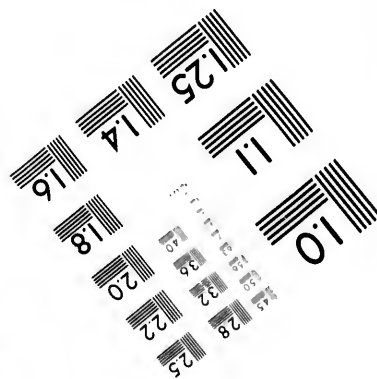
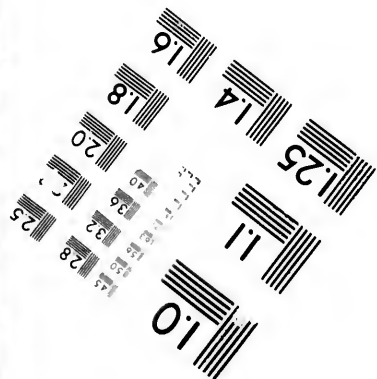
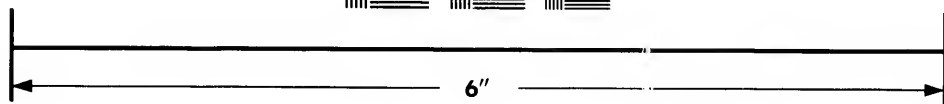
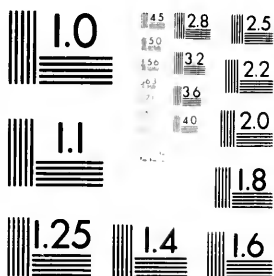


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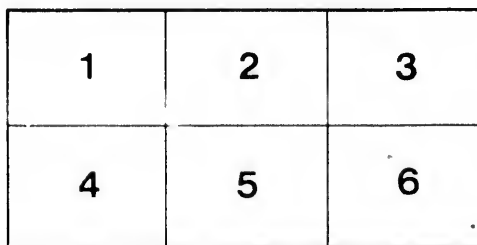
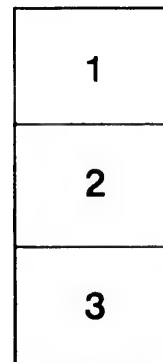
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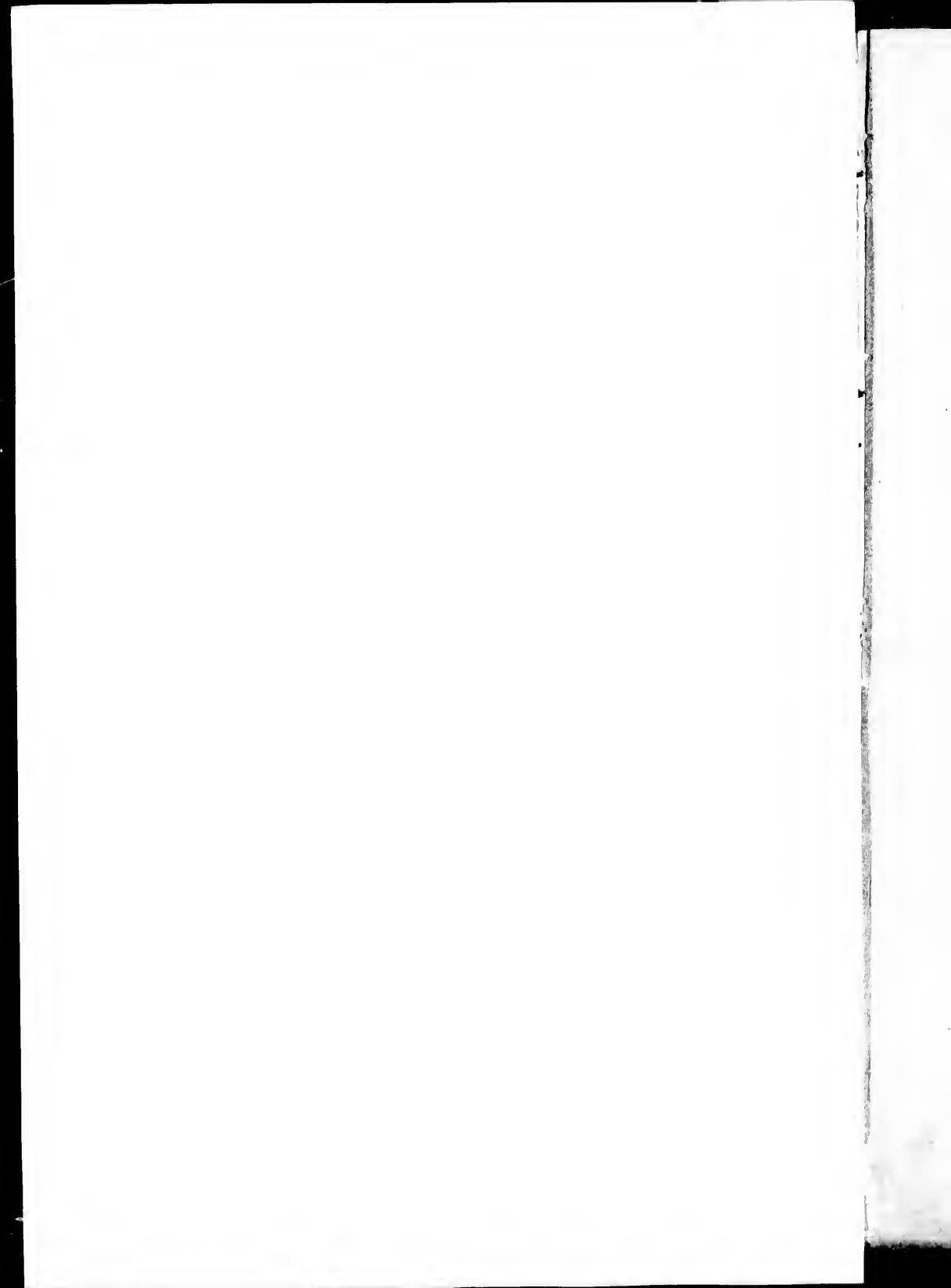
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Canada and the Federation of the Empire,

BY

JOHN GEORGE BOURINOT.

