

The Colonist.

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IMPERIAL UNITY

We are not of those who believe any good results are likely to come from an attempt to force a situation. Hence we have held aloof from the attempt being made in some quarters to bring the question of Imperial Unity to a climax. The formative stage in this movement has not yet passed. Chemists will tell you that the more perfect the solution the more perfect will the crystallization be when the time comes to precipitate it. The solution of the imperial problem is not yet perfect. Hence it would be a mistake to attempt to hasten the process of crystallization. We think, however, that some things are becoming very clear. One of them is that, if the Empire is to be continued, there must of necessity be some representative governing body charged with the decision of all questions of an imperial nature. We have already said that we only use the word "imperial" for lack of a better one. What we all mean by it is the British Commonwealth. The term "empire" seems to imply a dominant as well as subordinate parts, but the very essence of the British Empire must be perfect equality between all portions of it. To attempt the further consolidation of the British realms on any other principle is to invite disaster. Let our friends in the United Kingdom, who labor to promote imperial unity never lose sight of this fact.

Just in what way this central governing body is to be constituted we do not think any one, having any sense of responsibility, will undertake to say definitely. We can easily understand the ideal body, something in the nature of what Mr. J. Norton Griffiths has called an Imperial Senate; but how this body shall be constituted and what shall be its powers are subjects upon which it is well for the present to reserve judgment until after there has been a good deal more discussion than has yet been given to it. Upon the principle involved in the establishment of such a body there can hardly be any difference of opinion, and in order that the proposal may be taken out of the realm of theoretical politics, we propose to deal with it in some detail.

The first question arising, when one endeavors to state his views on this subject in concrete form, is as to the nature of the subjects to be dealt with. The second question is as to how they shall be dealt with, and the third is as to the composition of the body that shall be charged with the task of dealing with them. The obvious answer as to the nature of the subjects is that they shall be "imperial," but this expression calls for definition. What constitutes any question an imperial one? A general answer might be that a question should be regarded as imperial when it is related to all parts of the Empire alike, that is to say, when it is of such a nature that each Dominion as well as each part of the United Kingdom is concerned, similarly in kind although not necessarily in degree, in the manner in which it may be disposed of. For example all questions involving the prosecution of a war or the negotiation of a peace, while they might affect one part of the Empire more than another, would be equally important to all parts of it as matters of principle. So also might be classed the degree of interest which Canadians, for example, might take in the adjustment of the frontiers of South Africa would as a matter of course be very much less than what would be taken in it by the people of South Africa. It would be equally important to all parts of the Empire that its frontiers should be maintained inviolate by the combined power of the whole. So also international relations as far as they affect the rights of British citizens in foreign countries and the right of aliens in British countries might very properly be regarded as imperial. The general regulation of trade and commerce, the registration of shipping, the formulation of plans for defence, and the control of the Imperial army and navy might come within the scope of the authority of such a body. We do not think that tariff matters ought to, for one reason if for no other, namely, that no such body could be expected to understand the diversity of interests involved in such a question. It is difficult enough for the parliament of Canada to frame a tariff acceptable to all parts of the Dominion, and for any legislative body to try to frame one

that would be acceptable to all parts of the Empire would be to attempt the impossible.

We pass on to refer briefly to the manner in which the subjects assigned to the central body should be dealt with. Should the Imperial Senate, or whatever else it might be called, have the right to initiate, enact and enforce legislation. Would its decisions have the force of law in all parts of the Empire, or would it be thought necessary to require that they should be confirmed by the various parliaments? This is a question of extreme importance and of great difficulty. Would the right of taxation be conferred upon it? When we sit down to frame a constitution for the Empire, this is one of the chief stumbling blocks in the way. It is not by any means an insurmountable obstacle, but it must be taken into account.

