

propositions on one side and the other, it would be evidently better that silence should be observed, because whatever observations are made now may be distorted so as to do harm in the negotiations. We are told that there is to be a new department—that some other minister is to be added to the baker's dozen we already possess, and it is to be called the Department of Trade and Commerce. I thought that the National Policy rather discouraged trade and commerce outside. I do not see that our trade abroad has materially developed within the last six or seven years. On the contrary, beyond the export of our natural products I see no extraordinary revival of the outside trade and commerce of Canada to warrant the establishment of a new department.

I notice also that the Government proposes to construct a canal at Sault Ste. Marie, and the Senate is not called upon to consider the question. I look upon that as a question of policy—as a question of whether it is in the interest of this country that that canal should be constructed. His Excellency has been made not to address the Senate, but to address his observations entirely to the House of Commons on this question. He says:—

“You will be asked in order to provide against the possible interruption of the navigation of our great inland waters for an appropriation in aid of the construction of a canal to connect the waters of Lake Huron and Superior at Sault Ste Marie.”

It does seem to me that the Senate ought to have been taken into the confidence of His Excellency on that occasion, and that this House should be asked as to the wisdom of that policy. At the present moment, under the treaty of Washington, the St. Lawrence is free to the ocean, to the commerce of both countries. The St. Clair Flats Canal is free. The United States Government undertook to induce the several states to open their canals to the commerce of Canada, and the Imperial Government on its part undertook to secure for the United States the use of the canals controlled by Canada, and we have not heard the most remote hint that the present arrangement was in any way to be disturbed. Taken in conjunction with the first paragraph of the Speech one is almost led to

the belief that there was some strained necessity for building the canal at Sault Ste Marie alongside of the American canal that is at present free to us, for which we do not pay one farthing, where our goods are carried through one of the finest canals in the world without cost—a well appointed lock and canal which are illuminated with electric lights every night during navigation. We have used that canal steadily, and we have never heard the smallest intimation that the American government were intending to shut us out from the use of it. Before the construction of the Pacific Railway I could appreciate that there might be a little difficulty in the Americans not allowing our troops to skirt along our border through their canal in the event of difficulties in the North-West; but now that we have the Pacific Railway open in winter and summer there is really no necessity for that particular matter being considered in connection with this canal. Hon. gentlemen who pass through the Sault Ste. Marie canal know that the United States government have two locks there. They are practically two canals, one built many years ago and a very large lock built some seven or eight years ago and now completely finished—a lock sufficiently large to take three or four vessels through at a time—a lock I think of twenty feet lift, of gigantic proportions compared with the locks of our own internal canals, and I do not therefore see what necessity there can be for the construction of a work of that kind on our side of the river. I have turned my attention to it from the fact that I think it is not consistent with the powers entrusted to this House, as one of the legislative bodies of the Dominion Government, that we are not to be called upon to give any expression of opinion upon this subject. Surely the expenditure of several million dollars involving a question of policy is a matter of consideration for this Chamber. The House of Commons is told that something will be put in the estimates about it, but this Chamber is not asked to give its approbation to the proposition to construct that canal. I think the gentleman who drafted this speech to His Excellency has been guilty of rather a serious omission in that particular. With these