

Do you consider an autonomous Canada within the Empire our destiny? Or do you think the destiny of Canada ultimately is independence, or that measure of independence in which we will take care of ourselves and, untrammelled by definite obligation to others, exercise free choice as to our actions in foreign affairs?"

Many among us who hitherto have not thought it necessary to ask these questions, do not desire to face the alternatives or to be forced into these positions, and yet I believe you have here the marrow of the matter. The determination which may shortly be reached in the councils of these nations will determine, consciously or unconsciously, whether this Commonwealth will abide. Therefore, it seems to me we should give diligence to the inquiry;—Is this Empire worth saving as a permanent force in human affairs?

This thing we call Empire or Commonwealth: This connection with Great Britain and the Overseas Dominions: the standards of British fair play, and liberty, and justice, which have come to us through these associations, had grown to mean so much to us, that when the call came in 1914, we did not stop to reason, or argue, or question, or ask what others would do; but instinctively, unhesitatingly, spontaneously, in common with all the other members of this family of nations, we offered and supplied men and material and money. In common with all the others, we have undertaken burdens ungrudgingly, which, if we had been asked, previous to the war, could, or would we bear, we would have answered—IMPOSSIBLE.

In the doing of these things we have discovered we are doing them chiefly, not to help England—much as she deserves our help—but in response to a deep instinct, which called on us to play our part in defence of the right as we learned it, during this century of association with other Dominions and Great Britain. We have found that we had travelled a much longer way in idealism than we realized.

Is this instinct to bear the burdens of others, natural to intense Nationalism, or is it the outcome of the development which we call Imperialism?