

schemes for placing commerce on a common Empire basis. The principle of preferential trade lies in a system of mutual concessions in respect to tariffs, for the purpose of serving best the interests of the Empire as a whole. Here again, the imperialist runs afoul of the national self-assertion characterizing the autonomous states. Canada wishes to enter no tariff arrangement involving her in any common action, but desires simply to be left free to make her own arrangements with the Mother Country and sister colonies on terms of equality, entering into any specific agreement which by her independent action she approves.

A political federation of the Empire meets with even less favour than a commercial or military union. The project as yet is visionary. It has been urged by hostile critics that it would be practically impossible to determine an equitable basis of representation in the imperial council or parliament; that India and the crown colonies, in justice, also should be represented, thereby increasing the difficulties; and that it would be a superhuman task to satisfactorily harmonize the differing interests of the widely separated portions of the Empire. The Liberal premier of Ontario, in May, 1901, discussed this question at a meeting of the British Empire League, in Toronto. "In a federated Parliament of the British Empire, Canada would be subjected," he declared, "to the decisions of the representatives of all parts of the Empire—of men, that is to say, who have no knowledge of our social conditions or of our national aspirations." In the words of Mr. Asselin, the Quebec nationalist, "The idea of an imperial parliament legislating, even on some subjects only, for all the British realms, may appeal to the imagination, but no one as yet has shown how such legislation could be passed without the bigger and more powerful partners over-riding the will, now of this and now of that, colony."

The influence of the French-Canadian upon the course of imperial evolution was seen in an earlier recognition of the nationalist principle by the statesmen of the Do-