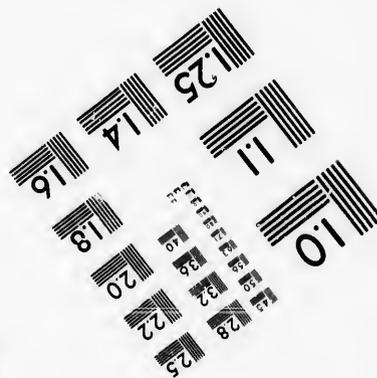
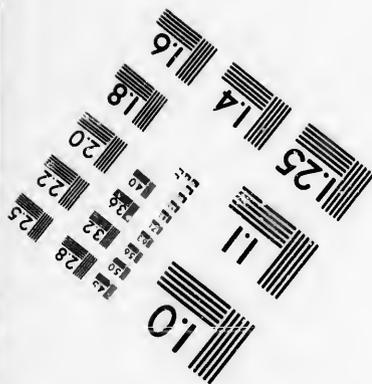
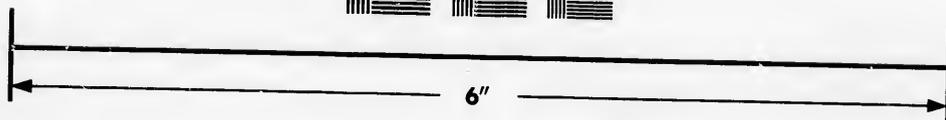
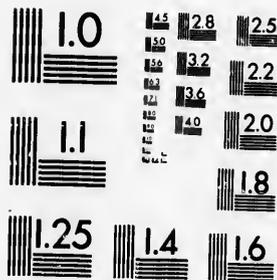


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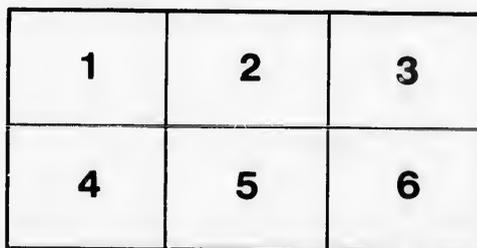
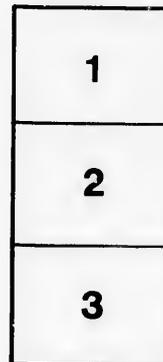
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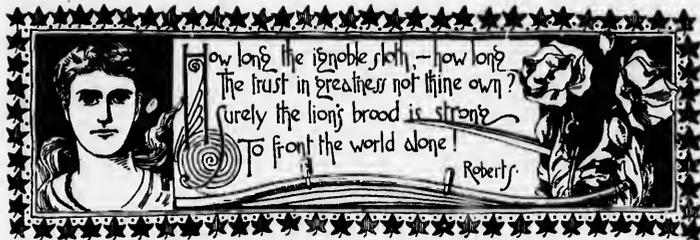
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Edmund Collins

509



THE FUTURE OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

BY
EDMUND COLLINS.

} *An Address delivered before the
} Canadian Club of New York.*



SOME of the greatest historians of the olden times, for the purpose of illustrating a nation's greatness, would only take into account the number of her spear's on the land, and of her galleys on the sea; and it must be confessed that, even in this age of industry and peace, we are not a little proud of our battalions and of the thunder of our turret guns.

In dealing with Canada, we have more substantial elements to fire our eloquence; we have her boundless acres, her limitless

forests, and the exhaustless treasures of her mines and seas. Under the Confederation immense strides have been made in national development, and this I think ought to be a guarantee for the future.

But, after all, there are several gentlemen in Canada, who are not satisfied with the Union. Indeed, at very frequent intervals, some patriot who has failed in the pulpit or at the bar, who has brought a country school into disrepute, or added to the population of a graveyard, arises among his countrymen, and declares that the Confederation must be smashed. The intensity of his eloquence on such an occasion will be commensurate with his wants. If he is able to scrape along at all, he will not be very fierce, and will receive no great attention; but if there is neither brief, nor school, nor pulpit, nor consumptive in sight, he rises to the very highest pitch of patriotism, and some admiring organ of public opinion puts an "extra" at his disposal. If, in the experience of Dr. Johnson, "patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel," in ours, treason is the first refuge of a patriot.

