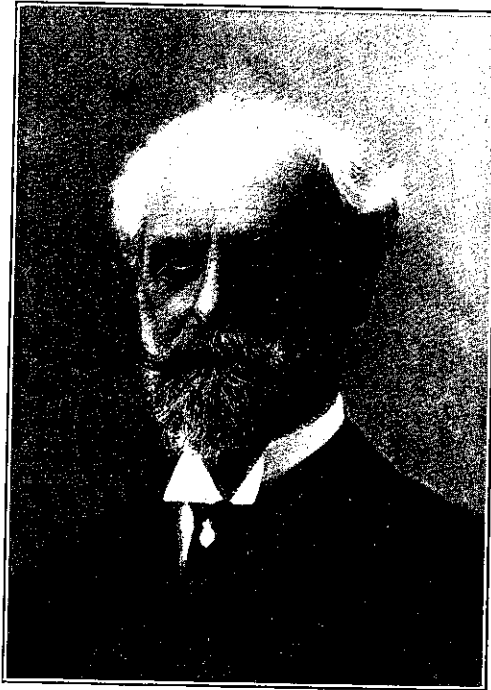


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The British Empire—Within and Without

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ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject, "The British Empire—Within and Without," Professor F. C. de Sumichrast, of Harvard University, President of the Victorian Club, of Boston, Mass., said:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—The subject upon which I am to attempt to speak is a very vast and profound one. As a result I have not the smallest intention of going into it thoroughly—in fact, I could not in the short space of time at our disposal. It is, however, a subject in which I confess a deep personal interest. I am an Englishman, and I lived in Canada for several years. Subsequently I went to the United States, but I have never lost my sentiment, never loosened my touch, upon the home land. I have watched, admired and respected the growth of the Greater Britains beyond the Seas.

And watching thus, studying thus, it has come to me that there are problems of great importance confronting the future of the Empire which demand earnest, thoughtful, patriotic attention. We speak of the British Empire, we unfurl its flag and the people are beside themselves with wild enthusiasm. And yet if we pause, if we ask those who are loudest and most vigorous with their hurrahs what they mean by the flag, what they mean by their enthusiasm, they do not know. Yet the flag is not a sentiment; it is a fact; and it is something that is facing a crisis of a serious character. It is a problem to solve; it is a problem to be faced, but not to be shirked.

The Englishman is the possessor of a very bad habit: he has a supreme confidence that no matter how difficult the situation which confronts him, he will somehow or other "muddle through." He muddles through in a manner which business men would consider neither right nor proper, trusting to his everlasting luck.

We are all interested—deeply, vitally, interested—in the success and further development of the great partnership that composes the British Empire, and we must not consent to let it muddle through.

Let us realize the greatness of the partnership to which we belong. Over a century ago, on the 7th of May, 1784, Webster paid this tribute to it: "A power to which Rome, in the height of her glory, is not to be compared, a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and her military posts, whose morning drumbeat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

And what is this great Empire? Materially, its kernel is Great Britain and Ireland. Even here let us be frank. It is not now so united as we could wish it to be. We must beware of the growth of separatist movements. They are at work even within the British Isles. And where are the members of the Imperial Parliament? What of the members of the House of Commons? Who among them is really taking thought to the whole Empire? There is a Labor party with its Keir-Hardie, whose sole aim seems to be a triumph over capital, not a loyal, much less an Imperial, project. There is Lloyd-George, a Cabinet Minister, whose ambition and ideal is Wales. There are Macnamara and his followers, with their Nonconformist aspirations for disestablishment. There are Redmond and his cohorts, whose aim is the independence of Ireland alone. It is a visible plain truth that the House of Commons does not represent that care and attention for the interests of the Empire that one would expect from the supreme ruling power over these vast states and dependencies.

We are Englishmen. I dislike the word "colonial." We belong to an Empire which is a combination of states. Of the three greatest of these states or nationalities Canada stands first. It is no longer a colony. This is a nation. Australia and New Zealand are growing nations, no mere dependencies. The Anglo-Saxon in these countries has proved by years of successful endeavor that he has the same strength, the same vigor of purpose, the same capabilities for success, as lie in the Englishman at home.

Go on, over the great list of the Britains beyond the Seas. Count them over: Canada, Australasia, South Africa, Newfoundland, West Indies, Honduras, Guiana, Falklands, New Guinea, Borneo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Aden, East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, Mauritius, St. Helena, Ascension, Cyprus, Gibraltar, India, all the Crown colonies, dependencies, protectorates, chartered companies and leased territories. Every one is a part of the world-power which we

incarnate in the British Empire. Over 400,000,000 to rule and guard; all races, Anglo-Saxon, Hindoo, Mahommedan, fierce Arab, wild savages; all religions.

All this means a diversity of needs and interests; it means a diversity of forms of government from the self-governing state to the pure Crown colony. If this is to be a united, solidified organization, not a mere conglomeration of entities with a sentimental relation, there must be a conciliation of all. The qualities required are devotion and duty simply done. It is the White Man's burden.

"Take up the White Man's burden—
 In patience to abide;
 To veil the threat of terror
 And check the show of pride;
 By open speech and simple,
 An hundred times made plain,
 To seek another's profit,
 And work another's gain."

That is the spirit that breathes the development and the permanency of the Empire. If any part of it is touched, the reflex action is felt in every other part. Not one component part can possibly be treated as absolutely local. There are no questions purely Canadian in our Imperial relationship, no questions purely Australian, none purely South African. If you affect one, the whole body politic will feel the reflex action.

