

his South Oxford constituents, he said : " It cannot be that these great Provinces shall always be permitted to hold their present relations to the Mother Country. We cannot expect that Britain will always, without consideration, send her navy to guard our shores. We cannot expect that British troops shall always, without consideration, stand ready to defend us against attack. We must look forward to the day when the whole of British America shall stand together, and in close alliance and heartiest sympathy with Great Britain be prepared to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a great and powerful nation." If it be replied that these words were uttered under circumstances different from those now existing, I would answer that the changes have tended to increase the difficulty of maintaining the present alliance.

My reason for holding this opinion is the fact that in the present system of government there is no provision in existence for securing that united action which experience has proved to be essential to the maintenance of any sort of union. Unity of action is the basis of every sort of association, be it political, ecclesiastical, commercial, benevolent, or fraudulent. Hence the existence of some authority to enforce such a course of action amongst the several parties associated is essential to the permanence of any organization or corporation, whatever. That in a state " absolutism must reside somewhere " is an admitted maxim of political science. But in the British Empire at present it practically resides nowhere. The several countries composing it are, in fact, almost independent of one another. Each acts with a view to its own peculiar interests ; but the confusion of prerogatives is so great that the act of one may affect all. England possesses exclusive control of diplomacy ; she can make war and peace for the whole Empire without consulting the Colonies, whose relations towards foreign states are thus entirely at her disposal. On the other hand, England is responsible to foreign countries for the action of colonial officials towards their people ; but of these officials she usually appoints only the Governor, and where " responsible government " exists, his power to command is very small. The Colonies can tax the products of the Mother Country to any extent which they may desire ; and it

can do the same with those of the Colonies. England's insistence on the Colonies assisting in their own defence, and the withdrawal from them of imperial troops, have led to the formation of separate armaments in different parts of the Empire, each practically under the control and at the disposal of the government by which it was called into, and is kept in, existence. Thus, in matters pertaining to either armaments, commerce, or diplomacy, one part of the Empire may act in a manner directly at variance with the wishes or interests of another part ; and in some cases the result of such action may affect all its members adversely, whilst in finance there is not even a show of union. Under such a polity permanent political unity seems clearly unattainable ; for whenever the actions of several associated parties become inconsistent with one another, and one insists upon adopting a policy to which another refuses to submit, their joint action must end. When two associated wills come into collision, their quarrel can be settled only by a dissolution of the partnership or an appeal to the sword—in the case of individuals I, of course, mean the sword of state. But there is no doubt as to how such a quarrel would end in the present instance. England has repeatedly declared that in the event of its occurrence she will at once settle it by dissolving the connection. Hence it follows that the Empire can remain united under the present polity only so long as its several members use their prerogatives in reference to each other, and to foreigners, in such a manner as neither by acts of omission or of commission to disturb that identity of feeling and policy which is essential to the united action of several different parties. Neither nations nor individuals have ever maintained such a course of action for any considerable period ; and its permanent occurrence in the present instance may, therefore, be dismissed as an impossibility, from which it follows that the alliance cannot be permanently maintained on its present basis.

It may be replied, however, that the alliance may exist until Canada has become sufficiently strong to stand alone ; and this, I believe, is the popular idea of the day on this subject. The fact is that Canada can never stand alone so long as the Union remains intact. The United States, although we may continue to gain on them, must al-