As to the manner in which the imperial body should be chosen we think we may say that no plan would be acceptable to the over-seas Dominions that was not representative and that did not carry with it the principle of perfect equality between all parts of the Empire. It seems premature to discuss whether the body should be elective or appointive, and, if elective, whether the election should be a popular one or be vested in the hands of the several parliaments. It would be necessary, in order that the members of this central body might not be confined solely to men of wealth, to provide very liberal remuneration for its members. These men would constitute a governing body of the Empire and their sessions would not necessarily be held annually or always in London.

Just at present the people of the United Kingdom are too deeply engrossed with their own affairs to render it timely to present any definite project of this nature for their consideration. What seems to be needed at this time is to impress upon the people of the Empire everywhere the need of some central governing body and concentrate their minds upon what the powers of that body might be. In what has been said above the difficulties of the problem have been presented; but these difficulties are not to be regarded as objections. In the over-seas Dominions we think the need of such a body is generally appreciated, and the only thing now to be done is to consider such questions as those that have been above outlined. We are much farther along the road to imperial unity than are our friends in the United Kingdom. The very great majority of the latter have yet to be impressed with the necessity or desirability of doing anything at all. But if they could be persuaded to reflect a little upon the facts of the Empire as they are developing from day to day, they would see that the time for taking another step forward cannot be very long delayed. In less than a quarter of a century Canada will have a population in excess of twenty millions, and she cannot be expected to entrust to another country, to a government in which she has no direct representation, the decision of matters that may make or mar her future. There must be closer union in the sense spoken of above, or a drifting apart will be inevitable. We repeat that we do not desire to be understood as seeking to force the situation. To our way of thinking the trend of public opinion, both at home and in the colonies is in the right direction. Our object at present is only to stimulate interest in imperial union not simply as a general proposition, for on that matter there is hardly any divergence of opinion, but as a concrete, practical proposition. We want to start people thinking about it, not as something purely theoretical but as something that must take concrete shape before long. We do not expect any plan to spring, Minerva-like, from the head of any statesman, but rather that the Imperial Council, Senate, Parliament or whatever it may be called, will be the result of evolution although the process is likely to be very much more rapid than that which produced the Empire as it exists today.

A QUESTION FOR MERCHANTS

In the course of another year we look for the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific to Tete Jaune Cache. When that takes place the whole trade of the country along the Fraser from Soda Creek to its source and along the Nechaco and the neighboring part of the province, will be served from Edmonton. All freight at present destined from that region goes in from Ashcroft and the cost of delivering it at Soda Creek is \$30 a ton. To this must be added the cost of river transportation, which will vary as the distance varies. Tete Jaune Cache will be nearer Edmonton by rail than Soda Creek is to Ashcroft, and of course the freight on goods by rail to the Cache will be very much less than on freight delivered at Soda Creek by wagons. It will cost less to deliver goods at Fort George or any other place on the Fraser above Fort George Canyon from the Cache than it will to deliver them from Soda Creek. In other words Victoria and Vancouver merchants will be so handicapped in competition for the business of this new district that we do not see how they can hope to do any considerable share of it. What is true of the region immediately along the Fraser and its tributaries is also true of the vast region north of the Fraser. Edmonton will have the coast cities at a disadvantage.

The remedy lies in what the Colonist has long advocated, namely the construction of a diagonal line of railway across British Columbia from Victoria by way of Bute Inlet and from Vancouver by way of Squamish to Peace river. Whether such a railway is built by the Canadian Northern, the Canadian Pacific, the Grand Trunk Pacific or by some independent company matters comparatively little to the general public, but that it ought to be taken in hand at the very earliest possible day seems to us to be beyond all question. Its early construction directly concerns the merchants of the coast cities.

The person who set fire to a scow load of refuse and permitted it to drift about the shore, is very culpable.

Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann have just bought 4,000 acres of iron lands in northern Ontario. Not having heard within a week that these gentlemen had been buying something new, we had become alarmed as to the state of their health.

Speaking at a luncheon in Ottawa, Sir Frederick Borden said that six of the provinces have accepted the plan of military training in schools and he hoped that all the provinces would soon be in line.

