

BRITISH PRESS OPINIONS CONCERNING THE PREMIER OF CANADA

It is no exaggeration to state that the impression made by Mr. Meighen on his conferees at the Premiers' Conference and upon the public men and the press of England has been of an unusual nature, and one of which Canadians, irrespective of politics have reason to be proud.

Appended are a few of the press opinions expressed by writers of the Old Country:

The London Times.

"His stay in this country has not been a long one, and his time has necessarily been fully occupied with affairs of State. But he will take back with him to the Dominion the deep respect of all with whom he has come in contact, both now and during his previous visit in 1917. Even before he came amongst us he was assured of a warm welcome here on account of the part which he played in Canadian politics during the war, and for his known devotion to the ideals and well-being of the Empire.

"The speech that he made at the unveiling of the Great War Cross in the Thelus Cemetery was a fine tribute to the fallen, expressed with the simple eloquence and delicate choice of words of which Mr. Meighen is a consummate master. It showed, too, a deep realization of the spiritual and idealistic aims with which Canada and the other members of the great family of British nations took their stand by the side of France and Belgium.

"When he leaves these shores the country will say au revoir to him as a faithful and upright son of the Empire, who stood by our side in the time of trouble, and leaves us, as he came amongst us, with good will in his heart."

The People, London.

"Described by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as 'the ablest mind that the Canadian Conservative party has produced,' Mr. Meighen, who represents Canada at the Conference of Prime Ministers, has achieved the summit of political eminence in his country by the sheer force of his intellect.

"A Canadian publicist said not long ago that Meighen was a mathematician in politics. To those who have watched the new Premier the remark explains a good deal of his political character. For to Meighen politics is something to be taken seriously, to be worked out almost upon a mathematical basis, with sentiment and emotion and everything else that is even remotely hostile to cold reason ruthlessly ruled out.

"Mr. Meighen possesses an amazing capacity for sizing up a situation quickly and diagnosing it accurately. The attitude he will adopt on the many problems to come before the gathering remains to be seen, but one thing at least is already clear: He will stand for the traditional policy of Canadian statesmen since Confederation, namely that Canada must continue an integral part of the British Empire, but with the largest possible measure of freedom, which such a position can permit."

Eastern Daily Press, Norwich.

Discussing the improvement of the communications between all portions of the British Empire, says:

"Mr. Meighen spoke anxiously of the indisposition of the British Press to publish Canadian news, and declared that he did not know how to get over that. Our own view is that trade expansion will remove that particular cause of complaint. The establishment of a community of solid interest will create the demand for news."

Manchester Guardian.

"The beauty of British institutions is that they are so flexible, and flexibility implies the possibility of surprise. With a growing thing we never quite know where we shall catch it, and the tendency will always be to catch it a little too late. This is an experience which has by no means been altogether absent from the source of the discussions with the Dominion Premiers.

"They have at times developed an assertive quality very natural and wholesome in itself, but a little disconcerting to those who had looked for more plastic material.

"Canada would not have the treaty (Anglo-Japanese) at any price. She feels that, in this matter of the treaty and all that it implies, her interests and America's interests are the same, that for good or ill they are in the same boat and can't get out of it. Therefore, Mr. Meighen, with wise forethought and frankness appears to have taken an extreme step. He let it be understood that if the treaty were renewed Canada might have to proclaim herself outside it. That would create a singular and anomalous position and one that might make a considerable inroad on the con-

stitutional unity of the Empire. It was a grave prospect with which the wisdom and legal acumen of the Foreign Office and its chief were by no means prepared to cope."

Canadian Gazette, London.

"In the Anglo-American-Japanese approach to conference Mr. Meighen has played his part, and we have great hopes of practical results from Mr. Hughes' 'persuasive punch' in the matter of inter-Empire communications.

"Mr. Meighen has, of course, exactly interpreted Canadian wishes, heartily welcoming the forthcoming conference on armaments, and especially armaments as affecting the Pacific."

Daily Despatch, Manchester.

"Meighen is fluent to a degree, and his speeches possess a certain eloquence, but cold reason and extreme earnestness are invariably the chief marks of his public pronouncements. Not long ago one of his intimates described him as a mathematician in politics.

"His ability to subject the argument of an opponent to a logical dissection, restrained in its expression but pitiless in its thoroughness, has been one of the main factors which has brought him to his present place in the politics of his own country.

