

heroic measures, then the master-stroke of diplomacy will be delivered against him—a preference will be offered to England and to the United States in the markets of the Canadian nation.

But they have not foreseen the contingency that Germany or that great congeries of communities, the United States, might call to their minds the unhappy situation of the fish which got themselves into the frying-pan, or the still more desperate case of the eel who was recommended to stew himself in his own grease. Nations are not so disinterested and so sincere as these naïve young men pretend to believe.

There are many difficulties in the way of these nation-builders. They have not yet decided where their capital will be, whether in Quebec or in Winnipeg. They have not told us in what language their deliberations are to be carried on, or what power shall be employed to put a Nationalist in prison, who smites a minister in the face, or breaks his cane, as he is leaving the precincts of the house of assemblage. They have not even discussed the question whether they shall have as their titular head a King or a Stork. The form of constitution which they shall adopt is a comparatively simple affair—there are so many excellent ones in the world to choose from, and it is as easy for a nation to adopt a constitution as it is for a parricide to adopt a father.

A nation is forged on an anvil with the fire of war, not in the muddled minds of amiable enthusiasts. A nation is not a process of thought, but the result of inexorable circumstances which are not amenable to human control. A nation which will endure creates itself, as slow as a glacier and as ungovernably as the course of the world.

The people of the United States made an attempt at nation-building, *de novo*, under conditions the most favourable for success. They had a new world to operate in, the resources of a virgin continent at their command, the isolation of two oceans, an Asia on one side, whose existence was so far away and so nebulous that it exerted no influence; and on the other side a Europe which was so preoccupied with its own affairs