

should, through pride of race and enthusiasm for the old flag, be ready to accept a perpetual vassalage and a dangerous solidarity, in the hope, by cementing the different parts of the empire, of upholding England in that preponderance of power which now seems slipping from her grasp. But we, Canadians of French origin, have not at all the same motives of sacrifice towards Downing Street. We are British subjects by neither blood nor choice. No particular affection binds us to England. We honor her flag which floats above us; we have before this spilt our blood in her defence, and we are still ready to answer her call, as a matter of duty; but she does not awaken with us any of those feelings which stir a nation. Reason and argument cannot destroy the stamp of nature. Our mother-country is France! If ever a conflict should arise between her and England, which God forbid—it is hard for me to say so, but it is true—we should be for France. Treason! some may cry. Nonsense; for our forefathers never voluntarily consented to become British subjects, and if we are such it is against their will and ours. Except for England and her cannons, we should still live under the flag of France.

Well, then, in presence of these facts, and since, in spite of all ties of blood and tradition, we should refuse political alliance with our former mother-country, how could we be expected to consent to an infeoffment not only with the United Kingdom, but also with distant countries like Australia, the Indies, East and West, and those other lands spread all around the globe, with which, although parts of that "Empire upon whose flag the sun never sets," we have no more natural connection than with the planet Mars? Such striking considerations appeal to even the most illiterate of my compatriots, and if French Canadians have a voice in the matter, they will never consent to sign a pact more galling perhaps to their feelings than hurtful to their material interests. Therefore, in my opinion—an opinion I hold in common with all our statesmen, publicists and men of business—if, in discussing the different forms of government which Canada might finally accept, the views of the French Canadians are taken into consideration, Imperial Federation must be absolutely thrown aside. It is conceivable that pressing political considerations or party exigencies may stifle the expression of public opinion through the press or from the platform upon this point; but those who can speak freely and without compromising any impending question must admit it.