When we come to consider the signs of the times we cannot fail to note that among the many important questions which are likely to engage the attention of British Statesmen for years to come, there are three which must assume a special prominence. One of these questions, it is needless to say, involves the peace and happiness of Ireland, and must be the very first to demand a solution. The next question which looms up from time to time in the political horizon is connected with the security of India. British Statesmen will be forced, sooner or later in all probability to grapple seriously with the question, whether it is consonant with the safety of their great possessions in the East, to allow Russia to hoist her flag and station her troops on the very frontiers of India, in conformity with that persistent design which, during the whole of this century has carried her soldiers in that direction. The third question has already assumed some prominence in the speeches of leading public men and in the pages of influential periodicals. Thoughtful men of all parties are slowly but surely coming to the conclusion that the time is fast approaching when it will be necessary to place the relations of England with her great self-governing colonial dependencies on a more satisfactory basis — or such a basis as will give greater unity and security to the Empire as a whole, and at the same time a larger influence in the Imperial Councils to those prosperous, rapidly growing communities which it is the most enduring glory of Englishmen to have founded. These three questions it is quite evident, are closely associated with the stability and integrity of the Empire at large. On their successful settlement rest in a great measure the future peace and prosperity of England. If it be possible for English Statesmen to give such a system of self-government to Ireland as will effectually neutralise

the aggressive spirit of Nationalism, and bring her people into harmony with the central governing power of the Empire; if it be possible for them at the same time to assure the future peace of India by a firm and resolute policy, and to devise a plan which will satisfy the National pride and the self-respect of the Colonial peoples, whilst assuring the integrity of the whole Empire, then England will certainly occupy a position, which may well be the envy and admiration of the world.

It is only with the third of these Imperial questions that I propose to deal in the present paper. Though this question, so interesting and important to the parent state and its dependencies has in no wise assumed a practical form, yet there is no doubt that it must continue to form the subject of earnest discussion in the press, and eventually demand a solution on the floor of the Imperial Parliament and in the Colonial Legislatures, throughout the Empire. At present British and Colonial Statesmen have not got beyond the tentative stage of discussion. The allusions made to the subject in the speeches of public men are of very general character and only prove the earnest desire that exists on all sides to prevent, what seems present in the minds of some thoughtful men, and that is, the disintegration of the Empire. It is significant, however, that so deep an interest should be taken in the question, even by men who, a few years ago, paid little or no attention to matters affecting the colonial dependencies, or were impressed by the belief that Separation was the inevitable consequence of the liberal measures of self-government conceded to certain sections of the Empire. That the idea of Separation should be no longer popular in England is a fact, which of itself shows how much better educated the public mind of Great Britain has become on the subject of the value of the colonial connection, and encourages us to believe, that Englishmen generally will earnestly and sincerely combine with the Colonial peoples to perfect some simple, efficient system, which will strengthen the whole Empire, and give greater influence to all its members.

In view of the importance that this question must assume in the future, it may be useful to consider for a few moments the condition of Canada and the sentiment of her people on the subject of Imperial connection. In order to do this intelligently it will be necessary in the first place to refer briefly to the leading features of the political condition of the Dominion and to the effect that the close neighbourhood of the American Republic is having, or is likely to have, upon her future destiny. It does not require any elaborate

argument to prove that no speculations in her future would be complete, that did not take into account the necessarily close commercial and social relations that exist between the two countries.

Canada within the last twenty years has made remarkable strides in the path of national development. Until 1867 the provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island had no community of commercial or political interests. They had no rapid means of communicating with one another, no common tariff, no system of interprovincial defence. They were so many distinct political entities whose only bond of union was the fact, that they all formed part of the British Empire and paid homage to the one Sovereign. Since the federal union of these long isolated communities, the Dominion of Canada has been given jurisdiction over a territory reaching to the shores of the Pacific Ocean — a country greater in territorial extent than the United States though inferior in variety of climate and in certain natural resources. On the Atlantic and Pacific coasts are noble harbours and all the natural characteristics necessary to maritime greatness. The large provinces of Quebec and Ontario are watered by a magnificent natural highway which connects the lakes of the West and the extremely productive region stretching beyond them, with the Atlantic Ocean. Between the lakes and the Pacific Shores stretches a region which, despite its severe climate, possesses facilities for wheat-production and grazing purposes not surpassed by any States of the American Union. Bituminous coal exists in large quantities not only in the North-West region, but at both extremities of the Dominion. [Five millions of people now inhabit this country where, a century ago, the total population did not exceed a hundred thousand souls. These people on the whole enjoy an amount of prosperity which may compare favourably with that of their progressive American neighbours, who have so long received the bulk of British and European emigration. Their system of government is well adapted to develop their industries and teach them self-reliance. Each province enjoys a system of self-government which gives it control of all those provincial and purely municipal affairs which naturally and conveniently appertain to a local administration. These affairs are administered by a lieutenant-governor, an executive council, a legislature, and municipal councils, all acting within a sphere of well defined functions. Over all the provinces is placed a central government which has control of all questions of national import like tariffs, defence, fisheries, and public works of dominion

