

thrown himself into the fore-front of the movement in favour of an Imperial Confederation. This, I know, is viewed by some persons, and very eminent persons, in Canada, as well as by a numerous and influential class of the community, as a chimera—so was reform, so was free trade, so was the abolition of the slave trade. But when it is considered that it must be either Imperial confederation or Imperial disintegration, it may be asked whether the man who considers that the probabilities of the permanency of an Empire based upon politic concessions and just recognitions of mutual rights and obligations is less visionary than one who entertains the prospects of a dissociation of the elements of an Empire so strong, so universal, so knit together by ties of kindred, of government, of interest, and of national glory? It is true that there have recently been imputations freely cast upon the loyalty of the members of the existing Government in Canada, by a notorious pumpkin-squeezer in the Tory press. Their treatment of the question of Reciprocity and of the Pacific Railway has been pointed to as indicative of their desire to bring about annexation with the United States. It is not my business to defend or attack the policy of this or that Canadian Government, but upon a question of fact and of probability I may without impropriety make a statement. To my mind no more gross or wanton falsehood could be first of all asserted and then wilfully maintained. There can only be one opinion on the part of anybody who has taken the trouble to look into the financial position of the Dominion at the time the present Government came into power, and at those engagements into which the previous Government had entered with British Columbia—viz., that to carry out those engagements in their integrity would have been a stupid and idle waste of the resources of the Dominion. It would more than have doubled the debt of Canada; it would have taxed her resources—resources better devoted to the development of population and wealth—to the utmost; it would have created a vast and costly Government patronage, and a constant financial derangement which must always have been perilous to good and econo-