

CANADA AND IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

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A closer union between Canada and the rest of the British Empire appears now to be the destiny of this Dominion. Independence is a dangerous dream, Annexation a disgraceful impossibility. Advocates of separation from Great Britain for either of the latter purposes forget that secession without due cause is dishonorable as well as difficult, and we may be assured that the mother country will never give us sufficient reason to take such a step. The school of thought in England which once talked of Colonial Independence is dead and buried under the new conception of closer and better relations, and the two men—John Bright and Richard Cobden—who at one time hinted at the possibility of Canada becoming a part of the American Union, are gone from among us and their views in this connection are remembered by few even of those who still follow them in other matters, or in name at least.

Independence for Canada means dependence upon the United States; diplomatic weakness abroad; inability to protect our rights and privileges; the necessity of an enormous expenditure upon defensive armament; increased debt and a steadily growing taxation as a consequence of added burdens; loss of possible trade preferences in the British market or chance of a treaty with the United States short of commercial annexation; provincial difficulties without any increased federal power; all combined with the constant scheming of American politicians, railway and commercial interests, desiring, and very naturally, to obtain possession of so valuable a territory, so important an addition to their material estate and such magnifi-

cent fisheries as Canada possesses upon the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. It involves a similar declaration of independence by Australia; the loss to England of her coaling stations, harbors and fortresses and the command of the sea; the destruction of her prestige and the possible loss of India; in short the disruption and destruction of the British Empire.

Annexation is hardly worthy of discussion. No nation has voluntarily surrendered its name and institutions of freedom for any consideration which could be presented. The United States had a cause and reason for separation from England, we have none. The South considered that it had good reason for secession, but the civilized world has approved of the dictum which describes its action as rebellion, and deems it to have been justly crushed. If in any degree the American people seem better off than the Canadian, and it is merely an appearance due to a larger population and greater cities, it should be remembered that the United States has one hundred years the start of Canada and never had to compete with a great nation twelve times its size upon its Southern frontier. Had Mexico been another United States I doubt whether that present degree of apparent prosperity would have ever been attained. But our people are built of better stuff than even our neighbors to the South, worthy as they are of admiration, and no fear need be felt that Annexation will ever come up for serious consideration by the nation. If it should, the crushing which Commercial Union has received at the polls would be but a bagatelle in comparison to its fate. Canadians certainly do not