

Seven provinces and some sparsely peopled and only partially explored territories formed all that the world then knew as Canada. To-day have we not fifteen provinces for the most part thickly peopled, and long since fully explored to the shores of the Arctic Ocean?

In the present days of political serenity it is hard to realize the animosity and extreme bitterness of the past century. The two parties into which men formerly divided themselves, viewed each other as enemies, and each party opposed on principle whatever measures the other proposed. From a careful study of the principal journals of the time, filed at Ottawa, we gather that the party, self-styled "Reformers," frequently opposed progressive measures, and even attempted to hinder the construction of railroads, while the other party called "Conservatives" considered railroads as the best means of opening up the enormous tracts of country then lying untrodden by man, and useless to civilization. Such are certainly the inferences to be drawn from the records at our command, though it is hard to believe in opposition to railroads or to advancement in any form in these days, when new channels of communication and new industries are viewed with favor by the whole nation. Each party seems strangely to have belied its title, for the Reformers, after the confederation of the provinces in 1867, endeavored with singular perverseness to frustrate or retard reform and improvement of all kinds, while the Conservatives did not desire to preserve things in the old ruts and grooves, but strove hard for beneficial advancement of every sort.

In 1883 the United States was one of the leading nations of the world. With a population of over 50,000,000, and an almost illimitable extent of territory still open for settlement by the fugitives from troubled Europe; with exhaustless wealth, developed and undeveloped, it seemed reasonable to suppose that a nation so placed should be able to attain the foremost position and be able to keep it. Such appears to have been the opinion of most foreigners, and also of some of our Canadians of the period, for the wealth, apparent power and prestige of the United States caused many of our weak-kneed ancestors to lose heart in their own country, and in fits of disloyal dejection to fancy there could be no progress except in union with the States. Stout hearts, however, ultimately gained the day, and we