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interest. The government of the vast north-west territory is exclusively in the hands of the Dominion authorities, who may carve out new provinces and establish therein all the machinery of government. The arrangement of the tariff is a matter entirely within the control of the dominion parliament and the imperial authorities no longer claim the right to interfere in anyway even though the taxation may weigh heavily on certain classes of British manufactures. The volunteer forces of Canada are fully equal to the internal defences of the country, and now in times of peace the presence of a fleet and a few troops at Halifax is the only visible evidence of British supremacy in Canada. The ability of the united provinces to cope with internal difficulties, and to do their full share in case of foreign aggression, has been clearly proved in the North-West region, where a nascent rebellion was crushed in a few weeks by the intrepidity of the Canadian volunteers, whose rapid march for thousands of miles at a most inclement season into a wilderness country is among the most remarkable achievements ever performed by relatively inexperienced troops. All these facts are so many evidences of the national development of a country whose political history as a British dependency goes back only to the latter part of the eighteenth century. To all intents and purposes Canada possesses many of the attributes of a sovereign independent state. England only retains the appointment of a governor-general as the head of the executive authority in the Dominion, and the right to disallow acts of the Canadian Parliament whenever they may interfere with matters of exclusively Imperial jurisdiction. Canada cannot directly enter into and perfect treaties with foreign powers — that being an act of Sovereignty — but her right to be consulted and represented in the negotiation of treaties immediately affecting her commercial interest, has been repeatedly recognized within the last thirty years. The Canadian Parliament cannot alter the written constitution, known as the British North America Act of 1867, except by the authority of the British Legislature from whom that instrument emanated; but the act gives power to the several provincial legislatures to amend their respective constitutions within certain limitations. The decisions of the Canadian Courts are not final as there is an appeal to the Lords of the judicial Committee of the Privy Council — the Supreme Court of the Empire in certain cases; and even this reference is only allowed with certain restrictions for it is not the practice to refer mere abstract questions of law to this committee.

Under this system of government Canada has made decided advances in material prosperity. She has carried a great line of railroad across the continent within less than a decade of years and built a system of canals superior to those of any other country in the world. [Cities like Toronte and Ottawa are increasing at a rate not exceeded by the most enterprising American communities, and one in the far West, the capital of Manitoba, has now a population of between ~~twenty~~ ^{twenty} and ~~thirty~~ ^{thirty} thousand souls though it has only sprung into existence since 1870. The government of Canada has exhibited a surprising amount of energy and enterprise in completing those great public works, which are absolutely essential to the development of the whole country, although in doing so a great debt has been accumulated. Of this debt, however, the people do not appear to make any loud complaints, since it is clear to them that it is intimately connected with the progress of the Dominion. If Canada is to hold her own in competition with the United States, it is only by affording such facilities to capital and population as will induce them to come into the country and develope its various resources.] It is not too much to say, that had the Canadian people not formed themselves into a federal union, and gone vigorously to work to develope the latent resources of their country, and to open up the great North-West, their absorption among their progressive American neighbours would have been by this time quite among the probabilities of the day.

There was a time in the history of Canada when annexation to the American Republic was, in the opinion of some Canadians, thought to be the only means of obtaining redress for undoubted public grievances, and for infusing new life into the industries of the country. Previous to the establishment of a liberal system of self-government in Canada, when political cliques, headed by crown officials, practically ruled the different provinces, there was a wide-spread feeling of dissatisfaction which at last culminated in a rebellion. At this time Lord Durham admitted in his able Report on the state of Canada, that the people were wont to contrast the liberality of the public institutions and the prosperity of all branches of industry in the United States, with the illiberal system of government and the poverty and depression that prevailed in the British provinces. The union of the two Canadas and the concession of Responsible Government gave a new impulse to the political and the industrial life of the people, and the whole of Canada, especially the large and fertile province of Upper Canada,

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now known as Ontario, entered on a career of prosperity not exceeded by that of the Western States. The discontent that had so long existed among all classes of the people, with the exception of the official and aristocratic governing coteries, yielded to a general sentiment of satisfaction with the new order of things. Now and then perhaps a few disappointed politicians or some enthusiastic youth would issue annexation manifestos, but the great body of the people never showed any inclination to unite their fortunes with their American neighbours. There is little doubt, however, that the political disunion which existed until 1867 among the provinces was not favourable to the creation of a national sentiment or to the consolidation of British interests, and that the existence of a Reciprocity Treaty for ten years from 1854 to 1864 was insidiously bringing about closer relations with the United States, especially in the provinces by the sea. There was no system of free trade between the provinces whilst British North America had with the United States a free interchange with certain commodities, which both countries largely produced. The intercourse of the maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island with the United States, naturally increased year by year, and the people of those provinces were beginning to look upon that country as the best market for their fish, coal and lumber and the same may be said in a measure of the agricultural west. Had the Reciprocity Treaty existed for another decade of years, and had the provinces continued isolated from one another, there would in all probability have grown up a strong annexation sentiment, the first evidence of which would have been a demand for a still more extended Treaty, and probably for a zollverein — an entirely impracticable scheme whilst Canada remains politically identified with the British Empire. Happily, as thoughtful men now believe, for the political interests of Canada, the statesmen of the United States at this critical time in Canadian history, refused to renew the Treaty when it expired by efflux of time, and it is notorious that some of them were animated in a measure by two considerations first, by a desire to punish the Canadians for the sympathy which they had generally felt for the South during the war of the Rebellion and secondly, by the hope that they could gradually force the people into the conviction, that their commercial interests were so closely identified with those of the United States, that the best guarantee for their prosperity was to be found in a political connection with that country.

