

Radical, and Goldwin Smith put together, and, beside, I am a Canadian and know the country as well as the cities of Canada. I have met in the cities more than a dozen people in favour of annexation, but I have never met one in the country. Seeing that the representation of Canada is almost wholly in the hands of the country constituencies, this fact may be of some little significance and yet I would never dream of parading it as evidence. The only evidence on the point worth giving, in a periodical like the *Contemporary Review*, is the fact that in a Dominion so vast, with three oceans on three sides, where the conditions of life must, therefore, be widely different, a land, too, where every passing phase of sentiment gets immediate public expression, no annexationist as such—so far as known to me—has ever been appointed to any municipal, provincial or federal position. But what is the use of slaying the slain? If it is a comfort for Dr. Smith to rest in the arms of the shadowy party which Max O'Rell has created I have no desire to disillusion him. Indeed, I know perfectly well that he will refuse to be disillusioned.

But what of the Conference? It met, we are told, "with the special blessing of the British Prime Minister." Possibly this is meant as a sneer, but as no one save an incurable cynic could begin a serious article on such a unique gathering with an attempted sneer, let us hope not. Think of the occasion. No true Canadian ever reflects on Confederation without a thrill of grateful emotion that, in the case of Canada, separate and independent provinces united into one Dominion, without the usual preliminary of bloodshed. Very different was it with the States to the south. Very different has it been in South Africa and Australasia, where all efforts to accomplish union have so far been in vain. The one fact that all our provinces were British and that their constitutions were on the British model made Confederation possible. And, last year, the same fact proved sufficiently potent to bring together, for consultation on matters of common interest, delegates from all the great self-governing colonies of the Empire. Is there no significance in such an extraordinary fact? We had no trade relations of consequence with any of them. The development of each has followed lines peculiar to itself. Each has problems of its own to solve. Yet the one fact of common citizenship brought them together, with the view of gradually making their union under the flag a reality of business and everyday life. They met as brothers, they discussed their assigned programme as brothers, and they parted as brothers, with a better knowledge of each other and with increased faith that there are no difficulties in the way of a living union, which may not be overcome by time and by "pegging away." I have been in South Africa, in New Zealand, and in the Australias long enough to know something of the temper of the people and a little of the boundless possibilities of the countries; and it is to me incredible that there should be a man of British birth, anywhere, not absolutely destitute of heart or imagination, who is unwilling to join with the Premier of the Mother Country in thanking God for such a Conference of their delegates, in the capital of Canada, and anticipating the best results from it and from the others that shall as certainly succeed it as good seed is certain to propagate itself, wherever there is soil. After all, there is only sea between us and the lands under the southern cross; and not only has a sea always been the highway of our race, but in the future still more than in the past the channels of commerce are to be traced along the great seas of the world. This is no vain prophecy. It is determined by the increasing necessity and facilities of inter-communication, and by the simple fact that fifteen tons of freight can be transported by water as cheaply as one ton by land.

The next point which Dr. Smith makes is that the Conference could hardly do much, because the delegates were accredited only by the colonial governments and not by the legislatures or by the people at large; "and the governments are partisan and ephemeral." Scarcely had the Conference risen when one of the Australian governments fell; so that in a few days its delegate would have been left in the air." It is enough to point out that this criticism would make Conference or action between any governments impossible. Surely, though governments pass away, the engagements made by them are binding on their successors. The government of every civilized country is now "partisan." As to being "ephemeral," colonial governments have long leases of life, compared to those with which France has been blessed

for the last twenty years; but the policy of France, both at home and abroad, has been tolerably continuous notwithstanding. Countries that trade with her know that right well. Germany, in particular, knows it by heart. So will Madagascar also. M. Hanotaux may leave the foreign office but his successor is sure to go ahead on the lines traced out by him, unless the Hovas submit. Even the resignation of Casimir-Perier will not prevent the proclamation of the treaty with Canada by his successor. As regards Canada, the present government dates from 1878. Dr. Smith, however, will not allow even it to count for anything. He believes it to be doomed, "and the policy of the Liberals in Canada would be widely different, in regard to imperial and commercial questions, from that of the Conservatives." This is an unfair blow at Mr. Laurier, the real, as well as the nominal leader of the Liberal Party. No one hailed the Conference with such felicity of phrase and such true insight into its significance and possibilities; and there are men in every constituency in Canada intending to vote for him, who would work and vote against him, if they believed that he spoke insincerely and that he intends when in power to discourage either imperial or inter-colonial unity. Why should he? His policy is freedom as against restriction of trade, and it is only along lines of free trade that real union can take place. Absolute freedom of trade between the different States made the country to the south. Should not sister colonies learn to treat each other like sister States? Such a policy would be easier to Mr. Laurier than to the present government. But any stick is good enough to beat a dog, and if there is no stick at hand just now, Dr. Smith hopes that there may be one after the next general election. He cannot even deny himself the pleasure of saying so, though he says it in a way that makes his hope a little less likely to be realized.

His next point is that the feeling on the part of the Canadian people that their destinies were not in the hands of the delegates, "combined with the secrecy deemed necessary to their debates, prevented interest from being taken in their proceedings by any but the friends of Imperial Federation." This statement is inexplicable. If I remember aright, Dr. Smith has again and again insisted that such Conferences, if they are to accomplish anything, should meet in private session. This does not seem "secrecy." The results of their deliberations are given to the public. Nothing can be done till the public is taken into full confidence on every point, in every colony. This may mean a little more delay, but what of that! Great States do not affect a feverish or mushroom rate of growth. Rome was not built in a day. The implication that public interest was not taken in the proceedings makes it clear that Dr. Smith resolutely put the glass to his blind eye. Every city in Canada was eager to entertain the delegates and every county as well. The delegates had abundant proof of that, and they have returned to their homes to tell their countrymen that the heart of the Canadian people went out towards them and their mission, in a way which inspired them and made them feel that everything was possible.

After these remarks, of the willing-to-wound type, on the subject of the Conference, covering little more than half a page, Dr. Smith proceeds to tell his readers what the Conference did not do. Then, getting to the old, old story of the future of Canada, as discerned by everyone but those terrible creatures of his fancy—the Jingos—he announces his lack of faith in the British democracy, and the necessity of British statesmen governing themselves accordingly. It seems that it was "the aristocracy by which the British empire was formed," whereas "the British artisan, if he has any political convictions, is a socialist and a patriot not so much of his country as of the labour market and the trade union." Dr. Smith is as unjust to the British as to the Canadian democracy. As to his view of the British aristocracy, it seems to me slightly different from that which he has expressed at other times. But it is in assigning their proper work to British statesmen that he comes out most strongly. Above all, they must bestow blessings hereafter not on colonial conferences but upon "the reunion of the race in America." The reunion of the race! Certainly, but why limit it to America? Why begin a reunion with a separation? What has the Mother Country done to deserve that? Why spurn the millions of Australians, who are of the purest British stock, with scarcely any intermixture? Why refuse to have anything to do with Cecil Rhodes and his great work in Africa, or with John Henry Hofmeyer and his Africanders,