I presume that those who hear me are not unaware that Nova Scotia has lately passed resolutions affirming a desire for separation, and there is a rumor in the air that New Brunswick wants to get adrift. I do not believe that these ideas will prevail; but they have undermined faith in the solidity of the Union, and Castle Garden receives the immigrant. It is no harm, however, to sin against the State. If you libel an individual, or decry his enterprise, the law will look after the matter; but assail the country whose institutions protect, and whose kindly breast sustains, and the Governor

will select you as his chief adviser or his Secretary of State. For my part, instead of providing cabinet offices, I should prepare the cat and the pillory.

It may not be uninteresting, if not precisely cheerful, to enquire about the fate likely in store for the provinces who seek separation, in the event of the possibility of their release. In spite of the wealth which they boast of, to me they seem to stand up on the very verge of pauperdom. Enjoying the felicity of independence and isolation, each one would be a Lazarus at the gates of the Empire. We know very well that the expense of house-keeping, in Nova Scotia and in New Brunswick, is greater than either province is able to bear; and either one or the other is always found at Ottawa, with a threat or a prayer upon her lips, asking for still "better terms." Let us suppose one of these provinces cast adrift. Her only sources of income would be the proceeds from the sale and lease of her timber and mineral lands, and the toll of the custom-houses.

To-day Nova Scotia is almost completely stripped of her forest, and the area of woodland in New Brunswick is rapidly diminishing; and if there is but little income from the mines for the individual, there would be less for the public treasuries. The ship-yards are idle, and must remain so from now until the end of time; nor is there any industry in sight or in the distant future. Under the terms of confederation a sum of 80 cents per head is set apart from the Dominion treasury, and to hope that this amount could be made up under the régime of divorce, from the little provincial custom-houses, is mere delusion. For the lack of responsible guarantee, the obligations of these provinces would go begging in the money

market. Capital and immigration would pass by their doors, and they would become the paupers of the Empire.

It is the custom, among certain people in the East, when famine afflicts the land, to enter the temples and belabor with clubs their favorite idols. As the timber becomes scarce, and revenue falls off, these good people by the sea wax fierce in their denunciation of taxes, as if the most weighty and unjustifiable tax of all, that on coal, were not merely maintained as a sop to them.

However, it may be said, once for all, that Nova Scotia and her sister will be saved from themselves. For there is no road leading out of the Union.

If, in discussing the prospects of Canada in general, I may be allowed to confine a few more observations to the maritime provinces, I should say that I believe their manifest local destiny to be maritime union. To superintend about a million and a half of public business, they have three petty kings, three houses of Commons, and at least two houses of Lords; while in number the judges and chief justices, to borrow a fantastic comparison, are as the stars of the heaven. But let alone the fact that each province requires a legislature, a governor, a cabinet and a standing army of officials, to transact half a million dollars of business, there must needs be in addition the pomp and circumstance of presenting arms, firing salutes and decking out in uniforms and cocked-hats.

I have heard many speeches delivered from those very provincial thrones at the opening of the legislature, and have noted some of their items. There is always a paragraph having reference to Providence and the harvests; and this seems to be

quite fitting, for the harvests are about the only matter in their political economy in which the hand of Providence is to be seen. In New Brunswick, I once listened to one of those pretentious speeches from the throne wherein this passage occurred, the most important one of the whole communication: "During the year, my Government have given earnest attention to the affairs of the husbandman, and the improvement of stock; and to this end have effected the importation of a superior breed of sheep." I turned to the itemized public accounts and found that the numerical strength of the importation consisted in six animals. Imagine putting on a cocked-hat and a sword to announce that a Government had brought in Canada six ewes and rams.

