

The formation of the Canadian Confederation showed that the people of the different Provinces had the national instinct. Autonomous Provinces are not willing to give up any portion of their power, even to constitute a nation. Any one will admit that, who knows the reluctance of the thirteen colonies to surrender to the central authority the smallest portion of their independence. And, in our case, the geographical difficulties in the way of union seemed well nigh insuperable. To begin with, the Intercolonial Railroad had to be built along the St. Lawrence, involving a detour of two or three hundred otherwise unnecessary miles. Commerce demanded that the connection between Montreal and the maritime Provinces should be across the State of Maine, and the road by that direct line is now being built. So, too, commerce demanded that the connection between Montreal and the Northwest shore be by the Sault St. Marie and along the south of Lake Superior. And commerce made no demand for a railway across the Selkirks to the Pacific. But in all those cases, political necessities predominated, and the people have consented willingly to the enormous cost of building the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific railways as political roads. All that is now required to make the Dominion perfectly independent, by land and water, so far as means of communication from one part of the Dominion to another is concerned, is a canal on the Canadian side of Sault St. Marie; and its construction has been determined upon. The cost will not be excessive. There nature is on our side. If there was to be only one canal, it is quite clear to the most careless observer that it should be on the Canadian shore. The adoption of the National Policy, or the protection