

FEDERATION, ANNEXATION, OR INDEPENDENCE?

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INDICATIONS are not wanting that the discussion of the above question, with regard to Canada, will ere long be brought within the domain of practical politics. Hitherto the matter has been relegated more to the arena of debating societies and magazine articles; but gradually the people of the country are being aroused to the fact that the question is to them one of prime and vital importance, and one which insists upon being answered. People are beginning to see more clearly every day, that the position in which this country at present stands to the rest of the world, is not a permanent position: that the growth and expansion of the country, in wealth, population, and territorial control, must be accompanied by a corresponding growth and expansion of the political system: that the voiceless submission to a supreme Governmental authority, though adapted to the governing of a small colony, is yet unsuited to the requirements of a vast and important country. When Canada has become a great nation, as before many years she will, we in Canada must have our due and proper voice in the direction of the supreme affairs of that nation; and in what way that voice will be best heard; what scheme of governing will best maintain the integrity of the nation, give effect to the will of the people, and further the material well-being of all will be the answer to the question we have before us. Shall we have an Imperial Federation of the British Empire, with all parts of the Empire represented in one Imperial Parliament? or shall we have annexation to

the United States, with representation in the Congress at Washington? or, shall we have Canadian Independence, with our own Chief Executive officer, and our own supreme Parliament? Which? The current of events is rapidly drifting us towards one or the other of these three positions, and ultimately—perhaps sooner than many think—one or the other we must assume. As a final resting-place, there can be no intermediate position. Federation, Annexation, or Independence: which shall it be?

And first a few words to point out how the growth and development of this country must necessitate a change in the present system of governing. It may be considered in different aspects. Let us see how we stand at present in regard to war.

If England were to go to war tomorrow with any of the Great Powers of Europe, how would this affect Canada? It is evident that Canada, as a part of the British Empire, would become at once an object of attack for the power with which England was at war. It would at once be necessary for us out here to put our army upon a war footing; to fortify and protect our seaports; and to have everything in readiness to repel an attack which might be made at any moment. While England, on the one hand, could obtain no support, as a matter of right, from Canada; while she would be unable to call upon a Canadian army to assist her in the field; while Canada, on the other hand, could derive no honour or glory from the war; while she could reap no benefit from it, yet would Canada require to incur all the