned and Brown and Macdonald visited the different centres and made speeches. They made a promise. They said, "If you will join our union, we will construct a railway which will bind together all sections of Canada." The Maritime Provinces were at first afraid that they would be gobbled by the larger Provinces. The Legislature was dissolved and those who went out in advocacy of the union never came back. In New Brunswick they seemed opposed to it. In Nova Scotia

Mr. Tupper had a big majority and he simply said, "You have got to go into the union." This afterwards caused long trouble, not because the people were opposed to the scheme, but to the manner in which it was brought about. But the union came.

The result was that, after the Quebec conference, it was agreed that there should be such a railway. It was made a condition of the constitution of any confederation and afterwards became the chief corner stone in the constitution.

Before that time in matters of trade the Provinces had looked to the shores of the New England States. They sent there the natural products and brought back the merchandise and the manufactured products. If a young man wanted education he did not seek it in Toronto or McGill; his father sent him to Boston or the New England States. All the older medical practitioners, those of my own age, secured their technical training in New England. The lawyer graduated from Harvard, the medical man from Boston or Bellevue or Baltimore. If they were married they did not take their honeymoon to Toronto and visit the Exhibition. Boston, New York and Portland were the attractions.

The fathers of Confederation saw that the first essential was the construction of a railway and then the diverting of this traffic. Accordingly they established very low rates. We continually hear the Intercolonial assailed because of its deficits, because it does not show a balance to the good. But it finds markets for your Ontario produce and finds means of getting your manufactured goods to the Provinces by the sea. If you have merchant princes in Toronto, and if your farmers are making great progress, the Intercolonial should get credit for a great deal of it. Some say it is only the manufacturers that reap the benefit. Why, there are more oats sent there from Ontario than anywhere else, more dressed meat and cattle. I have heard till I am weary that the Intercolonial is a burden on Ontario, that it is only for the Maritime Provinces. I repudiate that idea. Ontario has reaped the cream of the low rates. If there are deficits in the Intercolonial, Ontario has benefited as well as the people of Eastern Canada. We are told that eighty millions has been spent to the present time and it has never paid even an interest. It is spoken of as a crime. I tell you the surpluses are in the pockets and not in the treasury at Ottawa.

Do you realize that we have paid one hundred millions on our canal system; that there is a deficit of a quarter of a million a year in their operation? Yet you ask us to construct a

Trent Valley Canal, you ask the deepening of the Welland Canal, the widening of the St. Lawrence Canal, the reconstruction of the Lachine Canal. But these are creating nothing else but deficit. In Canada we have spent \$125,000,000 in railway subsidies, in widening and deepening the St. Lawrence, yet there is no protest. It is in the interest of expansion of trade and commerce of Canada. I hear no murmur about all these expenditures. We realize nothing in interest from subsidies to steamship lines, and no man murmurs at the great public works which are for the good of Canada. Let us have an eye to what the Intercolonial has done to cement our Provinces together, to promote our interprovincial trade. We are aspiring for nationhood. Mr. Root said of us the other day, "You are a people of nation builders because you have burdened yourselves in the construction of these great works." The trade is an advantage to every Province. The Intercolonial in welding and cementing the Provinces together has made confederation a permanency. You pay in railway tolls \$125,322,865 a year. You pay to the Government railway system \$7,000,000. Eighteen millions goes into the pockets of the railway corporations of Canada. You pay per capita \$8 to the Customs and \$20 to railway tolls. Customs only affect part of the commodities, but transportation affects all. There is one reason why there are not surpluses on the I.C.R. The freight tolls are the lowest in the world.

We must not let our minds be warped and prejudiced by politicians and newspapers. Those now in opposition are not the only sinners. The Liberals were as violent and as hyena-like at one time as the Conservatives are to-day. Conservative Ministers and Conservative members seemingly lacked the courage to stand up to the results of the Intercolonial. It is the same to-day, in fact I think I am the only one. But I know the defence of the railway. I know the mission of the Intercolonial and how it has been fulfilled.

The average United States freight rates are .780, or nearly eight-tenths of one cent per ton per mile. The Canadian Pacific are .743, while the Grand Trunk is 1.02 of one cent per ton per mile. This is an average of .880. On the Intercolonial it is less than 6 mills. If the Intercolonial rates were brought up to the average of the other roads its earnings would increase fifty per cent., and instead of a surplus of \$100,000 we would have \$2,300,000, sufficient to pay what was paid in capital construction.

I have endeavored to tell the story in a nutshell, yet I fear I have trespassed upon your time. The Intercolonial has ful-

filled to the uttermost its great mission. Joseph Howe in his utterance in 1851 said the first essential was the construction of this road. If we had paid \$100,000,000 for it and had nothing to show for it we would have been justified in the expansion of trade. The Intercolonial is the greatest national asset Canada has to-day. Were we ready to negotiate for a transfer of it I believe there are companies in Canada who would think it was acquired dirt cheap for \$100,000,000. But the people would consider themselves dirt cheap to let it go at that figure.

Again I thank you. I hope I may have contributed a little information on a great subject, which, to deal properly with, would take hours rather than minutes.