

the war the farmers of the North-west will have to encounter. We ought to help as far as possible the successful prosecution of that war, and to that end we must do what was so much ridiculed during the late campaign—we must improve the water communications of the North-west; you can carry by water for one-fifth of the cost by rail, and you may be able to carry at a profit if you can get water communication when it would not pay you to grow wheat to be shipped by rail. [Hear, hear.] This is the more important because new sources of supply are opening now to England, and it is likely that the price of breadstuffs will rather fall than rise. I look on the success of our enterprises in the settlement of the North-west as practically dependent upon the improvement of the water ways. Of course, there must be railways at once to connect the sheets of water, and eventually a through line; but I am confident that a bushel of wheat will never go to England over an all-rail route from the Saskatchewan to the seaboard, because it would never pay to send it. We must take it in the speediest and cheapest way to the head of Lake Superior, where our splendid St. Lawrence route commences; and we must use every effort to avert the threatened danger of a diversion to the States of the trade relations of that country. Let me turn to another question which has been adverted to on several occasions, as one looming in the not very distant future. I refer to the relations of Canada to the Empire. Upon this topic I took, three or four years ago, an opportunity of speaking, and ventured to suggest that an effort should be made to reorganize the Empire upon a Federal basis. I repeat what I then said, that the time may be at hand when the people of Canada shall be called on to discuss the question. Matters cannot drift much longer as they have drifted hitherto. The Treaty of Washington produced a very profound impression throughout this country. It produced a feeling that at no distant period the people of Canada would desire that they