

store for a country showing so much energy and enterprise in all the pursuits of industry, and such admirable capacity for self-government? The five millions of people who now inhabit the Dominion must double in number within a decade or two, according as the agricultural and mineral wealth of her new territories is developed. When many millions of people inhabit a continuous chain of provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, will they be satisfied with their present position? This is a question that must ere long press itself more and more upon the attention of statesmen and publicists interested in the unity of the empire.

How slight are the ties that now bind Canada to the parent state is very clearly shown by the fact that she might to-morrow become an independent power without any immediate perceptible effect on the prosperity or greatness of Britain. For the moment it would simply mean that Her Majesty's government would have one governor less to appoint in her dominions, that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council — the supreme court of the empire — would have fewer cases of law to decide, and that the Colonial Office would have fewer despatches to write and receive in future. The regiment that now keeps up a semblance of British rule in Halifax would be removed, while the fleet would no longer be bound to make that port a headquarters in American waters. As far as the commercial relations of the two countries are concerned, — the important point, probably, in the opinion of many Englishmen, — these would not be affected to any marked degree by the separation of the colony from the parent state, since the Dominion has for years imposed duties on imports without much consideration for British manufacturing interests. Canada would then be able to make her own treaties with foreign nations without any reference to the imperial authorities. On the other hand, Canada would have to increase her expenditures for the purposes of national defence, and of keeping up a little staff of envoys and consuls, besides paying for other privileges inseparable from a national existence.

But national aspirations are the natural outcome of the growth and prosperity of a people. The great forces which are silently at work, developing a national character, may become more powerful as the years pass than the strong sentimental feeling which now binds Canada to the parent state. It is quite certain, however, that it would be with very great reluctance — probably from no fault of her own — that Canada would sever the connection to which she has faithfully adhered for a century and more. Should the time ever arrive for independence, the records of her history will probably show that she had far outgrown a position of mere colonial dependency, and that it was not possible to devise a plan which would enable her to remain in the empire on terms compatible with her dignity and security.