

bonds, it is surely absurd to maintain that Canada is an independent nation. Canada and Great Britain are really bound together at least in some measure by almost every tie which binds men to men and nation to nation. We are bound together by literature, history and law, by common liberties, common forms of government and common political ideals. Canada is not wholly independent fiscally, internationally or morally, or even executively and legislatively. There is not a single stratum in the whole pyramid of the Canadian constitution from apex to base where ties do not emerge which bind her to the Motherland. Some of these bonds may be stronger and some weaker, while some even may be almost invisible, but bonds they are, sanctioned by mutual usage and by mutual approval and consent. In the work of Empire some of these bonds may be destined to be broken, some to remain, some to be changed, and some to be strengthened, but to declare that they are even now all broken and repudiated is surely to use words and arguments in reckless disregard of truth.

The real confusion, however, in this whole matter seems to hang about our conception of colonial autonomy or freedom. Canada is exceedingly jealous of her autonomy. This problem of freedom or autonomy is, indeed, a confusing one to the human mind, both in political and individual ethics. The modern mind, for example, has always manifested a distinct tendency to confuse autonomy with independence or isolation. Autonomy is conceived as the state of being without bonds. If Canada were independent she would at least be free. This conception of freedom, however, is really the exact reverse of the truth. Paradoxical as it may seem to say so, the state of autonomy is always necessarily a state of bondage. The more numerous and far-reaching the bonds the wider and fuller the range of freedom. The

bonds which bind us to our fellows are the only possible wires or transit lines along which the energies of free-will can be effectually exercised. "Man," says Aristotle, "is a political animal." He can only exist and exercise his freedom under the bondage of political conditions. Men can exercise their freedom only by making contracts with their fellows, and by being bound by them when they are made. The man who refuses to make or to perform his contracts or to pay his debts is not a free man; he is merely a self-created outlaw who has denied himself all the prerogatives of freedom. Upon this conception of freedom or autonomy rests, we need hardly add, the whole fabric of civil and political rights alike in communities, nations and empires. The only true path of political freedom is the path of organic political development.

This conception of freedom or autonomy, then, being admitted to be the true one, the sole question for the Canadian autonomist is whether Canada, as a political unit, is likely to enjoy a greater measure of such freedom within or without the Empire. *Prima facie* the presumption is always against and not in favor of separation. *Prima facie* separation means loss of opportunity and loss of opportunity loss of freedom. The only possible method of rebutting this presumption is by showing that the colonial tie is a means of political oppression in the Colonies. We doubt, however, if any thinking man could be found in Canada who would be willing to advance this argument seriously. Canada surely has no grievances worthy of mention. On the contrary, it is admitted almost everywhere that the British Empire is the freest political community in the world. Under no other political system are human liberties so free and human rights so sure. British citizenship enjoys a measure of civil and political relationship of wider range, richer content, and greater op-