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THE FUTURE OF CANADA.

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Though the most important and far-reaching question that can possibly engage the attention of the Canadian people, it is only very recently that any large number of Canadians have begun to manifest any real interest in it. The present is fairly comfortable and the tendency among masses is to be indifferent to all matters which do not actually press themselves upon their notice by some palpable inconvenience. Yet it seems beyond all doubt that Canadians will, sooner or later, realize that the problem must be seriously faced. Differences of opinion may and must continue to exist as to the wisest and best solution, but all thoughtful persons must agree that colonists we cannot always remain, and many will recognize that it is not honorable nor desirable that colonists we should much longer remain.

While the time has past for being indifferent, the time has not yet come for dogmatizing. A great many things have to be carefully, indeed anxiously, weighed. The stage of discussion has been reached and it is the duty of intelligent men to think about it, to reflect gravely upon the question and speak fully and without passion or prejudice in regard to the issue.

The purpose of this paper is simply to clear the ground so that the discussion, which is bound to come, may

be rational and fair. More than one alternative is presented to the Canadian people, and if a wise decision is to be reached the most absolute and unfettered freedom must be afforded for presenting all sides of the question. This statement is necessary because many of those who are speaking upon this momentous question approach it as if it were base or treasonable to advocate any other than one alternative. We are constantly reminded that we are British subjects and owe allegiance to the British Sovereign, and that it is, therefore, wicked, ungrateful and ignoble to suggest any alternative except that associated with the British Empire. We are at liberty to accept any changes within the scope of British citizenship, but to go outside would be traitorous and vile. It may be that our true interests will continue to be bound up with the Empire of which we at present form a part, but most men will prefer to reach this conclusion after a careful examination and full investigation of all the other alternatives.

Speaking in general terms, it may be said that Canadians have the choice of at least four alternatives:

First. Remaining as we are—a colonial possession of the empire.

Second. A direct political alliance with the empire, involving represen-