

and keeping them all separate from the United States," has never been underrated. Since the idea of the present undertaking was first mooted, the Dominion Government has afforded it unwavering support; and it was in pursuance of that most important object, indicated in the sentence which I have quoted, that the charter for the construction of the Red River Valley Railway, from Winnipeg to the American frontier, was disallowed.

It has been stated that the act of disallowance, resolved upon by the Dominion Government, was in itself illegal; but I have little doubt that this opinion cannot be maintained. The Dominion Government of Canada, under the British North American Act, has the power to veto absolutely those measures, passed by the provincial parliaments, which are calculated to interfere with Imperial interests. It is foolish to argue that so necessary and important an authority can be dissipated by a charter devised by a local assembly, endowing itself with the right to build railway communications to the boundaries of its province. There still remains the question, whether the matter is fairly to be considered as one of Imperial interest. If, as Mr. Goldwin Smith is said to have suggested, the dispute is carried before the Home Government, or an appeal is made by the province of Manitoba to the English Privy Council against the exercise of the veto, it is almost impossible to believe that a decision can be arrived at declaratory of the proposition that the maintenance of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which has all along been treated by the Dominion Government as an affair involving great Imperial consequences, and has received from its bounty large grants of money and land, is of absolutely no Imperial importance. Although it is undoubtedly the duty of England generously to protect the rights of the local provincial legislatures, the idea cannot be entertained for a moment that the British Privy Council would in its decision so far "run amok" of the spirit of Colonial constitutions, and the expressed opinion of the united Parliament of all Canada, as to decide that the Dominion Government has throughout been exceeding its powers in treating as an Imperial question the formation and protection of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

But it is possible that the Canadian Government may have done wrong by the exercise of the veto vested in the Governor-General, though acting within their strict legal rights. The manner in which they have enforced it does, indeed, seem to give evidence of some lack of wisdom. Mr. Goldwin Smith, however, confines himself wholly to the arguments which may be adduced to impugn their conduct, in a manner which is calculated to leave a very erroneous impression as to the merits of the controversy on those who look no farther to ascertain the real position of affairs. In