"We need not expect either sentiments of flamboyant Imperialism or of aloof nationalism in Mr. Meighen's utterances during his stay. Indeed, he intends to say as little as possible in public. His whole bearing during this visit will be one of inquiry."

Freeman's Journal, Dublin.

"I had the advantage of a brief talk yesterday with Mr. Meighen, the Prime Minister of Canada. He was most hopeful of fruitful and lasting results accruing from the present efforts to settle the Irish question. He declared that nowhere in the world would the advent of permanent peace and an honourable settlement in Ireland be regarded with greater feelings of gratification than in Canada. He assured me he was prepared to do everything in his power—and he was sure so would every Premier from the Dominions and the free States of the Empire—to assist in bringing to an end the present intolerable situation in Ireland.

"Mr. Meighen discussed the question of the disarmament proposals and the situation arising out of the British-Japanese Alliance, and declared the action taken by President Harding was one of the greatest acts of statesmanship that has taken place in history. He was convinced that far-reaching results affecting the future peace of the world would eventuate from the coming conference made up of the Great Powers, and expressed his strong conviction that if this problem and that of Ireland were permanently and satisfactorily adjusted, a new era of civilization based on world peace conditions would indubitably be ushered in."

Daily Mail, London.

"Mr. Arthur Meighen, Prime Minister of Canada will be much in the public eye during the next month. He holds strong views and is not afraid to express them. He has enthusiasm, eloquence, virility and vivacity. He will be the youngest member of the Imperial Conference—he is just forty-seven—but he is experienced in the art of moulding men to his way of thinking.

"He may prove a difficult element in the Imperial Conference. He is an Imperialist, but he is a Canadian first. He realises the importance of doing nothing that will stir up ill-will in America, and his vote on some issues concerning the Pacific will be guided largely by that consideration."

Athenaeum, London.

"Despite some lukewarm observations by Mr. Massey and a few characteristic futilities by Hughes the weight of the Imperial Conference has been thrown definitely on the side of the League. Mr. Meighen, though he says less than General Smuts, is just as convinced of its value and the possibilities as the South African Premier and both of them are in a strong position when they reply to a request for increased contributions for naval defence by asking why the League is not being used to reduce armaments."

Sunday Pictorial, London.

"Mr. Meighen makes no secret of his pleasure at the announcement of the Washington Conference and is confident that the worst dangers in the Pacific will soon be overcome. The Canadian Premier's friends, however, are much concerned over his health. He looks pale and fragile, and nothing but his indomitable spirit keeps him going through all his tremendous tasks.

"If half of the reports are to be believed, there have been one or two stormy scenes in the Imperial Conference this week. Mr. Meighen has been holding his ground courageously but very firmly. General Smuts' qualities as an Imperial statesman are showing up better and better."

Evening News, London.

"What of the influence of the Overseas Prime Ministers, with their fresh vision and statesmanship?"

"General Smuts has been a power for good. It is now an open secret that but for Mr. Meighen's courageous stand on Canada's behalf, after a heated discussion concerning the renewal of the Japanese Treaty, the Washington Conference might never have been called under such propitious stars as now. Mr. Meighen's wisdom has been warmly praised on the other side of the Atlantic."

Daily Mirror, London.

"Mr. Lloyd George often says that in his experience of the House of Commons the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Sir Edward (now Lord) Carson were the two men who could most swiftly and surely fasten on the weakness in an argument. I am told that Mr. Meighen, Canada's Prime Minister has the same gift."

Leeds Mercury.

"How near came Mr. Meighen the Canadian Premier and General Smuts, the South African, now hammering out Empire problems, to being battlefield enemies, has just been told. It seems that Mr. Meighen volunteered for service in the Boer War, but was rejected."

The Aberdeen Journal.

"The respective outlooks of the Dominions were faithfully and characteristically reflected by their Prime Ministers. Mr. Meighen for Canada was judicious and non-committal; Mr. Hughes was vigorously outspoken; General Smuts idealistic and pacific; Mr. Massey full of a strong Imperialism. Mr. Meighen was all for publicity. He had no suspicions 'of designs on the autonomy of the Dominions, conspiracies to bring about revolutionary changes in our Constitutional relations."

Pall Mall and Globe, London.

