

proud of his Province. But that is not the same as national citizenship.

Should Canada be reduced to a Province, and should there be in future any danger of annexation—and the Imperialists have that danger constantly before their minds—the opponents of annexation could no longer appeal to Canadian national sentiment, to the desire to build up on this continent a nation which may rival the United States. The policy of consolidation and absorption tends to destroy that sentiment. They would find that in belittling and jeering at autonomy, they had destroyed one of the most powerful forces on their own side.

Some of the advocates of centralisation comfort themselves with the notion that provincial autonomy is the same thing as the autonomy which Canada now enjoys. It is a delusion. A Province of Canada does not control its own tariff. It has only a very limited control over taxation; for the Dominion Parliament levies taxation not only for Dominion purposes, but to provide large subsidies for the Provinces. A glance at the British North America Act shows that the Provinces surrender to the Dominion powers at least as great as those which they retain.

Advocates of centralisation may plead that they do not intend to go that far, or to surrender that much to their new Imperial Legislature or Council. Do they know how far they intend to go? Do they realise how far they may be drawn by the progress of events, even against their own intention? If not, they may study with profit the development of the idea of Canadian confederation.

In 1859 a convention of Upper Canada Reformers resolved in favour of recasting the constitution of Canada, giving each Province local freedom, and allowing matters of common interest to be controlled by a central body. One of the delegates, Mr. George Sheppard, warned them that the central government would

overshadow the Provinces. He told them that there was an inherent tendency in central bodies to acquire increased power. In the United States, he said, a Federal party had advocated a strong central government and excuses were always being sought to add to its glory and influence.

The convention was deeply impressed by this speech, and in deference to it, the proposed resolution was amended, so as to provide for "some joint authority" for federal purposes, instead of a general government.

Yet, in spite of this precaution, when the scheme of Confederation was worked out a few years later, it did provide, not for a league, with "some joint authority" for common action, but for a powerful central government and Parliament, and for limited Provincial powers. There is no guarantee that the rage for centralised Imperial government will not carry is that far, or at least farther than those who are now playing with centralising schemes expect.

The British Empire has grown through recognition of national sentiment and national autonomy. It is a successful concern. The Roman Empire and the Spanish Empire, and the Empire of the first Napoleon may have been more symmetrical and more centralised. But they had two great faults. First, they were not free. Second, they died. The British Empire is free, at least as to its self-governing communities. It is alive. It is growing. If you have a family in that happy condition, will you dose it with a quack medicine about which you know nothing except that it has produced a crop of funerals in your neighbour's household?

What motive except a restless desire for change is there for substituting a revolution for the evolution which constitutes the history of Canada and of the Empire? Why leave the path along which we have travelled in safety from strength to strength, and plunge into the jungle?