

power of Great Britain to-day—is but an outgrowth of that ancient and honourable body.

By creating a committee of the Privy Council for the purpose of discussing and reporting upon schemes of Customs Union or of National Defence, one would at the same time secure a means of Imperial representation capable of indefinite expansion, and perhaps destined to develop into a truly Imperial Cabinet of world-wide jurisdiction.

The highest appellate Court of the Empire to-day, as we all know, is but a committee of the Privy Council. Let us enquire, then, within what time, and at what expense, a practical representation of the Empire might be secured by this means.

The Empire may, for the purpose of this question, be divided into five groups :

- (1) Great Britain.
- (2) The self-governing Colonies.
- (3) India.
- (4) Colonies which have no elective legislatures.
- (5) Colonies which have elective legislatures.

Groups (1), (2) and (3) already have their representatives in London, who would only require instructions from their respective Governments in order to complete their authority. Group (4) is governed by instructions from England, and therefore could be represented by a nominee or nominees of the Queen in Council. If group (5) consented, for the present, to be represented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the whole Empire might be represented without any delay, and be ready to take their seats at a Council Board for the purpose of considering and advising upon Imperial questions.

The nature of the Board which I have above recommended, and of the representation which I think would meet all present requirements, warrants the belief that the establishment and maintenance of such a Board would cost little or nothing.

The suggested representatives are already in London, paid by their respective Governments to act as their agents, and they would probably find their labours in the Committee to be the most agreeable, as well as the most honourable, portion of their duties.

The necessity, or even the usefulness, of a detailed scheme of Imperial Federation is open to question.

The subject matters to be dealt with under Imperial Federation are :

- (1) Trade and Commerce.
- (2) National Defence.

These are matters which, of course, have to be dealt with in framing the constitution of any confederacy. The Constitutions of the United States and Canada may be taken as illustrations, and each of them necessarily contains many details on many subjects.

Let me point out the mode in which they deal with the above two subject matters. The Canadian Confederation was accomplished by the British North America Act, comprising 147 sections, and expressed in 34 printed pages of our Revised Statutes.

The two great subjects with which Imperial Federation is concerned are provided for in part of a single section (91) which assigns to the Federal Government amongst other things, "2. The regulation of Trade and Commerce" and "7. Militia, Military and Naval Service and Defence." So that in a case in which details had, in most instances, to be provided for, these particular subjects were designedly left at large.

The Constitution of the United States provides for these two subjects in the same indefinite manner. Art. I, Sec. 8: "The Congress shall have power to provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States; to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States and with the Indian tribes; to raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a larger term than two years; to provide and maintain a navy; to make rules for the Government and regulation of the land and naval forces; to exercise exclusive legislation . . . over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dock-yards, and other needful buildings."

The above extracts I think exhaust the provisions of the Canadian and United States Constitutions upon the two

subjects with which Imperial Federation is chiefly concerned and they strongly support the view that it is unnecessary, even in a case of written Constitutions, to provide for any details.

If our problem were to frame a Confederation between a few contiguous States, the objects, scope and *modus operandi* of the confederation might properly enough be expressed in definite written language. But it seems to me that a Federation of Great Britain with her Colonies ought to stand upon a higher and broader plane than such a Confederation. Its principles ought not to be rigid but elastic, capable of application as well to circumstances that may arise in the future as to those which surround us now.

It might be possible to define in detail the future life work of a confederacy, and after years of negotiation, to produce the offspring—Athenes-like—full grown, but alas, not fully armed. Would it not be wiser to first create the infant Federation, surrounding it with every means of healthful growth, and then permit it to develop itself?

The proposed Imperial Committee should be created, as was the Judicial Committee, by an Act of the British Parliament defining its powers and providing for its membership.

The President of the Council and all British Cabinet Ministers whose official duties related to Trade, Commerce or National Defence should be appointed *ex officio*. The self-governing Colonies and India ought to be allowed two members each, with a provision that not more than one representative of a Colony should attend any particular meeting. This would obviate hitches which might otherwise arise by reason of the illness or necessary absence of a single representative.

Any two or more Colonies should be at liberty to unite in appointing a representative in London for the purposes of the Committee.

Colonies which have no elective Legislatures could be represented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Colonial representatives should be liable to be recalled by their Governments, but no change of government should, of itself, operate as a recall.

The above scheme is doubtless imperfect in many respects. The three-fold subject is too large to be satisfactorily handled in a few pages of manuscript, but whatever may be its defects I think it may fairly claim to possess the following advantages :

(1) The proposed Customs Union does not interfere with the Free Trade principles of Great Britain, nor with the Protective principles of the Colonies, nor does it contravene those unlucky treaties with Belgium and Germany. Hence it might be adopted without delay by all parties concerned.

(2) Free intercolonial trade would strengthen the bond of Union between all the Colonies of the Empire, and would stimulate trade, not only between those Colonies, but, as I have shown there is reason to hope, between the Colonies and Great Britain.

(3) The scale of contribution to the Defences of the Empire is based on a well-tryed precedent, and, although moderate in amount, would remove forever the present just imputation, that the Colonies rely for protection on the British Navy, but contribute little or nothing towards its support.

(4) The Imperial Committee, as suggested, would secure adequate representation of the Colonies in the management of Imperial affairs without necessitating any change in the constitution either of Great Britain or of the Colonies.

(5) And finally, we should by this means attain, without expense or delay, a practical Federation of the Empire.

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An out-of-the-way book is that in which Mr. William Gibb proposes to illustrate the naval and military trophies and personal relics of British heroes in a series of water-colour drawings, with descriptive notes by Mr. Richard B. Holmes. Mr. John C. Nimmo has the work in hand. It will be published in nine parts, and will have an introduction expressly written for it by the new Commander-in-Chief.