At this critical juncture the statesmen of Canada determined to unite the provinces in a federal union. The successful accomplishment of this great measure to which English statesmen and publicists gave so cordial a support not only welded the people into a close political union, which seemed impossible less than half a century ago, but has given all the provinces free trade and considerable commercial intercourse with one another. From that day to this no political party in Canada has ventured to raise an annexation cry. There may be a growl now and then from a few disappointed merchants or politicians in the maritime provinces where, as I have just said, there has been created a close identity of interest with the New England States in consequence of the geographical situation of these countries and of the influence of the old Reciprocity Treaty. Some politicians in Nova Scotia have identified themselves with a secession movement, but their sincerity is very doubtful, and there is no sufficient reason so far to believe, that the mass of the people would be prepared, when they fully understand the question, to isolate their province once more as previous to 1867, practically to break up the Confederation, and prepare the way for absorption into the American Union. As a matter of fact the great proportion of the people of the Dominion are resolved on working out their own future apart from the United States, and on building up a new nationality to the north of the Republic. Canadians for the last twenty years, have taught themselves to be independent, not only in a political but in a commercial sense, whenever practicable, of their powerful neighbours. Their efforts have been directed as far as possible to new avenues of trade and to the building up of a large system of manufactures of their own, and to the cultivation in every way open to them of a spirit of self-reliance. The present fiscal policy of Canada is not favourably regarded in Great Britain, where a different theory of trade prevails and the manufacturers are very influential, but there is no doubt that the men who framed, and now support it well judged the disposition of the people when they called it the "National Policy". No happier designation could have been chosen to conceal any inherent weakness in the system than one which represents the aspirations of the majority of the people and especially of the youth of the country, for the consolidation of the political and commercial interests of the Dominion. The repeal of those clauses of the Washington Treaty of 1871, under which certain Canadian products were admitted free of duty into American ports as an equivalent in part of the admission of American fishermen

to the Canadian fisheries, has naturally led to a discussion as to the advisability of new commercial arrangements between the two countries, but whatever may be the result of the negotiations on the subject, it is quite certain that the dominant party in the Dominion is not likely to consent to any measures, which will at all interfere with the general operation of the National Policy. Canadians are quite ready to meet their neighbours in a spirit of compromise and to agree to such a treaty as will be mutually advantageous, but strictly on the basis, as far as Canadians are concerned, that their fisheries will not be sacrificed and that there cannot be any reciprocity in manufactures or in those products which may at all conflict with the growing industries of the Dominion or may even indirectly give a preference to American over British commodities. While these are the sentiments of a large political party — the one at present in power — the people of Canada generally have not been a little irritated by the hostile attitude assumed towards them by ~~the Republicans in Congress~~ since the repeal of the Washington Treaty. The unwillingness of ~~that party~~ to agree to any fair commercial arrangement between the United States and the Dominion, on the basis of a reciprocity in the valuable fisheries of Canada, has naturally stimulated the national spirit of Canadians and shown them the necessity of working out their own future patiently and determinately, without placing any too great dependence on the policy of their prosperous, energetic but not always very trustworthy neighbours whose desire for territorial aggrandisement and commercial supremacy on this continent has more than once carried them beyond the bounds of generosity and justice in their relations with the Canadian provinces.

Besides this national sentiment that is now so strong in Canada, especially among the young men, there have always existed certain influences most decidedly antagonistic to political absorption into the United States. No influence has been greater than that of the thoughtful, intelligent classes of the French Canadian population, who are anxious to preserve their institutions and language intact. There has always been a large influx of the lower class of French Canadians into the United States, especially into the manufacturing towns of New England. The mills of Fall River, Holyoke, and Sowell are now largely run by these people, who with all their slowness and disinclination to adapt themselves to new times and new things, are on the whole an orderly, industrious class of artisans. These men return from time to time to their own country, but few of them relatively appear to be animated

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by any controlling love for American institutions, and if they leave Canada and live in the manufacturing centres of the United States, it is with the desire of leading a more sociable life, and gaining more ready money than is possible in the sluggish agricultural districts of Quebec. The leading French Canadians, especially the priests whose influence over their flocks is perhaps greater than in any other Roman Catholic country of the world, have been always the first to point out the advantages of British connection on account of the security which it gives to their institutions as compared with the probable effects of absorption into the ranks of the American States, as illustrated in the case of the remnant of French in Louisiana. In addition to this powerful French Canadian influence in favour of the existing state of things, under which the French Canadian population exercises so much weight — at times, a supremacy, — in the political councils of the country, there is another sentiment which, if it does not appear to flow in as clear and well defined a current, nevertheless mingles with the stream of thought in the British speaking communities, and prevents it running in the direction of the United States. From the commencement until long after the close of the war of Independence, there was a steady influx of Royalists into the Provinces, and especially into New Brunswick and Ontario of which they were the founders. Some forty thousand souls in all made their homes in Canada and laid the foundation of that love for British institutions and British connection, which has ever been a recognized characteristic of the Canadian people. It may be easily supposed that the descendants of these royalists must now form no inconsiderable proportion of the five millions of the people who inhabit Canada, and must exercise a silent but none the less potent influence on the destinies of Canada. Of the members of the Senate and House of Commons some thirty gentlemen, several of them the leading men in both parties, are directly descended from this class, and we find them acting as lieutenant-governors and occupying important positions in every vocation of life throughout the Dominion.

All these influences would probably amount to very little if Canada should be overburdened with debt, her great sources of wealth paralysed, and her large schemes of opening up and peopling her undeveloped country in the North-West, fail of realisation during the next two decades of years. A wave of discontent and lost hope would then probably pass over the country and bring to the surface an annexation party; but it is idle to

speculate on what appears, as things are now, the most unlikely thing to happen. Whatever may be said by pessimistic writers like Mr. Goldwin Smith, or by discontented politicians in certain sections of the Dominion, success has so far on the whole crowned the efforts of Canadian Statesmen to consolidate the federation, and there is no reason to fear that their hope of seeing new and prosperous provinces stretching as far as the Pacific Ocean will not be realised during the next twenty or thirty years, as long as the mass of the people continue to be animated by that spirit of enterprise and national ambition, which has hitherto characterized their efforts.

