

IN opposing the forfeiture of the land grant for the Cascade division of the Northern Pacific railroad, both of the Oregon senators spoke of the strong competition which this, and our other Pacific railroads, are likely to have from the Canadian Pacific. In neither of their speeches, nor in other references to the subject, does there appear to be any exaggeration of the important part which the Canadian Pacific is to play in the traffic across this continent, and the development of business in the Northwest.

This road may be said practically to have the British government behind it, notwithstanding the fact that many of its securities are owned by Americans. It was built to extend the civilization and power of England in accordance with the policy announced by Brougham about thirty years ago,—“to preserve the connection of the different component parts of a great and settled empire and connect the whole mass,”—the same policy as that by which the Roman empire was consolidated, by making all roads lead to the imperial city. All the ocean paths now lead to England. The route to the East was shortened by the Suez canal, and England contends that a shorter and a cheaper route is now open through the Canadian dominion, and there is no doubt it will be used. The advertised time between London and Hong Kong via Gibraltar and Suez, is forty-two days, and to Yokohama, fifty-two days. By way of Montreal and Port Moody the run from Liverpool to Yokohama can be made in thirty-seven days. On the Eastern route vessels must take coal at Aden or Ceylon, which has to be carried from the mines in England or Australia, while the local supply on the Canadian route is abundant. Taking all things into account, the extra cost for coal, the tolls upon the Suez canal, and the difference in climate, the Canadian route would seem to be the most favorable for English traffic with Japan and Northern China.

Although the road has been open to traffic but four months, five tea ships from Japan have arrived at Port Moody, and others are chartered. These cargoes, however, are not for England, but for consumption in the United States and Canada. The Northern Pacific has been open for traffic three years without receiving as many cargoes of tea. The distance from Puget sound to Yokohama is five hundred miles less than from San Francisco—a difference of two days in favor of the sound. With a line of steamers plying regularly between the western terminus of the Canadian road and China, with mail patronage in addition to all the other favors of the British government, it is plainly to be seen that the road will have an immense advantage over our Pacific roads in foreign commerce, which has been regarded from the first as one of the main sources of revenue for these roads. Asa Whitney, who began forty years ago to urge the importance of building the Northern Pacific railroad, said it was “the only route which would shorten the distance between Europe and Asia so as to force a change to it.” But the Canadians have built another road a little shorter, and, what is of more consequence, the pa-

trons of the new rival have business to give it. Our government, which has been assiduously striving to avoid having foreign commerce, has succeeded so well that now it has very little trade with the East. English ships take our raw cotton to England, where it is manufactured into cloth; then English ships carry it to China, Japan and the Philippines, and return with cargoes of tea, coffee and spices. The aggregate amount of cottons sold by England in the East in one year is some six hundred million yards.

But the foreign commerce that may pass over the Canadian Pacific railway will not be its only, nor its main, support. This road will doubtless play about the same part in the transcontinental business of this country that the Grand Trunk has so long played between Boston and Chicago. Although the Grand Trunk was the longest road, it has successfully competed with other lines at every possible point, until now it is one of the most prosperous, as well as most powerful, roads in America. The Canadian Pacific will pursue the same policy. It has already secured a large share of the Eastern traffic on the sound, and is drawing business from San Francisco. It has established direct connections with Minneapolis, St. Paul and Chicago, and it will send its branches down into every fertile section of our northern border. It will come wherever there is business—to Seattle, to Portland, to Spokane Falls and to Helena—and its coming will also stimulate business at every favored competitive point. With the development of its oriental traffic other roads will have to go to its western terminus to get a share for distribution in the United States.

Vanderbilt used to say, when the Grand Trunk was pressing him so hard, that it was difficult to compete with a road which was not compelled to pay dividends. The London stockholders of the road were not seeking to make instantaneous fortunes, but to build for the future, to extend the commercial relations of England, and so they were willing to have their dividends deferred. The political importance of the Canadian Pacific is so great that it will be sustained, even if its business in the early stages of development should not be remunerative. All these considerations give it prestige to start with, and if the policy by which it has been opened, is continued, it will be a mighty factor in the development of business at various points in the Northwest. It may also teach American statesmen that foreign commerce is one of the elements of national grandeur and wealth, that even as great a country as this can not afford to despise.

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