To sum up the matter, one capable business man could, without governor or cabinet, without volunteer or the firing of rusty cannon, effectually transact the whole affairs of the three petty provinces by the sea. I think, therefore, that the conclusion any sensible man would arrive at in this connection would be that these provinces ought and must rid themselves by fully one-half of their present expensive administration. This can be accomplished by a maritime union, which would give for the three provinces one lieutenant-governor, one legislature and but one army of official dependents instead of three.

An outsider listening to one of the maritime statesmen would assuredly hear him talk of retrenchments; hear him cipher how much the Lieutenant-Governor squanders in paint and coal-oil, and naturally would ask himself why in thunder no mention is made of the larger items? He would scarcely hear a word about maritime union, because maritime union would

be the death of fully one-third of the professional politicians. But, suppose this part of the difficulty removed, there would still be in the background the burning question: "Which province is to have the seat of government?" Nova Scotia would rather pay two dollars in civil expenditure, where only one is needed, than that "The Island," or New Brunswick should be able to say that she was the home of the government. It will be seen, therefore, that so long as the question remains in its present shape, the three pinched provinces will go on maintaining their overwhelming system of magnificence and expenditures.

There is, I think, one way out of the difficulty, and although I have elsewhere indicated the way, I may be permitted to once more refer to it. A few years ago, when a teacher made application for a school in a back district, the great difficulty in his way was the question of where to board. The thought that one settler should monopolize the honor and the profit of his domiciliation was in itself odious, and the matter was finally settled by his consenting to "board round the deestricht." Are we to infer from this, that if the government of these three little united provinces would consent to "board round the deestricht," the greatest obstacle to maritime union would be removed.

Before discussing the governmental alternatives left to Canada, we must preface our remarks by stating that the political atmosphere should first be made purer if we desire to contemplate with pride the future of the country. There are now in public life in Canada some good men; men who earnestly strive to use their talent for the general good: but, after all,

such worthy ones are few. For the greater part, politics are in Canada what they are in the United States, one of the lowest of all the games that offer success to ability devoid of honor. The best men, and the most thoughtful among them in either country, are not to be found in political life; such men shrink from the ordeal which is the lot of the political candidate. The successful men are generally those who are popular in the billiard-room, liberal in treating at the bar, or foremost on the turf or lucky in the gambling pool. As a rule too, these men are without means and of no social standing; they are devoid also of education and of the knowledge indispensable to competently help in the making of laws. If a man enters public life without fortune and stripped of all honorable ambition, it is deadly certain that his chief aim is to further his own interests. Given an unscrupulous politician at the head of government, and he will buy these men as a butcher buys a flock of sheep.

It is true that these men give a semblance of patriotism to their movements by allying themselves with a party; but this party has become a machine, and the harm that the machine does to public interests and public morals is greater even than could be accomplished by loose fish who held themselves aloof from either side. I take it for granted that there is a splendid opportunity in store for young men in Canada, provided they stand aloof of the machines and take as their watchword, not Protection or Free-Trade, but the purification of public life. I say the young men, because the older ones have already suffered themselves to be bound to the wheel, and to the end will go sinning for the party rather than bring upon their brilliant names the reproach of "turncoat."

I affirm, without dread of refutation, that our country is worse now, and not better, for her politicians.

The Confederation is made up of interests more or less divergent, and of aims more or less conflicting; there is a slight antagonism of religion, and there is fierce conflict of races. The best and the noblest deed patriotism could perform would be to restore harmony to that part of the instrument which is jangled and out-of-tune; to seek and close up the joints in the Confederation; to demonstrate that the interest of the many ought to prevail over that of the few; that Canada is the country of the Gaul as well as of the Celt and the Saxon; and, finally, that the triumph of the country as a whole, in civilization and prosperity, is of far greater moment than the success or the aims of a section, a creed, or a race. Mr. Goldwin Smith describes the French province as a wedge driven between the Eastern and Western sections of the Union; but even this tenacious and exclusive nationality would in time blend into its surroundings if the politicians did not rekindle the old feuds periodically and were not continually unearthing for new discords. I do not think, however, that there is much room for anticipating that this province will readily submit to the logic of environment; if there were, such a hope dwindles down to mere nothingness when we find that the execution of a man convicted of treason and murder furnishing a new source of discord and isolation.

