

# THE POLITICAL DESTINY OF CANADA.

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*(From The Fortnightly Review.)*

IGNORANCE of the future can hardly be good for any man or nation; nor can forecast of the future in the case of any man or nation well interfere with the business of the present, though the language of colonial politicians seems often to imply that it may. No Canadian farmer would take his hand from the plough, no Canadian artisan would desert the foundry or the loom, no Canadian politician would become less busy in his quest of votes, no industry of any kind would slacken, no source of wealth would cease to flow, if the rulers of Canada and the powers of Downing Street, by whom the rulers of Canada are supposed to be guided, instead of drifting on in darkness, knew for what port they were steering.

For those who are actually engaged in moulding the institutions of a young country not to have formed a conception of her destiny—not to have made up their minds whether she is to remain forever a dependency, to blend again in a vast confederation with the monarchy of the mother-country, or to be united to a neighbouring republic—would be to renounce statesmanship. The very expenditure into which Canada is led by her position as a dependency, in military and political railways, in armaments and defences, and other things which assume the permanence of the present system, is enough to convict Canadian rulers of flagrant improvidence if the permanency of the present system is not distinctly established in their minds.

To tax forecast with revolutionary designs or tendencies is absurd. No one can be in a less revolutionary frame of mind than he who foresees a political event without having the slightest interest in hastening its arrival. On the other hand, mere party politicians cannot afford to see beyond the hour. Under the system of party government, forecast and freedom of speech alike belong generally to those who are not engaged in public life.

The political destiny of Canada is here considered by itself, apart from that of any other portion of the motley and widely-scattered "empire." This surely is the rational course. Not to speak of India and the military dependencies, such as Malta and Gibraltar, which have absolutely nothing in common with the North American colonies (India not even the titular form of government, since its sovereign has been made an empress), who can believe that the future of Canada, of South Africa, of Australia, of the West Indies, and of Mauritius, will be the same? Who can believe that the mixed French and English population of Canada, the mixed Dutch and English population of the Cape, the negro population of Jamaica, the French and Indian population of Mauritius, the English and Chinese population of Australia, are going to run forever the same political course?