For the foregoing reasons we may fairly conclude that the question of annexation to the United States is not in any shape before the people of Canada at the present time, and is not likely to be before them whilst the country continues to make the same progress it has made for years past. The advocates of Imperial Federation, need not therefore consider there is any question of annexation which can be of weight in the argument which they are pressing so strongly: that the time is fast approaching, when the dependencies will drift entirely away from the parent State unless an earnest effort is made to unite them more closely to her on terms compatible with their self-interest and self-respect. We are then called upon to consider the nature of the connection between Canada and England, and to inquire on what grounds it is urged the time is approaching, when there will be a necessity for a change in those relations. Certainly it cannot be argued, that this necessity will arise from the fact that the position of a dependency like Canada is a source of weakness to the parent State. She has far outgrown the state of colonial pupilage, and is in no way a burden upon the Empire. Her history of late years has conclusively proved, that she is fully capable of defending herself; and that in case of foreign invasion she is likely to do her part as creditably as in the war of 1812—15, when Canada was a poor, struggling colony. A foreign war affecting Canada would be in all likelihood waged for Imperial reasons, and she would be in no way responsible since she would have, as things are now, no direct influence in Imperial Councils. If Canada should then require protection and assistance, it could not be refused to her except at the loss of the prestige and honour of England. In the construction of her great public works Canada has had ever in view the consideration of her internal security. The Intercolonial Railway which connects the upper with the

maritime provinces follows a route which is neither the shortest nor the best from a commercial point of view, but the public men of Canada who urged its adoption always kept in view the fact that it is the safest in case of foreign aggression. The Pacific Railway, just completed between the two Oceans, is not merely a Dominion, but essentially an Imperial work which would be found of undoubted value in case of a war between Russia and England. The present Governor-General of Canada in the course of an address delivered some months ago to the citizens of the City of Victoria, in British Columbia, referred in emphatic terms to the importance of the road from an Imperial point of view. »You have here at Esquivalent” he said, »a naval station likely, »I think, in time to become one of the greatest and most important strongholds of the Empire. You have a coal supply sufficient »for all the navies in the world. You have a line of Railway »— part of which I had the pleasure of visiting today — which »is ready to bring that coal up to the harbour of Esquivalent. »You will shortly have a graving dock, capable of accommodating »all but one or two of her Majesty’s largest ships. You have, in »short, all the conditions requisite for what I believe is spoken »of as a *place d’armes*; but until now that *place d’armes* has »been inaccessible except by sea. We shall henceforth be able »to bring supplies, stores and material of war to it by an alternative »route, direct, expeditious, and lying for more than half its way »over British territory. I think, therefore, we need be under no »doubt as to the interests touched by the establishment of this »line, and that we may be assured that if this province has a »special interest in the matter, the whole Dominion, and not only »the whole Dominion, but the Empire at large, is likely to gain »in strenght and solidity by the change which is about to take »place.” England might have been fairly asked on Imperial grounds to contribute something to the construction of this work, so invaluable as affording a secure route to the Australasian and eastern possessions of England, but the fact that such assistance has never been given and that Canada has completed one of the most gigantic undertakings ever entered into by a young country, entirely on her own responsibility, is an evidence of her courage and ambition. Whilst Canada is in this way a source of strenght to the Empire, her people continue to be among the best customers of England, despite the National Policy. Of the total import trade of Canada — between twenty five and twenty six million pounds sterling a year — England alone supplies on the

average some ten million pounds worth of goods. Nearly one half of the total value of Canadian exports — some twenty millions of pounds sterling a year — finds its way to Great Britain. The great proportion of these exports consist of agricultural products, cattle, and lumber — articles now of prime necessity to the English people. Canada stands in the fifth rank among communities, as a buyer of British commodities. The value of the aggregate trade of Canada with England is exceeded only by that of the following countries, the United States, India, Australasia, France, Germany, Holland and Russia. Proportionately to population Canada is a better customer of England than the United States. Every Canadian buys at least two pounds sterling worth of English goods, whilst no citizen of the United States pays for only a little more than half a sovereigns worth. In the nature of things, as Canada increases in wealth and population and remains a dependency of the Empire, her people must always be large consumers of British manufactures. Annexation or Independence would in all probability bring about higher protection and the purchase of American rather than British goods. A Zollverein or free trade in manufactures between the two countries, would have practically the same effect.

But we are not left to grope in the dark for reasons why, in the opinion of the advocates of Imperial Federation, the present relations between the parent state and a great dependency like Canada are considered in certain respects unsatisfactory and must be more so in the years to come. Some Englishmen believe that a scheme of Imperial Federation which would give a uniform fiscal policy to the whole Empire, would be, not only more favourable to British commercial interests, but tend to weld the Empire as one — a question to which I shall refer a little later on. Others again see in the political development of Canada, as I have briefly reviewed it, the germs of separation from the parent state — 'hat the time must come when Canada with a population of ten or fifteen million people who have gained confidence in themselves, under the operation of their liberal institutions and the development of their industrial resources, will be hardly content with the position of a mere colonial dependency, however pleasant and comfortable it may be in the absence of national responsibility. It is urged with much force, that when Canada possesses the resources of a powerful nation, she will not be so ready to continue in that position of inferiority in the Empire, which she held without a murmur in the days when she was fully engrossed in the work