Before dismissing this chapter of my subject, I beg to point out one condition under which much could be done to improve political morals and draw men of character and fitness into public life. I think the honor of a seat in the

legislature should be of itself a sufficient reward to the legislator. In England this is the rule, and instances like our own Pacific scandal, or the many frauds that blot political history in the United States is unheard of.

In our country, as in the States, a man imagines that an evil political deed brings no personal taint; until men are made to feel a reproach upon their public honor as keenly as a wound, the life of the legislator can not be an honest one, his calling an honorable calling. Honor is everything to most of the men who serve in Westminster, and for honor alone do they seek the place; their fortune puts them above the debasing influence money exercises, there we hear nothing of the sin so familiar to our own ears.

I am aware that it would be a grave injustice to the people of a young country to place its representation and its law-making power solely into the hands of those who could afford to serve without salary; for, at such a stage in a nation's life, every Cincinnatus handles his own plough. But the distribution of wealth is now wide enough to make the compensation one of honor; and wherever honor is the sole reward the best men only strives for the place. Admitting even that the twenty New York aldermen who perpetrated, in the early morning, the foulest act known to municipal history, were not needy, we must concede on the other hand that they were the product of what is worst and dishonorable in the wards; if a higher standard of representation had obtained, candidatures as theirs would have been out of the question.

And now, I shall endeavor to briefly discuss the three alternatives which the future holds for Canada:—

First—Federation with the Empire.

Second—Annexation to the United States, and

Third—The formation of an independent nationality.

Federation is a vast scheme; nothing will so capture and dazzle a small mind as an omnipotent question. I may state, for the benefit of those who may have forgotten the fact, that the first public man of note in Canada to advocate Federation, was Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt;—but, looking over the files of old Canadian papers, I find that this same gentleman was at one time the leader of a movement in Montreal which sought to bring about annexation. But, such as the idea is, I have to deny credit for its origination with Sir Alexander, or for that matter with politicians. It was conceived by Mr. Justin McCarthy, who deals in some very splendid kite-flying in the closing portion of the history of *Our Own Times*. But Mr. McCarthy derived the inspiration from Tennyson, who, as everyone acquainted with *Locksley Hall* knows, tells us of a time when the war drum shall throb no longer,

“And the battle flags be furled,
In the parliament of man, the Federation of the World.”

I wonder that somebody has not overtopped Lord Tennyson and taken in the moon. Sir John Macdonald, on account of whom I have been blamed for having over-praised him in my books, has latterly favored the idea; but Sir John is now nearly seventy-two, and a medical friend of mine, Dr. Ferguson,

informs me, upon his professional reputation, that atrophy of the brain begins a little after fifty. Moreover, it must be remembered what influence an extra decoration, if it takes the form of a star or a pretty ribbon, has upon the understanding of men.

What puzzles me is how men like Sir John and Sir Alexander, so thorough in their examination of questions, and so sound in judgment, should have failed to find three or four objections to this project, any one of which is fatal. For instance, the fundamental notion in the scheme is the equality of the several portions of the Empire; but, if the existing Imperial constitution were to be preserved, this would mean colonial representation in the House of Lords as well as in the Commons. Colonial soil does not produce, that I am aware, peers of the realm; and the principle of entail and primogeniture is lacking to propagate the dignity and the status of a transplanted peerage. Imagine my grandson, the third Lord Collins of Canada, exercising his noble energies in sweeping chimneys!

Then, as to our concern in affairs of the Empire.