That story about the King wounding a member of a hunting party, if true, only indicates that accidents will happen in the best regulated families. His Majesty is said to be one of the three best shots in the kingdom.

President indications are that the building permits for the year will considerably exceed the two million dollar mark for the first time in the history of Victoria. There is no doubt at all about the fact that the city has got a pretty lively move on. There is no place on the American continent today where real estate is a sounder investment than it is in the capital of British Columbia.

The Toronto News referring to the reception of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the West, said: "Moreover, whatever may be thought of the policy of the Ottawa government and its methods of administration, will deny that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is an attractive figure, that he has great personal distinction and that through long public service and long tenure of office he holds a position in the country very like that which was held by Sir John Macdonald. Under all circumstances it was inevitable that the Prime Minister would get a cordial reception in the west and we cannot but think that the mass of Canadians of every party would not have it otherwise."

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ENGLISH SOVEREIGN

In the reign of Anne Maribea long period practically king. George I. the role was played. The reign of George II. was a resplendent period the reign of George III. was unfortunate in all times a strong man to lead the tally he was never very sagacious. He very unwillingly submitted constitutional restrictions, which people had placed about their necks. He tried his best to follow his mother when she said: "George, be a man, was not the stuff of which absolute made, and during his long reign more than a tool in the hands of joyed his confidence, or who demonstrate that they possessed the House of Commons gave way five times during his crown. In his personal life he was exceedingly narrow and peevish resentment upon the heads of defended him. His personal influence development of the prestige actions of the nation, when it was purely negative, his intellect and the very narrow scope of his ting the evolution of constitutional ment. He came to the throne of his grandfather at a time when was at the height of its glory. He quered most of India; Wolfe had been to the Empire. Unfortunately the men who were entrusted with affairs proved unequal to the erving so vast and diversified a mistake was made that cost Britain Colonies.

The breach, which led to the Colonies, arose out of the attempt King's advisers to impose taxes a great deal has been written on and very much of it has been wrong. The people of the Colonies their obligation to pay their duties cost of wars waged largely for their. Their protest was against the taxes by a body in which they were sent. Stripped of all details, the root of the whole difficulty. There were many people in the Colonies ing of the mental weakness of believed that he was merely a tool of the Tory party, and their sympathy not with the Tories; but the weapon with any idea of setting up a government. The issue between government and the Colonies, stated: "The government sought to enforce the regulation of to provide for a standing military force on the newly-acquired territories."

To impose taxes upon the Colonies. The only serious objection the last of these three policies, an acute form when the Stamp Act in 1765. Immediately upon news being received in America, a committee of the several colonies named. All the colonies did not a majority of them did, and res passed setting forth their objections measure. These were forwarded and the result was the repeal of tax. Meanwhile, however, in the great deal of excitement was instances of mob violence were Stamp Act was repealed in 1766 content might have been allayed King sought to impose his personal the nation, and these were substituted the right of the British Parliament the affairs of the Colonies was found ministers willing to further and several statutes were passed of asserting that right. For nine was constant friction, the people ies being irritated by repeated control them, fresh laws being the place of others that were response to colonial protests. In was passed intended to discipline sets, which colony had been in its opposition to the new tax cleared the port of Boston closed provided for the quartering of citizens, and altered the whole government. This led to the sun new congress, and the Colonies be ed. Strong protests were made, ential party in England made a effort to bring about a policy of co the King and his ministers we upon asserting the right to alter the Colonial governments, imposition they saw fit and regulate their views without respect to onies might desire. Owing to u on both sides, an armed collision between the Colonial and the Bri 1775, and military operations b As yet no thought of independent the minds of the majority of the Colonies. They knew that th many armed uprisings in Eng what were thought to be acts and they saw no reason why, after sserted their protests by force, th return to their allegiance. The Independence was not signed 1776, but even this step would final, if the famous ministers of not employed foreign troops t Colonists, a step which was a proclamation declaring that all thized with the demands of the Congress were rebels. Indeed, ev