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**Catholic Record.**  
LONDON, SATURDAY, SEPT. 26, 1888.

### THE FUTURE OF CANADA.

It is as well for nations as it is for in-  
dividuals to look betimes ahead, that  
they may be prepared for the eventual-  
ities of the future. The destinies of  
nations as well as of individuals are in  
the hands of God, but it is the manifest  
duty of both to prepare themselves for  
correspondence with the Divine will in  
their regard. It is not given to man to  
look into the future with anything of ex-  
actitude and certainty. But to men of  
observation it is given to study the signs  
of the times, to examine into and care-  
fully consider the forces at work in the  
life of a nation that must eventually  
work changes of import in that life  
either for the better or the worse. Great  
political changes are not the growth of  
a day. The American revolution of  
1776, the French revolution of 1789, and  
the peaceful Canadian revolution of 1867,  
are all cases in point. The American  
colonists had left Britain to enjoy the  
pleasures and privileges of liberty in the  
new world. They well understood the  
rights of freemen, and from the begin-  
ning, either in their houses of Burgesses  
or general courts, exercised control over  
their domestic concerns. The enjoy-  
ment of these representative institutions  
produced as a natural result a desire  
for wider action and increased scope  
in the management of their  
affairs, in a word, created and fostered  
a national spirit brought suddenly into  
a life and death struggle by the aggres-  
sions of the British Parliament, at the  
close of the seven years' war, on their  
ancient rights and privileges. The French  
revolution was the outgrowth of regal  
absolutism, courtly extravagance and  
immorality, the grinding oppression of  
the poor by the nobles; the general  
lack of statesmanship in the manage-  
ment of public affairs, and lastly, the  
diffusion of immoral and irreligious lit-  
erature among the reading classes of the  
nation. These causes had been long at  
work, and at length from them  
the mightiest convulsion that ever  
shook the globe startled and affrighted  
all mankind. Our own peaceful revolution  
of 1867 was the effect of causes long  
at work. It had for years been the  
desire of British statesmen to secure  
the fusion of the French with the Eng-  
lish-speaking races of Canada. Hence  
the denial of responsible government to  
Lower Canada, hence the encroachments  
of the Executive and Legislative Coun-  
cils of that Province on the rights of the  
people—culminating in the ill-judged  
and ill-fated rebellion of 1837, hence, in  
fine, the union of 1841 between Upper  
and Lower Canada, brought about with  
the view of placing the French Canadian  
majority in a minority in the Legislature  
and thus weaken and ultimately destroy  
its political power. The failure of this  
purpose is too well known to our readers  
to need recital here. Lower Canada  
although not keeping pace in population  
with her sister province, became the  
stronger in political power. After twenty  
years of unhappy partnership Upper  
Canada sued for terms, demanding con-  
stitutional changes that would give each  
of the Provinces absolute control over its  
local and domestic affairs. The coalition  
of 1864 and the union of 1867, which  
included also the Provinces of Nova  
Scotia and New Brunswick, were the  
product of the agitation that had long  
disturbed and distracted the United  
Canada created in 1841.

The Canadian confederation now in-  
cludes all British North America from  
Vancouver to Prince Edward Island.  
Vast natural resources and an enlight-  
ened industrious and ambitious popu-  
lation give promise to Canada of a bright  
future. It is idle, however, to deny that  
the governmental system inaugurated  
in 1867 is now on trial, and that this

union is exposed to grave dangers which  
nothing but patriotism of the highest  
order and statesmanship of the broadest  
and most far-reaching charac-  
ter can avert. The constitution  
of 1867 conferred on the Federal Parlia-  
ment certain powers and prerogatives  
therein distinctly enumerated, and at  
the same time invested the Provincial  
Legislatures with a certain other scope  
of action, equally, to all seeming, as well  
defined. During the eighteen years that  
have since elapsed there has been fre-  
quent clashing of authority between the  
local and federal authorities—and there  
has been manifested on the part of the  
latter a tendency to centralization, that,  
if pushed to extremes, must result in  
the shattering of the edifice of confeder-  
ation. Then the sources of revenue  
provided for the Provinces have, in most  
cases—in fact, we may say in all cases,  
for Ontario itself is rapidly approaching  
an era of deficits—proved inadequate to  
their wants. Hence agitation and dis-  
content. At the very last session of the  
Legislature of Nova Scotia, to a motion  
in favor of a repeal of the Union, the  
Hon. Mr. Fielding, First Minister of  
that Province, felt bound to move the  
following amendment:

