

those other influences worked ~~a little~~ to draw us apart.

"In the struggle between the two, which have won? We are all glad to know that the centripetal forces have triumphed over the centrifugal; and in proportion, as we got greater freedom, we became more loyal to the idea of Empire. (Hear, hear.) The two, instead of countervailing each other, dovetailed.

Three Courses Open

"There were three courses which this young people, so welded together, found before them. There was the policy of absorption in the great country to the south, with its tremendous magnet of attraction operating in so many ways. There were advocates of that step in this country, more advocates of it in other countries, and, I am ashamed to say, some people in the Motherland, that would have seen that take place and never turn a hair. Canada was saved from that, first by the instinct of preservation.

Protest Against Absorption

her — "She looked on absorption as a going out of individual and corporate existence, did not like it, and made this protest against it. Besides all the other circumstances which led to confederation was this, arising out of the refusal to renew the old reciprocity treaty or make another, that an attempt was being made by the United States to incline Canada by way of partial compulsion, to such absorption. It was in protest against that pressure that the farseeing men of confederation days were driven into building the units into one strong body. (Cheers.)

"That was Canada's first recorded protest against absorption. The next came in 1873 and 1874, and by the year 1878 it had developed national proportions. It was a Dominion question. It became known as the national policy, and it was in reality the protest of the people against industrial absorption into the country to the south of us. And it has never been effected.

"In the years 1891 and 1911 when

the question of commercial absorption was raised, the protest was repeated with added emphasis. These protests had underlying them the tenacity of these northern people to be themselves, and to live their own lives. (Applause.) They did not intend to submit to political, industrial or commercial absorption. They may have been wrong, but I think that it was a loveable trait in any man to be wrong under such circumstances. So that today among the dearest of dead issues there is the corpse, or the nightmare, or the will-o'-the-wisp of absorption into the country to the south of us.

No Sentiment for Independence

"There was another course open. It was the course of independence. Would they cut loose from Great Britain and proclaim themselves a republic? We had kindly advisors who said we were too old to hang onto our mother's apron strings; that we should paddle our own canoe and run our own ship, and so on; but none of them were entirely disinterested. Anyway the advice was not taken, and I think we may all conclude that independence was never much of an issue in this country. And why? Well, for two reasons: First, because of the wide freedom that was conferred upon us by the Mother Country in the management of our own affairs; and second, the part of protector that she has always played on our behalf. These two things, together with the strong common sense which I think Canada has always possessed in a large measure, made it impossible for any propaganda in favor of independence to be worth the name.

"The common sense of the country said we are independent now; we are as free as we need be. We have the substance now. Suppose we cut loose from the Mother Country and set up an independent Canada, would we have the substance or the shadow? And the common sense of Canada answered that question at the very moment it was put. It would have meant no independence for Canada.