

A Reply to Mr. Bourassa

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CANADIANS are under greater obligations to Mr. Bourassa than they usually acknowledge. No one states our problems more courageously or goes nearer to their roots. Thus when in a recent number of the *CANADIAN COURIER* he explained his opposition to Imperial Federation, he made India the pivot of his argument. Realizing that under any imperial scheme India and the dependencies must be governed no longer by Great Britain alone, but by the whole imperial parliament, he contended that this arrangement was objectionable on two grounds. It would require Canadians and Australians to take time and energy from their own concerns and "to supersede" the highly trained and highly successful civil service of Great Britain. The objection is not a serious one. Canadians and Australians can be found now who would be glad of precisely that opportunity which a career in India affords.

It is not a case of superseding the existing service or of destroying its traditions. Our men would be draughted into the ranks, and would carry on the present order and methods without a violent break. At the moment important posts in the eastern missionary field are occupied by Canadians who are understood to show both ability and sympathy. Mr. Bourassa expressed less concern, however, for the fortunes of the civil service than for the future of Canada. If India came under the Imperial Parliament, would the wish of its people to enter Australia or Canada be respected? Whether it were respected or not, could the Empire stand? The question must be answered from both the Canadian and the Indian sides.

IF Canada enters into an imperial partnership, there must obviously be a delimitation of powers between the imperial and the Canadian parliaments. Immigration may be left to the Canadian Parliament. In that case Canada will be free to pass any immigration laws that suit our pleasure. If, on the other hand, immigration becomes a subject of imperial jurisdiction, either directly, or indirectly through a veto power enjoyed by the imperial parliament, Canada may be over-ruled. We shall then have to decide whether to submit and remain within the Empire, or to resist and go outside it. Independence or Empire, the two paths will always be open. All we can hope is that when the representatives of the various dominions are brought together around the same council-board, differences will tend to disappear, and hard feelings to soften under the influence of greater knowledge and a common responsibility. If at present Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Ewart were required to consult with two thorough-going imperialists before arriving at an important decision, the rather heated atmosphere which now surrounds this whole subject would rapidly be cooled.

In the years after 1837 several responsible statesmen both in England and in Canada resisted the grant of self-government to the colonies on the ground that differences of opinion would arise between the colonial administration and the home authorities. Their mistake lay in dwelling upon the few cases in which disagreement was possible, and not upon the innumerable cases in which harmony was certain to prevail. It is equally wrong now to let imaginary difficulties obscure our view of the common interests which hold the Empire together and which would contribute to the satisfactory working of an imperial government. Even from the Indian standpoint the situation may not be irremediable. The foreign policy of India will for a long time to come be controlled by the imperial authorities. Like Canada, India may well pay that price for defence. Still the representative institutions which the Indian people now enjoy will develop ultimately into what we know as responsible government and India will be offered a place in the administration of the Empire. If the Dominion representatives require it, the terms will be that Indians are not to settle within the Dominions. India can then decide whether to desert or to join the Empire. As in the case of Canada, we can only hope that a sufficiently strong community of feeling will have grown up and a sufficiently high type of imperial statesmanship will have been formed to secure a satisfactory solution of the problem.

