

# DOES ANNEXATION FOLLOW?

## COMMERCIAL UNION AND BRITISH CONNECTION.

### AN OPEN LETTER FROM ERASTUS WIMAN

—TO—

MR. J. REDPATH DOUGALL, EDITOR OF THE MONTREAL  
"WITNESS."

MY DEAR MR. DOUGALL:

Absence and pressure of work have prevented me sooner answering your recent letter. Although your communication is a private one, and seeks to elicit my private opinion as to the eventual result of commercial union as affecting British connection, I avail myself of your invitation to furnish you a public reply for the columns of your paper, in order that others beside yourself may be informed of how the matter is regarded from this point of view. The key-note of your letter is contained in the closing sentence of the following paragraph:—

"My object in writing you is, in the first place, to congratulate you on the importance and benevolence of the cause you are advocating with such vigor and ability. and, in second place, to ask you for my own edition if you really think there is standing on your platform for Canadians who are prepared to forsake British allegiance."

In attempting to reply to this direct and pointed question, it is important that there should be no ambiguity, for it is evident, that if such a reply could be framed as would remove doubt on this point, a great step would be taken to promote in Canada the cause of commercial union with the United States. Impressed with the importance of the task which you have committed to me, I beg, first, to say to you, that so far as I can fathom it, the motive which prompts the movement among Canadians here toward commercial union is the good of Canada, combined with the maintenance of British connection. No Canadian can reside for any length of time within the United States, and fail to be impressed with the advantages which would result from a business connection with this country. Every day brings forth evidence of progress in all that contributes to material growth. The liberality, nay, the extravagance of the people of this country seem entirely justified by the constant growth in the sources of income; in the development of great natural resources; the profits from

vast business enterprises, and the steady accumulations in monetary institutions and Governmental revenues; and also in the rapidly increasing population of the best class of immigration, to which the whole world is contributing. With this marvellous procession of circumstances daily in view, it is impossible not to feel that our beloved Canada ought in some way to more largely benefit than she does by the growth, right at her own borders, of a nation so powerful, so rich, and so much in need of all that she has to offer. This feeling is all the more constant because of the knowledge that Canada is richer in natural resources than the United States themselves; that in her forests, fisheries, fields and mines are riches, now almost dormant, that would yield a return of the most satisfactory kind, if once the barrier that divides the two countries were to be obliterated. If this could be done without sundering the tie that binds Canada to Great Britain; if, without sacrificing the practical political independence of our native land, and without imperilling her future in the experiment which in a Government by the people is here being slowly and not altogether satisfactorily worked out, surely this proposition could hardly fail to meet with favor. No mode by which this could be done has ever seemed possible except the admission of Canada into the Union, and the abnegation by her of her political existence. That this was repugnant to the great majority of Canadian residents in the United States, is evident from the fact that no movement of this character has ever been apparent. Between seven hundred and fifty thousand and a million Canadians are in active business in this country; yet no organization, no suggestion, or even individual expressions in the direction of annexation are called to mind. For my own part, though in most frequent communication with hundreds of my countrymen, I cannot now recall a single instance where a political separation was favored; on