

sentiment may exercise upon the destinies of a people, the fact must not be ignored that material and commercial interests are most powerful factors in shaping them. Upon such data, those who predict the ultimate annexation of Canada to the United States, base their opinions. Occasions, however, continually arise where commercial advantages give place to political objects, and Canadian dislike to American institutions would furnish a case in point. To the Americans, reciprocal trade with this country, which would discriminate against British manufactures and products, would be acceptable, as a means to an end more intensely desired by them—the political acquisition of Canada—and who doubts for a moment that such an end would not be attained by such means? To accomplish this object, have not all their hostile and irritating trade and tariff legislation for years been directed? and will it not be continued, even should we become independent? The importance to Canada of reciprocal trade with the United States, upon a fair basis, no one will pretend to deny; but this is exactly what our neighbours will never concede, except in a shape which cannot but sever our connection with England, and ultimately drive us into the American union. But when our destiny, as part and parcel of the British empire, becomes an accomplished fact, is it at all outside the limits of possibility to expect the establishment of reciprocal trade upon a broad and liberal basis between all nations and countries speaking the English tongue with a tariff discriminating against the products and manufactures of other nations? Would not such a state of affairs do more than anything else one can imagine to bring about what Cobden so earnestly but vainly worked for, the free interchange of products among all the nations of the earth? It will certainly be found that, as an integral portion of the British empire, and when the hope of absorbing us has been finally abandoned, we

shall receive a much greater degree of deference at the hands of our American neighbours, than under any other circumstances. Could England be prevailed upon to recognise the importance of her being independent of foreign nations for her food supply, and to admit the ability of the Dominion of Canada to supply it, she would hasten the endeavour to form a Commercial Zollverein with her colonies, and would terminate a policy of late so suicidal to her interests, of throwing open her ports to nations which have, in nearly all instances, met her liberal advances with bitterly hostile tariffs. One of the prominent features of the scheme of federation will undoubtedly be the organization of a comprehensive system of Imperial defences, and the formation of a force of such strength and efficiency as to make foreign nations refrain from assuming an attitude of hostility; and such as will command for the empire, among the peoples of the earth, that weight and influence due to its power.

To sketch such a plan is not my intention, seeing that to the members of this Institute one was very ably presented in the paper read by Lt.-Col. Scoble, in October last, on the 'Utilization of Colonial Forces in Imperial Defence,'—a paper which has been highly endorsed by the officer, then commanding Her Majesty's forces in North America; and having been recently published in the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, will, undoubtedly, receive the attention which it merits. It would appear that till some plan for the consolidation of the forces of the empire shall be earnestly and comprehensively entered upon, then, and not until then, can it be truly said of Canada that her ability to repel attack is the best guarantee of her immunity from it. To say that the defences of the Dominion are eminently unsatisfactory, is to give utterance to a truism. In what respect this is so, the Annual Reports of the Lt.-General commanding the militia, and