

LETTER NO. 2.

**Imperial Federation Scheme doing more to Disintegrate than Unite the Empire
—A Retrograde Step from a Canadian Standpoint.**

It is easy to discover increased responsibilities and difficulties, but no real advantages for Canada, in Imperial Federation, nor do I see how we can have any closer or better connection with the Mother Country than exists at present.

The idea at first glance is admittedly dazzling. That the British Isles should become the centre of a grand Federation of Free States, governed in all Imperial matters by one Parliament, bound together in peace or war, and circling the globe with Christianity and civilization, is a conception both dazzling and ambitious; but it appears, on a very cursory examination, more like a Jingo dream than practical statesmanship, and a dream, too, which might readily develop into national nightmare.

The well-intentioned and eminently respectable noblemen and others in Great Britain who seem bent on pressing this ambitious project are, I fear,

DOING MORE TO DISINTEGRATE THE EMPIRE,

at least so far as Canada is concerned, than their proposals would do to bind it together. Whilst unable to present any plan of Federation which the public mind does not at once dismiss as impracticable, their agitation is doing much harm by creating widespread doubts as to the strength and durability of the ties which have so long and, upon the whole, so happily united us to the Mother-land. Like the agitation for so-called Commercial Union with the United States, the Federationist movement is disturbing and impeding the consolidation of the Dominion, and if pressed and persisted in must ere long

PRECIPITATE A CRISIS

in our Colonial relations, the end of which it is impossible to foretell.

In a brief paper such as this, it is impossible to discuss so broad a question as Imperial Federation at length, and I shall have to confine my remarks chiefly to a few of the principal objections from a Canadian point of view.

So far as Great Britain itself is concerned, there is no evidence that our fellow-citizens there either believe in its practicability or advantages. With the exception of Lord Rosebery and the late Hon. W. E. Forster, I am not aware of any influential statesmen who have taken part in the movement. Such eminent men as John Bright and Goldwin Smith have denounced it as absurd and impracticable, and it can be readily understood, that after building up the greatest and freest Monarchy the world has ever seen, to undertake to change its character and form—the laborious work of centuries—into a Federation combining heterogeneous races and countries, and to give to each a voice in the great Parliament of the nation, would not only be a dazzling but

A MOST DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT.

With the history of ancient Rome before them, the people of Britain might well ask whether such an experiment would not be more likely to presage the downfall of the Empire than its consolidation and perpetuity.

Whatever else it may include, the project necessarily involves the creation of a Federal Parliament which would meet in London, and in which the British Isles and the self-governing colonies would be jointly represented. This body would naturally have control of all questions of Imperial concern, such as peace, war, ships, colonies, the fisheries and cognate subjects of a general character. It is extremely doubtful whether the British people could ever be induced to hand over such vital interests to a Parliament which, if based on just principles of representation, might be eventually controlled by the colonists; and, on the other hand, if the latter were not fairly represented, would be certain to end in dissatisfaction and disaster.

FROM A CANADIAN STANDPOINT

Federation is a retrograde step. No such change in our colonial relations is possible