There is a moral for us all in this. We in the various States are often irritated by the action of the Imperial Government. Let us be big enough to look at things imperially. While this irritation may often be legitimate, we should bear in mind the complex difficulties of the Imperial Government. What suits Australia may not always suit Canada. We have conflicting interests, different opinions and varying judgments. It is well that we should cultivate patience and forbearance towards the Imperial Government.

There is then the second thought. If I have ventured to affirm so strongly what we owe to the central authority, I am not unmindful that the Imperial Government owes a solemn duty to every part of the Empire. The Imperial Government should carry out its responsibilities to every part of the Empire. Many speak as though in the case of every member of the British Empire living under the flag nothing on earth could sway them from it. Well, nothing could with me, but we are not all alike. It was nothing but stupidity, nothing but ultra-conservatism and self-confidence that lost the mag-

nificent domain to the south of us to the British Empire. The great empire of Rome fell to pieces from some of the causes analogous to those at work to-day.

What are the ties that bind us to the home land? Language and literature, history and tradition, the community of ideals, the community of manners and customs, the community of temper and disposition. Yet these very forces may contain the germ of separation. The growth of contemporary literature dealing with local—with national interests, from a local or national point of view. We raise our glasses in the air and drink to the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood. Ah, yes, there was another such—the great Roman brotherhood. It included Italy, Gaul and Iberia. But there came a change in language, in literature, in national ideas and aspirations, and then separation complete and final. They are now no longer Romans. Italy, France and Spain are intense nationalists. History repeats itself. Years later the United States seceded. Later on it may be Canada. The change is brought about by different conditions. What suits the Old World does not necessarily suit the newer countries. There are new problems and inevitably different solutions. There is community of customs. True, but these change even more rapidly. There is community of stock, but look at the United States. The mingling of the races there threatens to swamp the original Anglo-Saxon stock. The greed of gold, developed to unprecedented extent, adds to the difference. Even to-day Canadians are wont to affirm with truth that they understand the Americans better than the stay-at-homes in England.

These are possible causes of segregation. Why did we lose our American colonies? It is summed in the well-worn expression, "Taxation without representation." What is the danger now? I am not a prophet of evil, but is there not a danger that we may lose some of the great States through taking action without consultation? Undoubtedly Canadians are loyal; undoubtedly Australians are loyal; undoubtedly Afrikanders are loyal. But the strongest loyalty may be worn threadbare after a while. There are two or three instances in which our loyalty has been bitterly tested. We are all willing to make sacrifices, but the Alaskan award was a straining of our loyalty. The New Hebrides convention was another case in point. There are conflicting interests, ever new grievances, occasional maladministration, ignorance, culpable ignorance, or indifference, or tactlessness on the part of the Imperial Government.

What is the remedy? It is for the statesmen to find out. Milton said, "When God has any hard task to do on earth, He sets His Englishmen to do it." There is one great statesman who understands the Greater Britains beyond the Seas; that statesman is Joseph Chamberlain. Sentiment has great power, but it cannot work miracles straight along. Chamberlain has preached the doctrine ably, fervently, but he cannot perform the operation on the people at home. If he could convert their brains and hearts as the brain and heart of St. Paul were converted on his way to Damascus, it would be a heavenly thing. It will take months and years of education, but eventually the people will see further than the parish pump. A member of the Imperial House of Commons will realize that he represents not merely the constituency which elected him, but the Empire as a whole. We must give direct representation to the whole Empire. It is impossible to have a group of men, no matter how able and excellent they may be, dictate Imperial policies to nations justly filled with the sense of their greatness. Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke rightly when he said, "If you want our aid, call us to your councils."

The last general election has been used by the present Government after the manner of a conjuror's hat; every sort of mandate is drawn from it. It is a Government of mandates.—Lest you should not guess it, I'll tell you, I'm a Conservative.—No matter what crops up, they look in the hat and find a mandate—a mandate for everything except attention to the Imperial mandate to busy themselves with the all-important question of the welding together of the British Empire.

And it is a Government of timidity and irresolution. It backs down all the time—before foreigners as before its followers. "I am their leader," it declares, "so I must trot behind them." It indulges in bursts of repression, of nagging interference, of pin-pricks, of intolerable neglect of vital questions. They are brave in words, these Ministers with their top-heavy majority. They are threatening the House of Lords. For heaven's sake, leave the blessed Lords alone and pay some real attention to the Empire. While you are squabbling about the dignity of your House and the need of making the people's mandate respected, whether it is sane or not, you are loosening the bonds that keep the Empire together.

This Government grudgingly consent to an Imperial conference, and at the same time discover a mandate that the conference is not to discuss the question of Imperial preference. They are afraid to let the people of the United Kingdom debate and learn what the colonies offer, lest the sacred mandate

battalion be swept from its sweets of power, misused or neglected. It is for the Imperial Government to study, in conjunction with accredited representatives of the Greater Britains beyond the Seas, the pressing problem of Imperial unity and consolidation.

It is daily becoming plainer that present conditions cannot long continue, and that if the Empire is to be welded together in a strong and united world-power, a solution must be sought.

Bristling with difficulties? Yes, but what is a statesman if not a man capable of grappling with difficulties and removing them? What we call for—what we have the right to call for—Britons born in the old land and Britons born in the new lands, is that we shall not see repeated what Egerton has so well recalled as English policy in Canada: "English policy in Canada was, for many years, a vain attempt to shirk issues which in the end would have to be faced."

What we have the right to insist upon—and no Government, Liberal or Conservative, may hope to escape the responsibility of bringing this about—is that ere many years be past we may rest assured that not only are we ourselves actually, but that our sons after us through all the centuries shall be, citizens of the United Empire of All the Britains.