

sides? Is imperialism the true solution? Then let the advocates of imperialism take the platform and demonstrate their case. Is continentalism wrong and unsound? Then what is the difficulty of so demonstrating to the intelligent thinking people of Canada? If there is anything that will throw doubt and discredit upon a cause, it is the fear to challenge the crucial test of fair, open and manly discussion.

I said at the beginning that my only object in this article was to clear ground, not to give opinions on the merits of the several proposals. Indeed I have no definite opinions to give. In common with most of my fellow citizens I do not conceive that the moment has arrived for making a decision on this vast question, but I recognize that the moment is approaching. There is no need of haste, and yet every reason for thought. Of the four alternatives presented above there is only one upon which I have any settled convictions, and that is in relation to the first. I am clear that the existing condition of things cannot and ought not to last. If British subjects we are to remain, then I say, a thousand times better that we be a co-ordinate part than a mere dependency of the empire. If I am to accept Great Britain's protection then I want to be a man and pay my share of the shot; and if I am to share the fortunes of the British Empire I want to have a say in shaping these fortunes. If there be a career of glory within the compass of the national service I wish that career open to me and to my children.

But in reaching a decision in this overshadowing question, whether my moral instincts be right or wrong, I propose to be guided solely by my conceptions of the best interests of Canada. I put this first and make it supreme. If the interests of Canada are identical with the interests of Great Britain, well; if they come in conflict in

any form, I shall take my stand on the side of Canada. In the years to come, as this question of Canada's destiny becomes from day to day more pressing and immediate, I shall listen respectfully to all who have views to present. I shall not be afraid to seek light from any quarter or any source. I shall listen and give as full weight to whatever is urged by the advocate of political union with the United States as to that which is presented by the Imperialists. I maintain positively and unreservedly that any citizen of Canada, in office, or out of office, has the same right to stand upon the public platform and advocate by fair argument union with the United States, as any other citizen has to advocate Federation with the Empire, or independent national life. There is no official in the Dominion of Canada, from the Prime Minister down, whose oath of office precludes him from standing on any platform in Canada and telling his countrymen, when it becomes his duty to express his views, his conscientious convictions as to the wisest and best course for them to pursue in deciding the destinies of the country.

Because I have put in a plea for fair discussion, I have no doubt I shall be charged, as has often been done before, with being an advocate of political union with the States. This will be entirely without foundation. I never advocated political union, and if I were compelled to make a choice of the alternatives to-day, I would not vote for political union. But I do wish the question intelligently threshed out. Up to this point there has been no fair discussion of this great question in Canada. The advocate of Imperialism has mounted himself on the platform of a lofty abstract loyalty and any one who dared to suggest any destiny for Canada that did not find its centre in Downing Street was a traitor and a scoundrel. So eminent a man as Professor Goldwin Smith,