"Though the Canadian Prime Minister spoke but a few words, he made a great impression upon his colleagues. Those who have come into personal contact with Mr. Meighen assure me that he has a great career before him, not only in Canadian but also in Imperial politics.

A man of clear thinking and businesslike habits, he goes directly to the heart of the subject he tackles. His words ring true and he inspires confidence."

The Evening Telegraph and Post, Dundee.

"Mr. Lloyd George has been captivated by the cultured personality of Mr. Arthur Meighen, the Prime Minister of Canada.

"Reserved and reticent, nothing pleasing him more than a quiet retreat where books are to be found, Mr. Meighen yet addresses himself to public questions with something of an Imperial mind. His speeches in the conference of the Empire's Prime Ministers have been notable for their grasp of main issues and their breadth of outlook. He has a thorough knowledge of British Parliamentary history, and one of his early addresses when he was making his debut in the public life of Canada was an analysis of the life and character of the younger Pitt."

Canadian Gazette, London.

"Some who were present at the Hall of Gray's Inn on Monday evening, when Mr. Meighen was the guest of the Benchers, tell us that nothing pleased those high legal luminaries more than the authoritative echo from a Britain overseas of the principles which make this Empire what it is."

Yorkshire Evening News, Leeds.

"It is known that Canada because of its nearness to America and its own considerable Irish sentiment has ardently desired for the good of the British Empire that peace and concord should take the place of anger and armed bitterness in Ireland. Mr. Meighen, the Prime Minister of Canada, has been at one with General Smuts in a noble yearning to achieve an honourable settlement in Erin's Isle.

"His wise counsel in the Empire's Parliament of Prime Ministers has helped to create a new atmosphere of hope. Somebody said to me 'The dayspring has come from Overseas'. It is known of course, that none of the Empire Prime Ministers could do anything officially."

The Star, London.

"Mr. Meighen the Canadian Premier, volunteered, I understand to serve in the Boer war, but was re-

jected. He might have been a soldier fighting for dear life against the forces of General Smuts.

"Today each of them a Prime Minister, they meet around a table in the Cabinet Room at No. 10 Downing Street, and admire each other's qualities of statesmanship."

The Metropolitan Review, London.

"Borden has found a man at last," was the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier's verdict when he and his party found their obstructive policy broken down by the quiet but masterful Solicitor General in 1913. The Right Hon. Arthur Meighen is all that Mr. Hughes is not. Taciturn, calm, the Canadian Premier represents the typical Transatlantic business man carried to the highest degree. Emotionalism will never deflect him from his course; he disdains publicity; but he knows both his own mind and the surest way of reaching his goal."

The Daily News, London.

"The Prime Minister of Canada has pointed out in his own Parliament that a moment when the minds of all constructive statesmen are turning with hope and even a glimmer of confidence to practical schemes of disarmament is not the time for concentrating afresh on the naval defence of the British Empire. Let us, said Mr. Meighen in effect, explore the possibilities of a reduction of armaments rather than devote time at this juncture to the elaboration of plans based on the assumption that the scale of armaments is going to remain as great as it is, or even greater. No counsel could be more timely, and the Canadian Premier will do a lasting service to the Empire if he presses his views, which are clearly those of Canada, on his colleagues at the Conference now in session."

The Daily Telegraph, London.

"When the Canadian Prime Minister received yesterday the Freedom of the City of London he interpreted that gift as a compliment to the Dominion from which he comes. He may be well assured that it was to the man who is the first citizen of Canada as well as to his office that the citizens of London were glad to do honour.

"They (Londoners) can well understand how power came into the hands of Mr. Meighen, and they have heard without surprise that whatever may be the future vicissitudes of politics and parties in the Dominion there is no dispute as to the confidence which his fellow-citizens have placed in the man who is now their Prime Minister.

"He has the good fortune to represent a country which at this anxious time enjoys a larger measure of content and prosperity than any other State in the world save one or two.

"Mr. Meighen assured us that the Canadians, as they prize the advantages of unity in the British Dominions in North America, have learnt to prize the unity of the Empire, and they are convinced that upon its maintenance depends the hope of evolving 'that greater league on the success of which the future of the world depends.'

"Such is the message of the Prime Minister of Canada; and if we may echo his words, not only the Dominions overseas but every British citizen must hope and pray that his anticipations will be fulfilled."

The Yorkshire Evening News.

