

## Canadian Nationalism.

**T**HIS is a doctrine which to-day holds the attention of all who follow the trend of political affairs in Canada, whose first official organ was "Le Nationaliste," founded in Montreal by Mr. Olivar Asselin and whose first exponents in the Canadian Parliament were Messrs. Henri Bourassa and Armand Lavergne.

Naturally, as in the case of every political gospel, and perhaps to a greater extent than any other ever preached in Canada, Nationalism has been violently attacked by the French Liberal press and in general by the English newspapers which, with few exceptions, have condemned it as being opposed to the true interests of Canada and the Empire.

I shall endeavor without literary pretention and in the measure of my limited knowledge—for I am yet but a student—to acquaint my fellow students of St. Dunstan's with the political programme of the Nationalist party, which has, perhaps, at some time been wrongly presented to them as the dream of French-Canadian exclusionists who look for the predominance of the French race over the other elements which compose the Canadian nation, and whose desire it is to break the bonds which unite us to Great Britain.

I shall not endeavor to treat the whole Nationalist programme, for the small compass of this modest article does not permit it. I shall also be silent about that part of it which deals with social and economic legislation, railways, mines, forest exploitation, water power, labor, educational reform, and that part, not the least important, which treats of the relations which should exist between the two races which live side by side together in Canada.

The first article of the Nationalist creed can be

stated thus : the maintenance of the colonial bond with the greatest possible measure of colonial autonomy. This first article contains nothing subversive and its words have not their usual signification if it expresses a desire to sever the bond which unites Canada and the Motherland.

The relations between Canada and Great Britain may be classed under three heads : political, commercial and those relating to Empire defence.

## I. POLITICAL RELATIONS.

As far as concerns our political relations with the Motherland we believe that little change should be made in the actual state of things.

The dream of those who desire Imperial Federation cannot, as far as we can see, be realized so completely that each of the parties to it will not at some time or another have reason to complain of its rights having been ignored or trampled under foot by the others. We believe, too, that appeals to the Privy Council are far too frequent and that matters such as those relating to copyright and bankruptcy need not be taken before English tribunals, for we can satisfactorily deal with such cases at home. It is otherwise, however, in cases of disputes which may from time to time arise between the federal and provincial authorities and Nationalism thinks it perfectly reasonable that these disputes should be carried before the Privy Council for settlement. Faithful to the principle that "the king should reign but should not govern," we desire to see the representative of His Majesty in Canada act to-day as our Governors-General acted from 1867 to 1899, leaving our governments free to manage our country's affairs, without promoting at state banquets and clubs such political doctrine as may in some quarters be in vogue.

## II. COMMERCIAL RELATIONS.

In commercial affairs we believe that if Great

Britain, wishing to encourage colonial trade, should give Canadian products a preference in her markets such as we give to her products in ours, the Nationalists would not look upon the arrangement with disfavor as long as such convention on our part might be set aside at will. But will Great Britain take any steps in this direction? The reception of the proposals of Sir Howard Vincent at Westminster in 1897, 1899 and 1901 convinces us that it is scarcely probable.

### III. DEFENCE.

This phase of my subject is one not easy for a student to treat and my fellow students will pardon me if I do not display the knowledge of an Asselin, a Monk, a Bourassa or a Goldwin Smith. Let me say here that an anti-Imperialist, that is to say a Nationalist, is not necessarily a peace-at-any-price individual and that he very well understands the necessity of defending what Providence has bestowed upon him. But to say that we must contribute to the defence of the Empire is a different matter..

Now that it is admitted that a Nationalist is not necessarily pledged to peace at any price let us make this point clear: French-Canadians are not disloyal to the British Crown as is said in some quarters. Why should we not be loyal to our sovereign? We are French in language and mentality, it is true; but if our accusers should take the trouble to read Canadian history they would learn that in 1775 and in 1812 those who defended the walls of Quebec and fell by American bullets at Chatauguay were French and received in the French tongue orders to kill rebellious Anglo-Saxons in order to retain Canada, coveted as it was by the United States, as a colony of Great Britain. Besides, it is but yesterday that Henri Bourassa, the Nationalist leader, delivered in eloquent language, in the presence of 15,000 French-Canadians who cheered his utterance, that if France, our well beloved mother, should at any time attack Canada



French Canadians would be the first and the last to fight in the defence of our country and in the defence of the British flag which waves above us.

But if we reverence British institutions, if we reverence the nation that has given to her colonies independence, our reverence or affection has nothing of the sentimental about it but is based on gratitude alone, and this is why we bring into the discussion of Empire defence minds free from prejudice and alone occupied with Canadian interests.

Why and how should we contribute to the defence of the Empire otherwise than by the defence of our own territory? This is the question at issue.

Why?

Because, it is said, it is unjust to allow the English tax-payer to be heavily taxed to maintain the defence of the Empire, while we who enjoy the protection of England contribute but little. Two things here require explanation. (a) For whom does England really tax herself so heavily? (b) What measure of protection does England afford us?

(a) England is a country of manufacturers, and in order to feed its forty millions of inhabitants it is necessary to keep the seas open to its commerce since it produces only enough wheat to feed its people for five or six weeks of the year, and its warehouses can hold but enough to supply them six months at most. It is to make sure of his own food that the British tax-payer must pay almost four dollars per year towards the maintenance of the navy, and as Mr. A. J. Balfour said two years ago, following Sir Charles Dilke and other authorities: England might to-morrow lose all her colonies and still could not spare a ship from her fleet or a cent from her naval budget, because of such ship and of such cent she has absolute necessity in order to insure a sufficient food supply. It may be seen from this that England taxes herself for her own security and that we are not to be charged with the necessity of imposing such taxes.

