

## HISTORY OF CANADA.

and falls of the Niagara river. In 1847 a line was opened between Montreal and Lachine. The 'fifties were however pre-eminently the period of railway expansion in pre-Confederation times. In 1853 and 1854 the Great Western Railway was opened from Niagara Falls to Hamilton, London and Windsor. In 1853 communication was completed between Montreal and Island Pond, establishing connection with a line from that place to Portland, and in 1854 the line was opened between Quebec and Richmond, thus giving railway communication between Quebec and Montreal. In December, 1855, communication was established between Hamilton and Toronto, in 1856 by the Grand Trunk railway between Montreal and Toronto. The Northern railway from Toronto to Collingwood was completed in 1855 and the Buffalo and Lake Huron railway between Fort Erie and Goderich in 1858, though sections of it had been completed and operated earlier.

River and Lake navigation was very steadily developed from the year 1809 when a steamer named *Accommodation*, owned by Mr. John Molson of Montreal, began to ply between Montreal and Quebec. The year 1816 saw the *Frontenac* launched in Lake Ontario. Year by year larger and faster vessels were placed on our inland waters, the chief promoters of steamboat enterprises being in Upper Canada the Hon. John Hamilton of Kingston and in Lower Canada the Hon. John Molson. A large and powerful steamboat interest had been created in the middle 'fifties, when the competition of the Grand Trunk railway, of which section after section was being opened, gave a serious blow to lake and river transportation.

It was in the 'fifties also that steam navigation was established between Canada and Great Britain. Mr. (afterwards Sir) Hugh Allan, of Montreal, was the pioneer in this important enterprise. As early as 1853 some vessels of about 1,200 tons capacity were placed upon the route between Montreal and Liverpool, and in 1855 a mail contract was assigned to the Allan firm for a fortnightly service, which took effect in the year following. The early history of this enterprise was marked by an unparalleled and most discouraging series of disasters; but with unflinching courage the owners of the Allan Line held to their task, repaired their losses as best they could, and gradually succeeded in giving the service a high character for regularity and safety.

In 1856 Mr. (afterwards Sir) John A. Macdonald, who as Attorney General for the West, had been perhaps the man to exercise the greatest influence in the Coalition Government, succeeded to the premiership, ill-health having compelled the retirement of Sir Allan MacNab. Party spirit from this time onwards ran very high. Although a certain section of the Reformers had supported the Coalition Government the bulk of the party remained in opposition under the leadership of George Brown, whose policy, while it won him many adherents in western Canada, had an opposite effect in Lower Canada, and thus tended to bring the two sections of the province more or less into antagonism.

The idea of a federation of the British provinces in North America had been mooted at various times in the previous history of the provinces. It had been hinted at in the discussion in the House of Commons on the Constitutional or Canada Act in 1791. William Lyon Mac-