"Meighen, as they say with us, is a man of reticence. He does not like nor does he seek the glare of the public light, the blaze that beats upon the heights of office. But he is in downright earnest. His motives are good, his principles brave and his banners unstained. Canada sends you in Meighen a cultured citizen. He will grace your Imperial Councils." It was an American visitor to our shores who spoke.

"Among the Prime Ministers of Greater Britain, Mr. Meighen takes noble place.

"His keen and burnished intellect, straight and swift as an arrow in its piercing to the crux and core of a problem, reveals a Canada which is bringing her best brains to bear upon the problems of a war-enfeebled world.

"There is a severity of seriousness about him. Before he crossed over from Canada and during his crossing he received countless invitations to attend this function and that during his sojourn in Britain. He refused to be feted. 'I need all my powers,' he said, 'for the immense task of the Conference itself. I can best serve my country by giving my whole strength to that work.' He preferred to sacrifice a festal popularity rather than dissipate his energies.

"His heart is as large and generous as his brain. He is an outstanding personality at the Round Table of Prime Ministers."

The Canadian Gazette.

"Mr. Meighen, new though he is to the task, has risen to the full height of a great occasion. His speeches at the Dominion Day celebration and at the touching Vimy Ridge ceremony on Sunday were worthy of Canada at her best. We hope it may soon be possible to let the public know what Canada's attitude has been at the Imperial Conference regarding the foreign policy of the Empire, and notably the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and the defensive measures necessary to uphold that policy. A healthy public opinion on such vital matters, here and overseas, depends upon a departure from the traditional and often unnecessary secrecy of British Foreign Office methods."

The Edinburgh Evening Despatch.

"He is absolutely loyal to the British co-partnership, but he sets no limits to the freedom which the several Dominions may take for themselves, to the self-development which may yet be theirs. He has made that quite plain in the course of public speeches; in words which may have startled some old-fashioned folks, who, perhaps, had been under the impression that the boundaries of Canadian self-government had already been fixed for all time."

The Manchester Guardian.

"Mr. Meighen is in the authentic line of the Canadian Premiers who, like Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Robert Borden, have united a sincere devotion of the idea of British unity with a firm insistence on the right of the Dominions to develop on their own and diverse lines.

"As time goes on and the nature of the discussion at this year's Imperial Conference becomes more fully known, the importance of the part played by Mr. Meighen will be estimated more and more highly.

"Since the first step towards solving the problems of the Empire is to recognise courageously the difficulties which they present and the many different aspects under which they show themselves, we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Meighen, and, without prejudice to the domestic politics of Canada, we hope that this will not be the last Imperial Conference in which he will take part."

The Northern Whig, Belfast.

"Mr. Meighen has made a most favourable impression both on the platform and in the social life of London since he arrived to attend the Empire Conference. Canadians in London are profoundly satisfied with the statesmanlike fashion in which Mr. Meighen has represented the point of view of free Canada in Imperial affairs. He has had the merit of perceiving clearly that financial obligations are involved in all arrangements of a co-partner nature made within the circle of the nations forming the Empire."

The Daily Chronicle, London.

"Mr. Meighen is a remarkably young man to hold such a post, having climbed rapidly up to it by ability and force of character; and his youth should imply that for very many years ahead he will occupy, whether in or out of office, a place among the Empire's leading statesmen."

The Manchester Evening Chronicle.

"Mr. Meighen, the Premier of Canada, is most sparing of words, but every syllable tells. It is woven into a logical texture. He seems to be without emotion. He is piercing in his analysis of the weakness of an argument and shrewd in council."

The Yorkshire Herald.

"Mr. Meighen has won both the liking and the respect of his fellow Premiers from overseas, to all of whom he was previously unknown. He is a clever and very studious man, who speaks little, but always as a master of his subject. I am told that our own Prime Minister is greatly struck with him and that General Smuts is equally charmed."

The Glasgow Evening Citizen.

"Mr. Meighen's great attribute lies in an intellect of remarkable swiftness, his capacity for the massing of details and facts, and his uncanny divining of the weak points in the argument against him.

"To sum up, he is a fine, friendly type of serious British manhood, intensely human and possessing faults like all of us. He has come to talk business and not waste time with the empty verbosity of old-world diplomacy.

"Intellectual, capable, and straight, Canada has sent one of the best of her sons to represent her in the Council of Nations. That he is representing her well there is no doubt."