(b) And what measure of protection does England afford us? A nation as well as an individual is protected against an enemy real or possible; but who are our enemies? Listen to this: "Canada has no quarrels with anyone; she does not desire to increase her territory; she occupies a position by herself and has but one neighbor with whom she has lived at peace for nearly a century." (Sir Wilfred Laurier, House of Commons, 29 March, 1909) Our Prime Minister says himself that we have no enemies excepting possibly the United States, with whom we have been twice at war but through no fault of ours. It has been declared in some quarters in England that Britain will never fire a shot at the United States even in our defence. Against whom then does the mother country protect us if we have no possible enemy but the United States?

As for the powers which might attack us from without (and this would be a possible consequence of our armament, for if we remained "in statu quo" our neutrality would be recognized by the great powers) we have the Monroe doctrine to protect us, though in some quarters such protection is considered humiliating. But why, if you please, should it be humiliating for seven millions to have confidence in the protection of a strong and powerful people when Belgium, with an equal population, Switzerland and Holland find no humiliation in similar circumstances? Besides, the Monroe doctrine was recognized by England when she withdrew her ships from our Pacific and Atlantic seabords, leaving our defence in case of sudden attack to the United States, and this is the explanation which the English Admiralty gave for abandoning the naval stations of Halifax and Esquimaux.

But the British Navy protects our merchant marine. Whose? Not ours, for we have none. There are 102 steamships plying between Canada and Europe, and of these 95 are registered in England and 7 at Rotterdam or Hamburg, and the tonnage of these ships which in

time of war may be converted into naval transports, swells the annual marine statistics of Great Britain.

But, it may be said, it is Canadian commerce that is carried in these ships, and it is this commerce that the navy protects in time of war.

Here I shall refer the reader to the Canada Year Book, 1908, pages 469-471, and it will there be seen that our Maritime trade amounts to only 1 1-4 per cent. of the whole.

Great Britain will find little difficulty in protecting this 1 1-4 per cent. of our trade while protecting her own.

How should we contribute to the defence of the Empire.

There are only two solutions proposed : direct contribution to the maintenance of the Imperial Navy and the creation of a navy of our own. Direct contribution involves taxation, and as soon as we recognize the necessity of helping the mother country to maintain her fleet our contribution must be generous to be of appreciable value. Such contribution, we submit, would be too great a burden and our people would soon tire of bearing it without the privilege of a word about the disposition of the money thus taken from their pockets. It is for these reasons and out of fear of the consequences which might result from the feeling which such taxation would naturally produce, that Nationalists object to direct contribution.

Do we want to see Canada with a navy of her own ? No, and for these reasons. Canada does not need a navy. She has no enemies beyond the seas, and ten small ships of war would be a useless defence against invasion by the United States. On the common frontier of 4000 miles which separates us from the neighboring republic, there is not a stone, a ditch, a cannon or a fort to defend us and it is on land alone that the contest in such a case must be decided.

And is it not a little ridiculous to proclaim that we



have a duty to perform towards the Empire. and at the same time to limit our responsibility by declaring that we shall perform it when and how we please? We shall take part only in wars that are just. Who is to decide if such and such war is just or not? If we recognize it to be a duty on our part to assist England when in danger or to fly to her aid when she demands it, to refuse that assistance in the face of the world would be a terrible blow to the prestige of the mother country.

If Parliament is not in session the Governor-General in Council may send our ships to the seat of war and our representatives will assemble in fifteen days to approve or disapprove the action of the Ministry. Suppose our representatives do not approve the conduct of the Ministry, what then? Our ships are already at sea and, if still afloat, cannot return, for they are no longer Canadian and their officers have but the orders of the Admiralty to obey, as appears from the Report of the Colonial Conference, 1909, page 34, where Mr. McKenna, first lord of the Admiralty, wrote over his own signature: "It has been recognized by the Colonial Governments that in time of war the local naval forces would be under the general direction of the Admiralty."

Another aspect of the question, and the principal one. Erskine May, in his Constitutional History of Great Britain, wrote in 1861: "England wanted to tax her colonies and she lost them; she attempted to govern them from Downing Street and provoked distrust and revolt; she gave them liberty and found sympathy and satisfaction. Lately Parliament decreed that colonies enjoying self-government should undertake the responsibility and the cost of their own defence." At that time English statesmen considered that the immediate consequence of the possession of self-government was that we should defend our own territory and that by so doing we should be fulfilling our whole duty to the Empire. The principle recognized by English statesmen at that time and proclaimed by Gladstone at the time of the Crimean

War is the principle of Canadian Nationalists to-day, who maintain that to bind ourselves to take part in England's wars without having the right to participate in her treaties or a word to say in negotiating them would be to surrender our autonomy, abandon responsible government, and with the stroke of a pen return to the days of Baldwin, Papineau and Lafontaine.

But in the words of Erskine May, whom I have just quoted, there is still more. "England wanted to tax her colonies and she lost them." If we go back to the War of Independence we might ask ourselves if our situation bears no similarity to the situation of the American Colonists at that time, and if Lord Selborne, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1900, was not right when he said: "Gentlemen, this (Imperial defence) is an old question in a new form. A century and a quarter ago it was this question of Imperial defence that was the basis of our quarrel with our colonies in America and which at last was the cause of losing them. Will history repeat itself? The same causes produce the same effects. Will Anglo-Saxons of Charlottetown, Halifax, Toronto and the West, when the burden becomes too heavy to bear, repeat the words of Patrick Henry: "No taxation without representation"? What then will become of the Colonial bond? Will it be severed by those who will have tried to renew the imperialism of ancient Rome, or will it be kept intact by Canadian Nationalists who say to-day and will continue to say: "Canadians, we owe our lives, our labor and our intellect to the country that God has given us; as British subjects we owe to England but the preservation of that part of the Empire which is ours."

L. D. DURAND.