On the prestige and the power of Great Britain, we all glory, and the throbs of transport felt at the heart of the motherland thrills the colonists to the finger tips; but for all this we are not prepared to give our last man and our last shilling, as Sir George said we were; nor, for that matter, any man or any shilling, in erecting scientific frontiers, in making disastrous excursions through the Khyber pass, or shooting blacks in Ashantee. The British tax-payer may be persuaded that to bear the brunt of this class of undertaking is proper

for him, because they maintain and augment the potency of the British name; but the Canadian tax-payer does not want, and will not bear, any share in such burdens. It would be only folly to expect otherwise, and this feature of the question is not worthy of further discussion.

Having disposed of these two barriers, let us picture to ourselves a contingent of representatives from Canada crossing the seas to discuss at Westminster whether a projected railroad bridge in Ontario should cross Swan's Creek or Duck's Puddle, and how much compensation deacon Estabrook's widow should receive for the slaughter of her cow or her husband by a government engine. Imagine the widow setting out from her farm to cross the wintry ocean in order to establish her claim before a listening England!

I suppose the question of divorce would be taken from the fond hands of the Ottawa senators to the House of Lords; and what a glorious occupation it would be for the Howards and the Stanleys to sit and hear the petition and the evidence of Martha Smith, and decide whether, after all, it was not best to turn the said Martha loose again into the matrimonial market.

Some one, among those present, will probably say that the Parliament of the Empire would have cognizance of only such questions as treaties, but three or four treaties in a life-time are about the number that past history has produced.

Let me repeat the fact that there is still a mightier question behind all this; it is found in the position that the heart of the Empire would occupy in relation to its outskirts. I am aware that our statesmen leave India out of the programme;

but, at the risk of repeating an old joke, I will affirm that this is like leaving Hamlet out of the play. Yet, even in doing this, I can, without danger of incurring the self-reproach of wildness, permit my imagination to travel to a time when the population of Canada alone will exceed that of the Imperial Island; so, when the representatives of goodly Canada would move into the house at Westminster, you would have the spectacle which Dundreary has best described, that of the tail wagging the dog.

Let those who smile remember that a federation on the mighty plan suggested is not a compact made for the span of a statesman's life, but a constitution fashioned to endure as long as the power and the glory of the British Empire last.

For these reasons and for a score of other good ones, I do not deem the scheme of federation to be either wise or practicable. It is a splendid subject to talk about, and, after all, it would be a pity to deny politicians the opportunity of discussing something grand now and again.

The second alternative is Annexation, and upon this I shall not waste many words. At the outset, allow me to remark that I can conceive of little in national ambition higher than a desire to form a portion of the mightiest Republic that the world has ever seen; but, with Canada, annexation would not mean alliance, it would simply mean absorption. Canadian individuality of course would cease, while the material condition of the people would not be improved. This, however, is a question about which we can only vaguely surmise. But I think that those who, like ourselves, have had an opportunity of comparing certain republican institutions with corresponding

ones under English monarchy, can have no difficulty in giving the preference to those of the latter.

I shall not dwell upon the spectacle of the ermine trailed through the party mire and beholden to the bad men who pull caucus wires, for I should have to speak with some bitterness. I contend that the administration of justice in this country is not, nor can it be held above suspicion; for, it is not likely that the judge upon the bench can ignore the men who gave him his eminence; he would be more than human if he were able to forget those who can, at a stated time, give him that eminence again.

Nor would I, without a struggle, surrender the mild, I might say fictitious, kingly prerogative for that of the veto—which may be as arbitrary and capricious as the dictum of a Roman Emperor. If the veto is never arbitrary and never capricious, the man is to be thanked and not the constitution.

It would be well too, for those who contemplate the grandeur of a political brotherhood extending from the Isthmus of Panama to the land of the Esquimaux, to ponder whether or not there may not be somewhere a breaking point in national expansion.

Lastly, I do not think that our political vocabulary would gain much in elegance by the addition of such candidates as the "Mugwump" and the "Bloody Shirt."

But, whether there be any force or not in my objections, I think that I am not over bold in affirming that our people do not desire annexation and never will accept it.