of developing her industries and laying the foundation of a state. The day may come, continue the advocates of Federation, when Canada will seriously ask herself, whether it is to her interest or profit to remain connected with an Empire on whose destinies she exercises less influence than do the people of Kent or Devon or Argyllshire, who are represented in an Imperial Parliament and can decide questions involving peace or war, the happiness and security of Englishmen the world over. Knowing as I do the loyalty and devotion of the Canadians, I believe that day is still far distant, but nevertheless the truth remains that there is peril latent in the fact that England can to morrow declare a war affecting most seriously the interests of Canada on the continent of America, with whose object her people may not in their hearts sympathize, although as heretofore they will rally their forces to fight for the honour and unity of the Empire. Such a position, its is urged, is only reconcilable with the infancy of a colony, and not with the growth and prosperity of a community like Canada, inhabited by a population not inferior in intelligence and energy to those Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen in the British Islands, to whom alone Imperial power is entrusted. As I have already stated Canada has gained much of late years with respect to the arrangement of commercial treaties; her High Commissioner is clothed with power, when it is necessary to enter into negotiations affecting the country he represents; nevertheless there are decided inconveniences in the fact that Canada cannot treat directly with foreign nations, but must act through the Imperial authorities as a matter of grace or favour. Canadian ships trade with every country in the world, — for the Dominion may claim to rank among the great maritime powers of the world — but where in the ports they visit do they meet with a consul who was born on Canadian soil or knows anything, as a rule, of the resources of the country? This is not a very important grievance but it is worthy of remark since it illustrates the little influence Canada exercises on the Empire at large — how completely she is ignored under existing political arrangements in the smallest matters by the governing powers of the Empire. If indeed we required any evidence that Canada is only a part of the Empire in name, we find it in the fact, that when her Parliament some years ago respectfully addressed the Imperial authorities in favour of the concession of a liberal measure of local government to Ireland, she was told in effect that it was none of her business. But we must not forget that of late years the services of eminent Cana-

dians have been recognized by the confirming of titles in a few cases. When we recall this fact, some of us cannot but notice, that even here there must be a distinction between Canadians and Englishmen; for it is somewhat noteworthy that in only one instance has the highest distinction of the Bath been conferred on a Canadian. Those gentlemen who received the first degree of this order were never elevated to the higher positions, but it was thought necessary to enlarge an inferior order with the express object of recognizing the services of distinguished Colonists. Canadians may be permitted to think, that in such cases it is not so much the men who are honoured as the order itself which obtains value from the fact, that they have accepted it in obedience to the commands of Her Majesty. This matter no doubt appears to most sensible persons of relatively small importance, but it is urged that it is also an evidence of the belief yet entertained by some Englishmen, especially in official circles, that Colonists are still essentially, inferior, and do not stand on an equality with the natives of the British Isles.

But the strongest argument advanced, by the advocates of Imperial Federation is the one already referred to: that the tendency of the extensive powers of self-government, now enjoyed by Canada, is in the direction of separation since it hardly seems possible, that a dependency will be satisfied with a relatively insignificant position in the Empire, when it attains to the dimensions of a nation. With a view of preventing the disintegration of the Empire in the years to come, a league of thoughtful men has been formed in England with branches in Canada and the other Dependencies, with the avowed object of fully discussing the whole question, ^{and the result} in the hope that the result will be the development of some practical scheme of union or federation on a basis which will preserve all the institutions of local government enjoyed by the dependencies and at the same time enable all sections of the Empire to combine more satisfactorily for certain common purposes with the parent state, than seems possible under existing circumstances. So far as the discussion has gone, there is a great diversity of opinion, and no one has been able to offer a scheme which is likely to prove workable. It is not the object of this paper to discuss the arguments of the able, thoughtful men who have devoted so much time already to the consideration of this question. All that I shall attempt to do, is to show the drift of the debate in Canada, on the various plans which have been already submitted for bringing the dependencies into closer connection with the parent state

and giving it greater influence in the Councils of the Empire.

This is not the first time that the people of Canada have had their attention directed to the desirability of a federation of the Empire. One of the most eloquent and popular Canadian Statesmen, the late Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia, whose name was long a household word in his own province, chiefly for his earnest and successful efforts in behalf of responsible government, many years ago discussed the question of a re-organisation of the empire in one of the most forcible and brilliant speeches ever delivered before a Canadian assemblage — a speech still often cited as the most elaborate exposition made in his days, of the growth and value of the colonial dependencies. The present leader of the Liberal party in the Canadian Parliament, has expressed his doubts of the stability of the existing relations between the parent state and the outlying sections of the Empire, and has advocated federation in general terms. Even the present astute Premier of Canada, the leader of the Conservative party, is a member of the league which was formed a year ago in London to agitate the question, and since then has expressed himself in favour of an improvement in existing relations on terms more compatible with the security and dignity of the Colonial Empire. But so far the whole question has not come out of the range of mere theoretical discussion. We may, however, come to the following conclusions, when we sum up the opinions of prominent public men and of the press so far as they have been expressed:

1. That the Canadians will accept no scheme, which may in any way whatever, weaken the admirable system of federal government and of provincial freedom which Canada now possesses under her present constitution.

2. That Canadians hesitate to entrust the arrangement of her financial or fiscal policy to any parliamentary body in which her representation will be necessarily small, and her influence consequently insignificant.

3. That a million and more of French Canadian people are decidedly antagonistic to any scheme of federation, which will curtail their privileges and bring them under the control of a federal parliament, in which their peculiar interests might be sacrificed and their identity as a distinct race eventually lost.