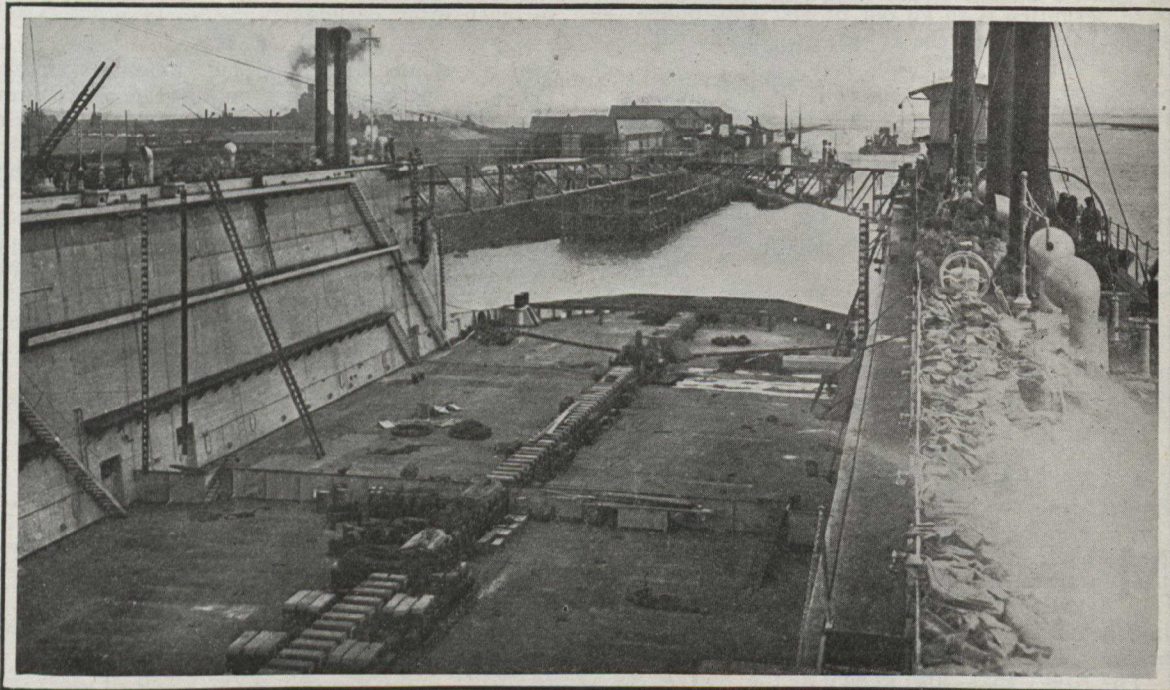
THIS hope can be our only answer to Mr. Bourassa's assumption that Imperial Federation would be unworkable, that it "would open, pave and widen the road to dangerous frictions and conflicts." If we have common interests to conserve, we may reasonably ask for a common body in which

they will be discussed and given shape. We must then expect that those upon whom the responsibility is fixed of adjusting differences and arriving at results will prefer reason to prejudice, mutual advantage to selfish gain. The present situation is not without its complications, and Mr. Bourassa's implied suggestion that the British Government can reconcile India by pointing to colonial autonomy as an insurmountable barrier offers no remedy. India could well reply to any secretary of state who prohibited its people from entering Canada because Canada was a free country uncontrolled by Great Britain: "Then, withdraw your protection from Canada, and let the Dominion make its own terms with us. It is unfair that you should defend Canada and at the same time refuse to direct its foreign policy." This inconsistency in our present position has not escaped Mr. Bourassa. He sees that we cannot continue to treat other countries as we please, and refuse to bear the responsibility of our actions. We cannot remain "half-slave and half-free." We must either control our own foreign policy absolutely, or form a partnership with the other British dominions for the conduct of foreign affairs.

HAVING announced his opposition to Imperial Federation, Mr. Bourassa was compelled at the conclusion of his article to favour the first of

these two courses. He urged at least that the problem of imperial defence would be solved if each dominion undertook to protect itself. The sum of the self-protected units would equal a protected whole. In making the calculation he overlooked a decisive factor. Canada would not be defended to the best advantage if Montreal, Toronto and other Canadian cities each undertook to protect itself. The larger measures necessary to link up the local arrangements might not be taken. In the last analysis one city might even prepare to defend itself against another. So with the Empire. The policy which its parts are to pursue both in common and towards one another should be decided upon before they make plans for defence. Mr. Bourassa has not covered the point. He would probably be prepared, however, to have this policy grow out of conversations and exchange of opinions between the dominions and Great Britain. The Imperialist believes that a policy will be reached more easily if representatives of the several states meet and have power to carry their decisions into effect. History would seem to show that where anything like the former arrangement has been adopted, friction and delay have ensued. After all a state, whether it be an Empire or not, is more than the sum of its component parts. It has a character, interests and ideals which could not exist without it. Has the British Empire such concerns or such a purpose? If so a common government should interpret them; if not, the dominions need look only to their own affairs. Mr. Bourassa must answer the question. I believe he has imagination and breadth of sympathy enough to decide that the Empire is worth maintaining as a political entity.

A Great Floating Dock for Montreal



In 1909 Major Stephens, President of the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal, brought back from Europe reports on the drydock situation in that port. More than a year ago work was begun on the new slip at the east end of the harbour, to contain what will be the second largest dock in the world. The "Duke of Connaught" being built by Vickers-Maxim at Barrow-on-Furness is 600 feet long, 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep, drawing 30 feet of water and of 25,000 tons capacity. She will be towed across the Atlantic, ready for installation as soon as she arrives.



A few of the links in the great chain that will be used to tow the drydock.