

place in the direction of North America. The discovery of the New World, the exaggerated conceptions formed concerning its mineral wealth, the beauty of its scenery, the advantages of its climate, the fertility of its soil, and the tempting field it presented for adventure and speculation, led to the development of most important colonies in North America. When the crisis occurred in 1775 the North American colonies were the only ones under the protectorate of Great Britain which could be thought of as capable of forming national aspirations. The issue in relation to this first great colonial possession is not reassuring, for the very moment the people were able to stand alone they threw off their allegiance and set up for themselves. Nevertheless it would not be accurate to conclude that this will take place in all cases hereafter. The loss of the American colonies a hundred years ago was due to unwise British policy, and the lesson has not been lost.

Since 1783, however, the other British colonies have been gradually developing and assuming proportions which raise the question of national life. Canada stands first. She has nearly double the population of the thirteen colonies that rebelled in 1776, and vastly more than double the wealth and resources. She has undertaken the responsibility of federation, and all parts of British North America (except Newfoundland) are under one central government. Australia is moving rapidly forward and will soon have the numbers, wealth, and strength, to look about her seriously and ask, What of the future? In time South Africa, as the British population increases, will be reaching the same crucial point. It is not amiss, therefore, for British statesmen to watch the drift of events in these large English communities, and it is equally proper that Colonial statesmen should be earnestly grappling with the same problems. Not, indeed, that there is any occasion for precipitancy of action, but that all incidents should be carefully studied and no accidents happen, no blunders occur, from the fruitful cause of ignorance.

One or two axioms may be stated at the outset, and, though axioms of the simplest character, the mass of men are unaccountably slow in recognising them. The first is that countries like Canada cannot always remain *Colonies*. The mass of the Canadian people have certainly never absorbed this idea, and the mass of the British people have never stopped to consider the matter at all. But it is surely a pregnant subject for consideration, for there is deduced another question of great import, namely, If Canada and Australia cease to be British Colonies, what will they be? It would be surprising if a British statesman had no interest in such a question. A Colonial statesman most undoubtedly has. It is these plain and obvious considerations which have led to the Imperial Federation movement. It is an attempt to solve the problem by means of a closer union of all the