These objections are believed by not a few persons to lie for the present in the way of the adoption of the large scheme of federation, under which one general parliament would be created for the whole Empire — the most logical scheme on its face, since it

would give each province or section of the Empire control over its purely local or provincial affairs, — including England, Scotland and Ireland — and constitute one large legislative body to legislate on all matters which would naturally appertain to the whole Empire. It must be admitted that grand as appears this idea of a federation, the difficulties that impede its realization seem for the moment very difficult to surmount, not only for the reasons which are urged by Canadians generally, but from the evident disinclination of England to grant a separate legislative body to Ireland under the conviction that it would eventually lead to the independence of that Island. An alternative system has been proposed to meet the objections to the grander scheme. A solution of the difficulties is sought, for instance, in the establishment of an Imperial Council, or Board of Advice, something like the Board of Trade and Plantations which formerly existed as part of the Privy Council. This Council is to be composed of the Colonial Agents resident in London, and several prominent members of the English Ministry including the Premier. It is intended, however, to be only advisory. Whenever questions should arise affecting any part of the Empire, the members of the body would consult together and inform the Imperial Cabinet of the result of their deliberations, of the opinions of their respective governments, and of the state of feeling in their respective countries, on the subject-matter of deliberation and discussion. Lord Lorne, whose opinions are entitled to great respect, since every Canadian knows how sincere is his desire to promote the best interests of the colonial peoples, would send certain Colonial delegates to the House of Commons to keep the House informed on all questions affecting the different sections of the Empire, to assist in impressing the views of their respective countries on the government and Parliament, and in short to perform all the duties of representatives except vote. In fact there would be a little coterie of Colonial politicians in Parliament, something like the delegation from the territories of the United States in Congress; but it is quite certain that this scheme of an advisory council, and of mere delegation in Parliament has never been yet seriously discussed in Canada. Such a Board would have little or no influence over the government or parliament of the Empire; its deliberations could not affect the fate of parties; it would simply add to the clerical staff of the Colonial Office. The British Government can now consult, if they think necessary, the High Commissioner of Canada and the Agents general of the other dependencies in London, and

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can have the advantage at any moment of the advice of the head of the Executive in the Dominion or in the other sections of the Empire, and it would be difficult to see in what respect an advisory Council, as proposed by Lord Grey and others, would exercise more weight than do these agents acting in their separate capacities, as accredited representatives of their several countries. As to the other part of the scheme it would be no representation in the real sense of the term. The territorial delegation in the House of Representatives at Washington is merely a temporary expedient until the territories become sufficiently populous to be erected into new states with a full and complete representation in the two Houses of Congress — with as many members in the Senate as the powerful State of New York, and a representation in the other House based on population. Such an expedient would be little flattering to the national pride of Canadians. A large scheme of federation, which would certainly give Canada a fair representation in Parliament, a representation increasing with her population — one or two seats in the Ministry, and elevate some of her best men to a House of Lords, reconstructed in accordance with Lord Rosebery's idea, can be supported on grounds quite consistent with the dignity and self-respect of the people of the dependencies, since it would give them a direct influence in the great councils of the Empire. In countries like England and her great dependencies political power and representation go together. and the establishment of an advisory Council would be a perfectly illusory concession to the Colonial dependencies. The advocates of an improvement in the relations between the great colonies and the parent State, attach great importance to the fact that the former have no influence on the Councils of the Empire and would hardly be satisfied with the creation of a body of officials, who, like the old Board of Plantations would soon sink into insignificance and oblivion, until some day a practical Statesman would make some troublesome enquiries and eventually move to abolish such purely useless machinery.

In Canada as in other parts of the Empire there is, however, a widespread feeling that the discussion which has arisen in connection with the question of Federation, will do a great amount of good by attracting more attention to the development of the colonies, by dispelling a vast amount of ignorance that still exists on matters affect' g their interests, and in this way bring about a better appreciation of each others desires and motives. It is safe to say that such misunderstandings as frequently arose under the

old regime of the colonial office, during the times when Downing Street officials were "meddling and muddling" can never now arise with the more correct knowledge that is already possessed by prominent Englishmen of Colonial affairs, and the desire that now exists among all classes of English politicians to attach due weight to the colonial connection. The interest taken of late in colonial affairs has undoubtedly strengthened the public sentiment in favour of the Imperial connection. If any one, indeed, takes the trouble to read the speeches of Canadian Statesmen or the opinions of leading writers in the press, he will see that they abound with expressions of strong affection for the parent State, and of an earnest wish to continue, if possible, the connection under which Canada is so rapidly laying the foundations of a powerful State.

It must not be supposed from anything I have written that there is a feeling of antagonism to the scheme throughout the Dominion. The fact is, no steps have yet been taken in the direction of a practical consideration of the subject. A few thoughtful men are attempting to create a public sentiment on the question, but the public men and press generally are silent in the absence of any practical scheme, which they can consider, whilst the mass of the people are too busy to pay any attention to what is so far a purely theoretical conception. There are so many decided advantages in the present political position of the country, that some great national crisis alone can show the people how frail after all in some respects are the ties that now bind the colonies to the Empire. Because the people are now indifferent on the subject is no reason why the advocates of an improvement in the relations between the parent State and the Colonies should feel discouraged. Previous to 1865 the confederation of the provinces of British North America had been briefly discussed in parliament and in the press, but the majority of the people throughout the country appeared to take little interest in the matter, and it was not until the political necessities of the two Canadas became very great, when government had become almost impracticable on account of divisions between the French and English sections, that leading men of both parties united on the general basis of the confederation. The legislative union of Scotland and England was not successfully consummated until the cause of the Protestant succession to the throne was in danger. The present constitution of the United States only became the fundamental law of the whole people, when the old confederation proved a mere rope of sand, and there was every prospect of disintegration. The same may

