

"What would the United States be at this moment if the several colonies had remained separate? I believe that our difficulties in making a united empire are not greater than those with which Washington and Hamilton were confronted."

I may be permitted for a few moments to digress in order to observe the tendency of civilization in national affairs. That trend is undoubtedly towards unity; unity in national life with almost absolute local control in local affairs. The failure of the great empires of the past; such as the Medo-Persian, the Assyrian, the Grecian, the Roman, the Carthaginian—their failure was because that while they had centralization in national life, they also failed to have centralization in local matters. The tendency of modern civilization has solved the problem of empire building. Great Britain was probably the first federation of nations, and had Great Britain divested the imperial parliament of many of the details of legislation which it possesses, and conferred them on the counties in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales by enlarging the powers of county councils and local bodies—not creating provinces but counties, I believe the British Federation would be the better of it to-day.

We have as an example at our doors the federation of the United States of America, founded on the centralization of national affairs with absolute local control over matters of local concern. In the United States we have that form of government worked out to a marked degree of success.

In Canada our own institutions show the exemplification of the same principle.

Germany possesses a similar federation, and under the new constitution the Republic of France has carried out to a very large extent the same idea of centralization of national affairs with absolute local control in local matters.

Long years ago I had the privilege of being a school teacher, and I remember that on an old map of the world, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, each of the provinces of Canada and each outlying colony of the empire was painted in a different colour. As a teacher, I sometimes found it difficult to make it clearly understood by the students that these were all part and parcel of the great British empire. So one Saturday in my leisure hours I took down the map and painted all the British possessions one colour—needless to say, Sir, that colour was red. I see some hon. gentlemen smiling; I may possibly have been indulging in painting some other things red, on later occasions, but I have always looked back with pleasure at that old map of the empire. It was the first map I had seen in which all the British possessions were of the same colour, and from that time onward I have felt that had these British colonies become legislatively united it would have been better for the empire and for the world at large to-day. However, there is no use regretting the past; all we have to do is to endeavour to make improvements in the future.

#### RACE.

At the outset I will be met with the proposition that a federation of Great Britain and the colonies is absolutely impossible, because the people who constitute the British empire are not of one race. If you will show me any great nation or any nation which has ever existed all of one race, I will show you a nation that is not a success. England is made up of many divergent nationalities; France from the earliest times has had a mixed population, Latins, Normans, Celtic, and Teutonic, all united and clearly traceable at the present hour in every part of France. In Switzerland there are three different races, the Teutonic or German, the French and the Latin or Italian in the south.

#### LANGUAGE.

Then we are told that uniformity of language is necessary. I need not go beyond Canada to point out how fallacious such an argument is. In my own experience in travelling from end to end of Canada I have encountered 22 or 23 different languages, but the people speaking these varying tongues were all peaceable, law-abiding citizens, each with the good of the nation at heart, striving to make it as strong and noble as possible. Neither uniformity of race nor of language is essential to the upbuilding of a country.

#### CREED.

Others will say: But you must all be of one creed. I notice by the census returns that Canada has a very large number of creeds, I think somewhere in the neighborhood of 100, the United States have about 130 or 140, and in the British Empire throughout the world there are about 1,000 creeds that are recognized. If I may be allowed to digress I would say that I always thank the Lord for the great number of creeds, the more there are the less danger there is of any one of them becoming in the ascendant and the less danger there is of persecution. I do not for a moment nor do I think that any one will consider that creed is an essential element, and that all people of a nation should be of one creed.

#### CO-TERMINOUS.

But, we will be told: You must absolutely have all these nations co-terminous; they must be in close proximity to one another or you cannot build an empire. They will say that the ocean divides us. If one passenger starts from Halifax or Portland for Van-