The CPR Syndicate

* Private Investors that funded the CPR project
* George Stephen of Bank of Montreal
* Donald Smith of the HBC
* James J. Hill—an expatriate Canadian investing in U.S. Railways

Government would give:

* $25million + 25million acres (most of the land on the prairies).
* Monopoly on all rail traffic west of Lake Superior for the next 20 years
* Tax exempt from lands until they were sold.

The CPR Syndicate would give:

* Completion of transcontinental railway within 10 years.

Original transcontinental route changed after contract signing.

Affects people: people bought land in hopes they would be near railway. Soils were more fertile above than below.

James Hill moved the line 300 miles south—NOT Saskatoon. By doing this, it guarantees CPR more freedom on where to establish towns and railway stations.

Major A.B. Rogers

* Expatriate to America, has a feisty, foul-mouthed attitude.
* Very determined man.
* First person to found a pass through the Rocky Mountains into BC for the CPR.
* CPR named the new way through to BC the “Roger’s Pass” and gave him a $5000 bonus.
* He didn’t care about the money, so he framed the cheque and hung it on the wall.

CPR construction was slow. James Hill needed to look for a new general manager who has exceptional energy and drive to complete the project.

Hired William Van Horne, a 38 year old general manager of a smaller American railroad company.

William Van Horne

* Spent the next 4 years driving himself and the employees unmercifully for the next 4 years until the CPR was complete.
* Understood Morse code and can operate any locomotive.
* His efficiency allowed the CPR project to be completed on schedule as long as the money held out long enough.

CPR started building in 1881. By 1883, the company was running out of money.

As funds dried up, the worker’s payments ran out along with it. They went on strike.

Canadian government passed a bill that gave the CPR an extra $22.5million

1884. Van Horne made use of the money and cut corners as much as he could.

* Used temporary wooden trestles to carry the line over difficult terrain.

End of 1884, CPR was running out of money again.

Working Conditions of Employees

* Dust from dynamite blasts, insects, overcrowding and filth in bunkhouses, leaky roofs, no plumbing.
* Diet= boring and unhealthy. Little access to fresh fruits and vegetables during winter.
* No medical facilities. No workers compensation if they were injured= Fired when unable to work.

Northwest Uprising broke out.

* Canadian government needed to get NWMP troops to the Northwest as fast as possible.
* Used the CPR.
* This was an excuse to go back to the government to ask for more $$ to complete the railroad.

1885—railroad completed. 5 years ahead of schedule.