"Whereas, previous to the union of  
the Provinces, the Province of Nova  
Scotia was in a most healthy financial  
condition; and whereas, strong objections  
were taken at the time of the union to  
the financial terms thereof, relating to  
the Province of Nova Scotia, as being  
wholly inadequate to meet the require-  
ments of the various services left under  
the management of the Provincial Parlia-  
ment; and whereas, after seventeen  
years under the union, successive govern-  
ments have found that the  
objections which were urged against  
the terms of union at first, apply  
with greater force now than in the first  
year of the Union, and the feeling of dis-  
content with regard to the financial ar-  
rangement is now more general and more  
deeply fixed than ever before; and where-  
as, these facts have been brought to the  
notice of His Excellency the Governor  
General and the Federal Ministry by the  
address unanimously passed by the Legis-  
lative Council and the House of Assembly,  
and also by representatives of a delega-  
tion from the Provincial government,  
without satisfactory results up to this  
time; therefore, Resolved, that if the Gov-  
ernment and Parliament of Canada fail  
to make provision during the present  
session of the said Parliament to place  
the Province of Nova Scotia in a better  
financial position in the Union, this  
House affirms that it will be necessary to  
secure a severance of the political con-  
nection between this province and the  
Dominion of Canada."

This amendment was carried by a  
decisive majority. Nova Scotia does not  
stand alone in its demand for a read-  
justment of the Provincial finances.  
Quebec has long addressed vigorous  
and pronounced demands to the Federal  
Government for better terms. Manitoba  
has obtained, and Ontario is desirous  
of obtaining, such terms. These  
facts, not to speak of others  
pointing in the same direction, indicate  
the necessity of a thorough and final  
readjustment of the financial relations  
between the Provinces and the Domini-  
on. We have already, as our readers  
are aware, advocated such a read-  
justment, and hope, for the best interests  
of Canada, that no delay will be made in  
bringing it about. The question of  
Provincial autonomy is one even of more  
vital interest and importance in itself  
than that of the financial position of the  
constituent part of the Dominion, and  
can hardly be separated therefrom, for  
without adequate revenue, it must be  
impossible for the Provinces to preserve  
independence in their own proper  
spheres. We have before us a speech  
of the Hon. Mr. Royal, member for  
Provencher, and a leading Conservative  
delivered in Montreal in 1884. He said:

"All the Provinces of Canada are  
deeply interested in the maintenance  
of the actual system, provided that it  
never depart from the organic prin-  
ciples adopted at the conference of  
Quebec. What are these principles?  
There are two which, above all others,  
appear to me essential. The first affirms  
the absolute independence of the Provinces  
and of the Federal government in the  
exercise of their respective powers.  
Each of these two great political bodies  
has its proper life, its separate sphere  
of action and its distinct machinery to  
prevent or nullify the effect of any  
possible collision. From their harmony  
will result national prosperity, but from  
their confusion and clashing must  
come certain ruin for Canada, moral  
ruin and material ruin. The second  
principle, not less fundamental than  
the first, solemnly establishes  
between all the Provinces an abso-  
lute equality of rights and duties  
in regard to the Federal Government.  
I find this principle distinctly proclaimed  
by the fathers of Confederation and  
affirmed in a manner not less formal  
in the constitution of each of the Provinces  
united in 1867. This principle is the  
necessary outcome of the Federal sys-  
tem. There should not be within the  
Federal union any Province more favored  
or better treated by the central authority  
than the others. The general govern-  
ment should apply the same rule to all,  
under the penalty of causing sooner or  
later an explosion of internal rivalries,  
jealousies, and dangerous agitations.  
Laws, wise, clear and just, laws appli-  
cable in all cases and places, should regu-  
late beforehand all the relations be-  
tween the central Government and the  
Provinces. Thus far we have only heard of  
the attempts, involuntary if you will, of  
the Federal Parliament to encroach  
upon Provincial jurisdictions. It seems to  
me, though I may be mistaken, it seems

to me, I say, that another tendency,  
equally dangerous in my eyes, has not  
been sufficiently condemned, viz., that  
which aims at the destruction of the  
equality of the Provinces between them-  
selves."

On the same occasion, the feast of St.  
John the Baptist, 1884, Judge Routhier,  
one of the ablest speakers and deepest  
thinkers in his Province, said:

"Gentlemen, I have affirmed that we  
should defend the autonomy of the  
Province of Quebec. The federal pact  
imposes on us certain duties in regard  
to the union, and these we should faith-  
fully and devotedly fulfill. But it is at  
the same time guaranteed to us certain  
rights in the exercise of which we are re-  
spected. Our religious liberty and our  
provincial autonomy are guaranteed to  
us, and we must never permit any  
attempt on either of these precious ele-  
ments of our nationality. We favor the  
federal union, but not the absorption of  
the Provinces. We desire to work in  
harmony, to bear our share of  
labor and of sacrifice in promoting the  
prosperity and glory of Canada our  
common country; but we also wish to  
preserve our national personality, our  
particular character, the distinctive  
marks of our race, and our well-defined  
rights in the exercise of which we re-  
spect, we desire to be Canadian, loyal  
and faithful subjects of Her Britannic  
Majesty, but we further wish to be per-  
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