

country gets at the kernel involved in the discussion, and then before long that is certain to become incorporated in the Constitution. Look at our own history. Lord Durham's Report on Canada was published in 1839. There the idea of Provincial Legislatures with local powers, subordinated to a central authority, as the best thing for us, was first authoritatively indicated; although individual writers had referred to it previously. But it was not until 1865 that the legislature of the old Upper and Lower Canada adopted the idea; and even then, although the leading statesmen of the Maritime Provinces had long before advocated some scheme of union, the legislatures of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island rejected the resolutions of the Quebec legislature. In 1867 the Act of Confederation was passed, but so slow is the process of national unification everywhere and at all times, that Lord Lansdowne was perfectly justified in saying that the plaster on the walls of our Confederation was scarcely yet dry. It is dry enough, however, to permit us to live in the house quite comfortably.

In the meanwhile, one of the objects of the Imperial Federation League is to form branches all over Canada to discuss the question from every point of view, with the confident expectation that in due time our Parliament will feel itself warranted by public opinion to instruct the Government of the day to enter into negotiations with the British Government on the subject. Then will be the time to draw up a scheme.

Before forming a branch of the League, all that is necessary is that a number of people in the locality should have two principles rooted and grounded in them: (1) that Britain and Canada must continue to have one flag—in other words, that the present union must be maintained; (2) that Canadians are prepared for full citizenship—in other words, that they are determined to be the peers and not the dependents of their fellow-citizens in the British Islands. As to the particular form in which the movement may take shape eventually, we are quite indifferent. We welcome the production of plans and of criticism on them, but we are committed to no scheme. You may think my summary of principles rather bald. But Mr. Lincoln went into the greatest war of the century with only one principle as his pole-star,—“The union must be preserved.” He carried that flag to the end, and gained the victory with it, smiling good-naturedly for years at elaborate schemes that wise men were pressing on him from every side, but