

would have under an Empire parliament, for unanimity and uniformity before such a policy could be carried out in any part of the Empire, you might have made much less progress in the same time.

Or, take Defence. The Imperial Conference, since 1907, has produced a skeleton scheme, which is being gradually filled in, for a sufficiently uniform military organization; and also a scheme of naval co-operation, which would by this time have produced a Pacific Fleet had Churchill not been deluded by the centralists into wrecking it.

Or take Naturalization. At this moment there is a Bill ready for introduction at Westminster. It prescribes a reform of the British law; and it gives extra territorial effect to the naturalization laws of the Dominions. The passage of this Bill, followed by legislation in the Dominions, will do away with the existing anomalies of which you are aware. The terms were agreed upon after a negotiation between the Governments which has lasted through about twelve years. The agreement and the Bill are the product of the Imperial Conference. Could you have done better with an Empire parliament? I think you would have done worse, because an Empire parliament would have had to settle the insuperable "colour" question. By the system of Britannic Alliance you avoid the principle of uniformity, and also the principle of collective responsibility, and by this means alone has the Empire been able to deal with naturalization despite the colour question.

Wanted, More Continuity

To make the Conference more effective than it is, we want more continuity. It should be regarded, not as a meeting once in four years, but as a permanent system of consultation between Governments, so as to arrive at common policies to which each or any of them can give effect as occasion arises. To obtain this continuity it is necessary that there should be political officers of the Dominions always resident in London. I say "political officers"—no more than that—because the status might vary according to the choice of different Dominions. It might or might not embrace the High Commissionership, which hitherto has been more of a financial than a political office. What are the difficulties?

There have been difficulties on both sides. So far the British Government have always tried to treat the Conference, or any committee derived from it, as a kind of advisory board. It is the old centralist idea—a single, sovereign, executive government, which the others may be allowed to advise what to do. The proposal made by Mr. Harcourt, in 1911, for a "standing committee" of the Conference, was based on that old conception, and it failed as soon as it was found out. What he was proposing was not a true standing committee of the Imperial Conference, but a board to advise himself. The Dominions do not meet, either in the Conference or in any committee of the Conference, to advise the British Government, any more than they come there to be advised by that Government. They meet to concert policies, which they either carry out independently, or commission the British Government to execute for them, as the circumstances of each case may require.

That has been the difficulty at this end, and it has arisen from the fact that while the Dominions have grown from colonies into nations in the last twenty years, the officials of the Colonial Office, chained to their desks, have not been enabled to keep pace. The ministers successively appointed to preside over that office—Lord Elgin, Lord Crewe, Mr. Harcourt—have each started a full generation behind in their knowledge and ideas. To my mind the Dominions Department of the Colonial Office, including the Secretariat of the Imperial Conference, is heartily to be congratulated on what it has been able to accomplish under such a handicap.

At the other end is the difficulty that the Dominion Governments are not accustomed as yet to control political ambassadors at the other side of the world; though this is done by every great Power. They have been afraid of them getting out of hand. It is interesting to note that so far the leader in the required direction has been General Botha, who was prepared to make his able High Commissioner, the late Sir Richard Solomon, a proper political ambassador, at a time when neither the Canadian, nor the Australian, nor the New Zealand Government would venture that step.

Feeling the Way

You cannot hustle developments of this kind; but progress has lately been made. In their despatch of Dec. 10th, last year, the British Government practically invited each Dominion to send a "representative," not necessarily a Minister, who might

regularly attend the Committee of Imperial Defence; with the further intimation that any Minister who might come to reside here would have at all times free access to the British Prime Minister and to the Foreign Secretary, as well as to the Colonial Secretary. Mr. Borden already had almost committed himself to appointing such a Minister, and in remoter New Zealand a proposal was discussed for having two such Ministers, who would take the duty turn about. But it is important to notice the difference between the position on the Defence Committee of a Minister or delegate who represents a government having control of its own forces, and the position of one whose government has surrendered that control to the British Government. The former would represent an independent executive, as in the Imperial Conference; the latter would be merely an adviser of the Imperial executive. The one would be able to preserve the autonomy of his Government in regard to its foreign relations; the other would not be able. If the naval policy of the Dominions is to be contribution, the Defence Committee remains an advisory board, as it always has been, and as the centralists want it to be. But if the policy of the Dominions is to create national navies under their own control in peace, the Defence Committee is automatically transformed, by the presence of their representatives, into a true standing committee of the Imperial Conference. The transition might take time, and in the interval the Defence Committee might be hybrid to the constitutionalists; being for one Dominion a committee of the Imperial Conference, and for another an Imperial advisory council.

Consequences of Autonomy

Perhaps there are just two objections which I ought still to anticipate before concluding. Autonomy in foreign affairs does not mean a multiplication of Foreign Offices and separate dealing with foreign countries. It only means that the British Foreign Secretary, acting as "doyen," could not in any important matter act in the name of all the partner countries without having first obtained the assent of each, through its resident officer.

That would mean only an extension of the existing practice, whereby treaties negotiated by the British Government are binding only on such of the Dominions as have expressly assented.

