

The British Empire depends essentially, if not formally, upon positive ideals. Free institutions are its lifeblood, free co-operation is its instrument.

May I point out what has been noted by some old country papers, that of the 450,000,000 of the empire's inhabitants over 350,000,000 know nothing whatever of free institutions. The Daily Herald has this to say:

Not a mention of India, not of Malaya, of Nigeria, of Kenya, of the Sudan, of all those colonies and protectorates and dependencies and mandated areas which have no "free institutions" and know nothing of "free co-operation". Not a mention of all the subject peoples, of the empire.

It does seem to me that at least those of us who have anything of an international point of view cannot very well rest satisfied that the Imperial conference should have taken such slight account of the great majority of those who are sheltered under the British flag.

We are to be given a summary of the proceedings of the conference. I should like to know just how much of those proceedings we may expect to have divulged. Here again, it strikes me, there has been altogether too much secrecy about the conference, a condition which is far removed indeed from the ideal of open diplomacy which is pretty well worldwide at the present time. I would ask the government, what about secret commitments, what about implied guarantees? So far we know nothing about these things. Let me quote a news item which appeared on November 15, 1926:

After witnessing the manoeuvres of aircraft at Croydon, the Atlantic fleet off Portland and Saturday's demonstration by army tanks, motor artillery and mechanical transportation the Dominion delegates are expected to express their views on motions to maintain the defence of empire.

What are these views? We have a right to know. Are they in harmony with that resolution published with regard to Locarno, reference to which was made this afternoon? In his Armistice day speech at Kansas City President Coolidge said:

It is more and more becoming the conviction of students of adequate defence that in time of national peril the government should be clothed with authority to call into its service all of its man power and all of its property under such terms and conditions that it may completely avoid making a sacrifice of one and a profiteer of another.

That will meet with the approval of many hon. gentlemen in all parts of the House, but I suggest that the government should take the very earliest opportunity to bring forward a

policy along these lines. If we are in any sense of the word to be committed, either actively or passively, to participation in another great war we ought to know at the earliest possible moment just what obligations we are undertaking, and adequate provision should be made in that direction. Let the government bring down its legislation. In this connection I would review briefly some figures given last year by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) in his presentation of the budget. The minister stated that the expenditures directly attributable to the war amounted to 47.83 per cent of our entire income, and then he went on to enumerate certain other items which brought the total up to fully 50 per cent. I cannot imagine that the people of this country can be generally aware of the fact that of all taxation that is gathered together in Canada by means of income tax and levies in various other forms, not to mention the tariff, fully 50 per cent goes to pay the interest on the debt incurred through the last war. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) himself later on in the same debate if I remember rightly, stated that not a dollar of the principal in connection with that debt had yet been paid. Inasmuch as it is practically impossible for us to form any adequate idea of the meaning of figures running into the millions, I would put the matter this way: the total spent by the Canadian government on public health amounts to .19 per cent of our income; the total on scientific institutions, merely .29 per cent; and the total on labour .36 per cent. Here are three very important phases of our public life—health, scientific institutions, and the matter of industrial relations—to which a total of .84, or less than one per cent, of the revenues of the country is devoted, while 50 per cent of that revenue goes to pay for the last war. I would venture to offer a suggestion to the Minister of Finance. If we seriously contemplate another war why not adopt ordinary business principles and set aside a sum sufficient, say \$50,000,000 a year, as a contingent fund? Not only have we to pay for the last war but apparently we are contemplating another war, and this being the case we may as well prepare for it. Any business conducted on sound principles sets aside certain reserves against contingencies; and this is not a mere contingency, for according to our experts it is dead certainty. I suggest therefore that the minister set aside \$50,000,000 a year for a contingent fund. This, I submit, would be a much more effective preparation than summer camps for militia. And still more important, it would