Finally comes the proposal of national independence.

At the risk of shocking some of my hearers, I will state as

my belief that national independence is the more natural and logical future of Canada. I think it just as natural and just as logical that, in good time, the Dominion should end its connection with the cherished motherland, as it is for the boy, attaining man's estate, to leave his father's house and, single-handed, achieve his own fortune. But, come independence when it may, there will be no reddening of the land and no serious turmoil.

Mr. Gladstone stated his belief, less than three years ago, that if Canadians were to inform the mother country of their desire and readiness to stand alone, Great Britain would not say "No." After all, it will not be necessary to kill my friend Colonel Dennison or any of those U. E. Loyalists who carry the integrity of Canada upon the blade of their sword.

To put in a plea for Canadian independence, of course you are called upon to state the gains, and you are handed a bill of costs. Upon the list of gains I shall put first what some may count as nought, and that is sentiment: take sentiment out of the breast of man and he becomes a sordid grubber for his bread.

Independence would stimulate national ambition; it would give Canada a status in the eyes of the world, and divert immigration to her fertile lands.

Furthermore, it would give her the power to make and fashion treaties in accord with her commercial needs, and give her a place among nations.

Higher aims would prevail in the political sphere, and as a consequence ambition would be more lofty. In a word, it would give that for which some of the noblest men that ever

lived, fought and bled and laid down their lives. I do not care to deal in heroics, but if the position of the guardian be higher than that of the ward, I take it that the standing of the independent state is superior to that of the dependent one. I do not see how there can be any dispute on this score.

Some will say: "Granted, but your independent Dominion will be a mere weakling among nations." And others may ask: "What can she do against hostile guns? What is to hinder the Republic at her side from swallowing her up?" I deny that she will be a weakling. Her population is greater now, and her defenses are stronger than were those of the American colonies at the time of their revolt. Her population is greater than any one of nearly a dozen independent European kingdoms, and she has a wider area of fertile land than any country on the face of the earth. Alone, the valley of the Saskatchewan, according to scientific computation, is capable of sustaining 800,000,000 souls. And along these boundless stretches of fertile wheat-land, herds and flocks live, without housing, through the winter season. In short, the capabilities of this country, about whose future the misinformed have doubts, are so great that an adequate recital of them would be simply amazing.

Let us now consider the dangers of an attack by hostile powers. In spite of all what pessimists may say, this is an age of peace and not of war; nations are not growing more warlike but more peaceful. We have reached at last the age of commerce, and to-day the battle is that of the ploughshare and not of the sabre. I do not think that we need fear to see any grapeshot sent across the Niagara, for our good friends the Americans are

quite too busy making money to embark into such a profitless occupation. They have given us abundant proof that war is not upon their programme; for they maintain no mighty fleet nor grinding army, but only ships and muskets enough to serve as a police force on land and sea. Moreover, they remember that the Canadian volunteers knew how to fight as early as 1812, and they have not forgotten some of the lessons we taught them at Chrysler's farm, Châteauguay, and Queenston Heights.

Looking into the future, I perceive my country spanning this broad continent, her bosom throbbing with life and great plenty. Upon the pages of her history I can read the record of her achievements, it is worthy of a land with so rich an inheritance. I see her artists kneel for inspiration before her majestic and lovely landscapes, while able pens are moulding the traditions and legends with which the land is so richly strewn into an imperishable literature, encompassing history, romance and song.

Later on I imagine that I see a people—intelligent, thrifty and well-ordered—who, with roll of drum and the joyous waving of flags, celebrates the centennial anniversary of the birth of Canada; and I hear statesmen alluding to this nineteenth year of the Confederation, as the one which saw unworthy men strive to sever the ties of the sisterhood. Later on still, it seems as if I heard them relate with pride that in spite of these men's treason, the loyalty and faith of the people remained unshaken; that they went on adding and building, striving and achieving, until they crowned their work with a nationhood that in the eyes of civilized mankind stood second to none in prosperity, intelligence and general contentment.