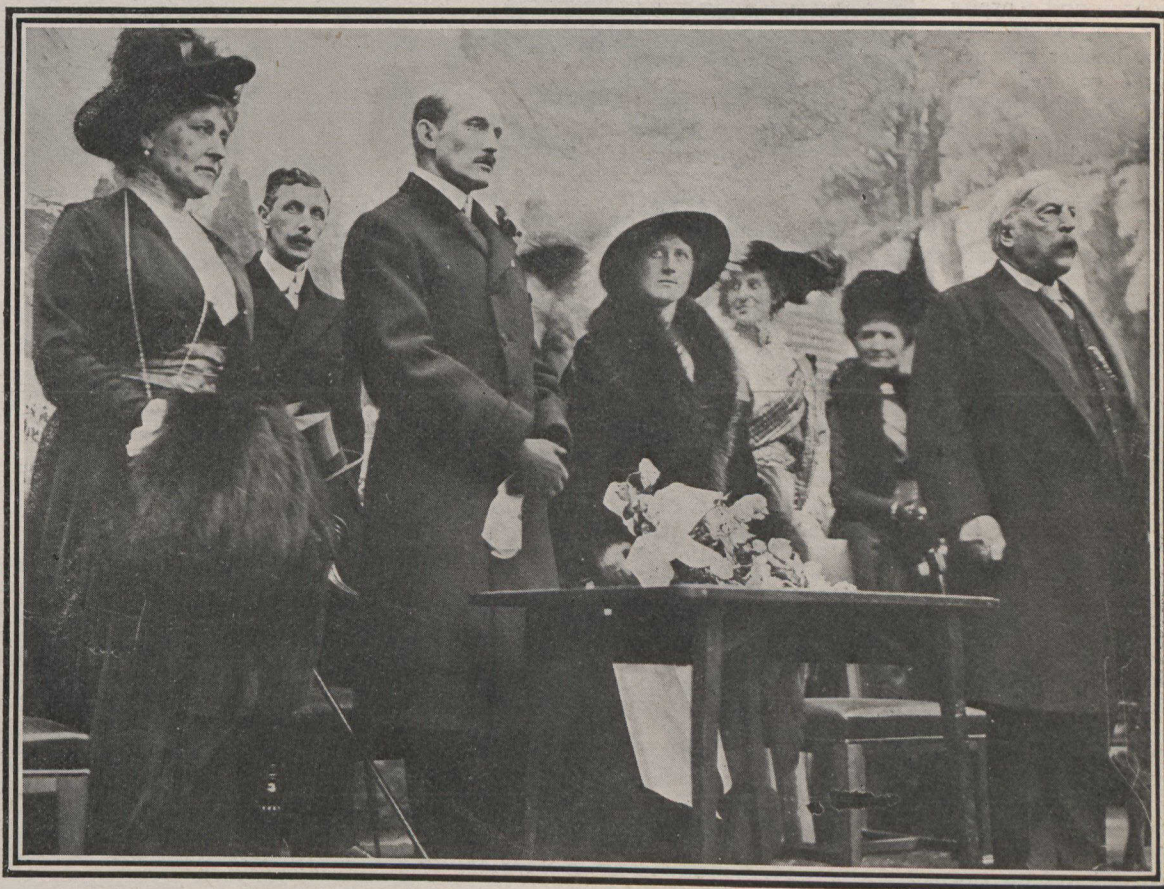
Finally, there is this one old but persistent argument. It is not natural and logical to expect that just as the old colonies in North America, Canada, Australia and South Africa, successively surrendered their independence by federal union; so those local unions, in their turn, will some day merge their independence in the bigger federal union of the Empire? In connection with our Empire problem I distrust all historical analogies, because the essential conditions are so utterly different. As to the colonial federations being a precedent, I would point out that they never came about until the pre-existing system of individual development had been tried and found wanting after a thorough experience. But the present system—the Dominion nation-state and the Imperial Conference—has not yet been found incapable of meeting either the practical needs or the ideal aspirations of the Britannic peoples. On the contrary, that system is still in the flush of youth, and of optimism justified by achievement. Nor should you ignore the difference between small, contiguous colonies, and states on a continental scale, each developing its distinctive racial type and national life. May it not be that the nobler destiny of this Empire is to furnish the exemplar of a new and higher order of international combination, based upon confidence instead of upon compulsion?

The Discussion

The discussion which followed the above address revealed that, while the majority of those present, members of the club and their guests, were adverse to Mr. Jebb's conception of Empire unity, a minority were inclined to support it. Among the majority was a well-known and veteran member of the Club, who, speaking as one who had been prominently connected with the old Imperial Federation League, was at a loss to understand how the Chairman could ever have invited an address from a gentleman who proposed to reduce the Empire to a conglomeration of South American republics.

THREE ROYALTIES AND A DUKE IN ONE PICTURE

A Group of Particular Interest to Canadians



Prince Arthur of Connaught opens the Military Bazaar and Christmas Fair at the Horticultural Hall in London. To His Left is Princess Arthur. At His Right is a Lady, Years Ago the Leader of Society in Canada, Then the Princess Louise, Now the Duchess of Argyll. To the Extreme Right of the Group is the Duke of Argyll Who as Lord Lorne, Governor-General of Canada 1878-1883, Toured the Whole Canadian West in a Buckboard Before There was a Mile of Railway on the Prairies. The Duke's Celtic Title is Mac Caille Mhor, Chief of the Clan Campbell. He Married Louise, Sister of the Late King Edward, in 1871. The Duchess of Argyll's Stay in Canada is Well Commemorated by a Statue of Her Mother, Which She Herself Executed, and Which Stands in Front of the Royal Victoria College in Montreal. A Sculptor and Painter of High Attainments, She Was Active in Founding the Royal Canadian Academy, is Patroness of the Montreal Art Association and Many Other Canadian Institutions.