be the case with the great question, still new to the popular mind throughout the Empire. Some great national emergency may rise to show the parent State as well as her dependencies, the inequality and insecurity of the basis on which the Empire rests. At present the Canadians may be apathetic for reasons which I have endeavoured to set forth as concisely as possible, but fifteen or twenty years hence when Canada will have a large population, and her vast territory will be divided into flourishing provinces extending continuously from the Atlantic to the Pacific, they may feel that the time has come for demanding a higher position in the councils of the Empire, commensurate with their growth and importance. Questions of tariff may then sink into insignificance and a people of fifteen or twenty millions will be entitled to a representation which may give them sufficient influence over the affairs of the Empire, and guard all their own immediate interests. The national sentiment which is slowly developing among the people, may become dominant and force Canada to assert herself more determinately. Any one looking at the political movement throughout the Empire, has every reason for thinking that events are shaping themselves for important political changes. The parent islands themselves are on the eve of a social and political revolution, the result of which cannot be foreseen by the most sagacious statesmen. The Imperial Parliament must sooner or later be compelled to relieve itself of some of its functions which now render legislation in many cases impracticable. A complete system of local government for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is admitted even by timid politicians to be urgent; and federal union between England, Scotland and Ireland, by which the latter would obtain a legislature for local or provincial purposes, as in the Canadian federal system, does not seem in the opinion of some advanced thinkers beyond the range of political possibilities. The Australian dependencies are improving their facilities for joint action and must eventually recognize the necessity, that exists for a wider scheme of federation. Even the West Indies are commencing to see the necessity of some bond of political union although no decided step has yet been taken in this direction. No doubt the principle of federalism, which above all other principles of government combines a strong central authority with local freedom of action, is likely in the future to suite all communities, naturally allied to each other by ties of a common nationality or common political and commercial interests. The United States and Germany and Austria-Hungary to a minor degree, illustrate the growth in modern times of this great gover-

ning principle which has resulted, from the necessity that has arisen in these days of democratic tendencies for giving as full play as possible to the desire that exists in every community for local selfgovernment. By the commencement of the twentieth century, in all probability the several groups of colonies which enjoy representative institutions will be strongly consolidated into a series of powerful federal States, and become in fact so many semi-independent nations. Then in the nature of things, it will be absolutely necessary to settle their future position among the communities of the world. Some great political convulsion may precipitate matters, but in the ordinary course of events some years must pass before the problem is likely to demand a solution. It is not a matter of doubt, however, that the time is not far distant when the question of the future relations between England and her dependencies must be seriously considered by the statesmen of all parts of the Empire. Before that time arrives, it is to be hoped that some practical scheme may be revolved to satisfy the reasonable and legitimate ambition of the Colonies, and at the same time give greater unity, and security to the Empire.

It is quite possible that this year, when the whole British Empire will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne, may see some progress made in the direction of a better organization of the relations between England and the Colonies. The idea of the Imperial Institute to which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is lending his powerful aid, is one deserving of every encouragement, since should it be fully realized, it must tend to stimulate an interest in the resources and progress of the Colonial dependencies and educate the people of England from year to year on the subject. The conference of representatives of the principal Colonial governments, which is likely to be held next summer under the direct auspices of the Imperial authorities, is signal evidence of the sentiment that prevails among British Statesmen on the subject of the relations between the parent state and her dependencies. At this conference it is proposed to discuss the subjects of Imperial defence and of Imperial inter-communication as a whole, in order that the needs of all parts of the Empire may, as far as practicable, be provided for. It is quite within the range of possibilities, that the conference, if properly and judiciously arranged, may lead to results most favourable to the unity and stability of the Empire. The fact that such a conference is now even urged is very conclusive proof of the growing opinion of the necessity of a better organization of the Empire.

In the preceding pages I have not attempted to discuss the subject of Independence, knowing as I do that there are no number of thoughtful men who believe that it would be prudent or wise for Canada to imperil her present position of ease and security for one which would immediately entail so many heavy responsibilities at a juncture when she is already fully burdened with obligations which it will require all her energies to meet for many years to come. No Canadian will of course deny that the time may arrive when a state of higher political existence may become the natural object of the aspirations of every man who is proud of his country and its successes; but it is certain that many years must elapse before any question of this kind can possibly arise. If separation should be inevitable in the years to come when Canada will occupy a position of no ordinary weight and importance among the communities of the world, it will be through a combination of causes which must prove stronger than her devotion to the country, with which it has always been her pride to be connected. It is questionable if Englishmen generally even yet fully appreciate the sincerity of the loyalty which has kept her always a dependency of the Empire through good and evil report. The inducements to join her fortunes with those of the United States have been undoubtedly very powerful at times. It is certain she could to morrow enter the ranks of the American States on terms compatible with her self-respect and largely to her commercial advantage. But Canadians, as I have already shown, have never listened to the voice of the charmer, charm be ever so sweetly. They have always believed that their true interests lie in the direction of establishing a federation which will be a friendly competitor with its great neighbour in the important work which both, as agents of civilization, have to perform on this continent. When, as in the nature of things must be the case, Canada has far outgrown the position of mere dependency on England, and the inequalities that now exist between her and the mother country become more obvious to her people, she is not likely to make an effort to dis sever the ties that bind her to the Empire in a spirit of impatience and ingratitude. If the difficulties that now appear to impede the successful accomplishment of a large scheme of federation continue as impracticable as they seem at present, if the necessities of the Empire do not bring about a practical solution of the problem which is now occupying the attention of public men in England, Canada will be very false to her past record if she should ask to stand alone, without a single

link of connection between herself and that England to whom she owes so much. If the difficulties that arise from distance, tariffs, and representation, cannot be arranged on terms which will preserve the interests of all sections of the Empire, then at least it will be open to Canada and the other great countries which are now dependencies of the Empire, should they be dissatisfied with the existing state of things, to assume a higher position among communities, and at the same time enter into a solemn League and Compact with their old parent for their common defence and security. Then England, whose manifest destiny it is to perpetuate her language and institutions in every quarter of the globe, would still be able to retain that prestige which the possession of a great Colonial Empire has long given her, while Canada and the other countries which are of British origin would be in a position to satisfy their national aspirations and at the same time preserve the connection on terms which would be at once a recognition of their importance and of their respect and affection for the parent State.

House of Commons,
20th January, 1887.

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