

The first hypothesis being set aside, there remain Independence, and Political Union with the United States. Here again public opinion dares hardly declare itself on account of party considerations. With us, dissimulation forms such an integral part of our political life that most of us are quite prepared to deny the existence of the sun at mid-day, should such a statement in any way shock the prejudice of any individual or group of acknowledged influence and position. In a situation so complex as ours it could not be otherwise. Not only the political chiefs but even the rank and file of their following must beware of expressing any idea which has not received the approbation of a majority the more difficult to satisfy in that it is composed of elements often more antagonistic than heterogeneous. One may not even state bare facts, for fear approves them *in petto*.

And this is why—when the word “Annexation” is on the lips of every man, when the mention of Independence in a political meeting is the call for unanimous applause—there may yet be found politicians who, though neither blind nor deaf, will affirm to the agents of foreign newspapers that there is no desire for annexation in Canada, that no one longs for Independence, and that French Canadians in particular wish for but one thing—to be left where they are, while the rest of the world goes on its way. It is high time this legend should be reduced to its true significance. As I have already said, England for us is an ally to whom we are faithful, and toward whom we have no real or serious cause of complaint, but who, after all, does not call forth any spontaneous affection on our part. Should the day ever come when we must choose between the loyalty we owe to her and the love we bear our own children, she will have no right to expect from us the heroic abnegation of siding with her “for better, for worse.” And this day cannot now be far distant. Nations, like individuals, cannot forever remain in tutelage; and the more we increase in number, the further we tread in the way of progress, the more pressing our need and cry for emancipation become. What form this emancipation may take is the question to be solved, and here again the French Canadian finds himself in a peculiar position.

Of course any independence that would give to the Province of Quebec, that is to say, to French Canadians, an autonomy of its own, distinct from that of the other confederated Provinces, is out of the question. Such an independence would be of no real benefit to us, for it would, on the contrary, isolate us while paralyzing the movements of the community as a whole. If Independence had for effect