

II. THE GROWTH OF NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE IN CANADA

War was happily averted, but the menace helped to make the British colonies in North America realize a weakness which was due largely to lack of union. The small provinces on the Atlantic sea-board, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, had each a separate government wholly independent of what was then Canada and is now the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. The great West was still a wilderness ruled by the Hudson's Bay Company and outside the pale of Canadian politics. The Civil War made the United States a great military nation. The North was irritated with Great Britain because of the widely extended sympathy of the English ruling class with the aspiration of the South for separation. It was not impossible that one of the aims of the restored Union, with a great army and a consciousness now of strength, would be to insist on a policy which should break any remaining political tie of American States with Europe. As a matter of fact when the Civil War ended, France, planning an empire in Mexico, was given prompt notice to withdraw her forces from that country. It might soon be the turn of Britain to receive warning that the tie with Canada must end and that either a separate Canadian republic must be set up or that the British colonies must enter as states into the American union.

Fear of dictation from the great republic was not, of course, the only motive which led the scattered colonies to think of union. They needed union to save them from obscurity and isolation. Thus it came about that just at the time in 1864 when the North was planning the supreme effort to end the civil war, when Sherman was making his desolating march from Atlanta to the sea, and Grant was nerving himself for the last heavy blows which brought in the end the unconditional surrender of Lee, delegates from the British provinces were in conference at Quebec on the problem of union. Their conference was fruitful, and out of it came, in 1867, the federation since known as the Dominion of Canada. Within a few years it included the West as well as the East. By 1873 Canada was a vast country stretching across the American continent and covering an area as great as the United States.

For a time no change was apparent in the relations with Great Britain of this state so potent in promise. The Canadian people had still the colonial mind. They thought it incumbent on Great Britain to protect them. They liked to see the British red coats