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At The Federal Capital

The most interesting and important debate in the House of Commons, during the week ending April 30th, came up on the question of the Prime Minister's visit to London next month to attend the Imperial Conference. The discussion originated on the motion to go into committee on supply. Sir Robert Borden took advantage of the occasion to review, at considerable length, the meaning of these conferences and their origin and development. He stated that the idea of the forthcoming conference had its inception in the conference held in 1917, when the following resolution was adopted: "The Imperial War Conference are of the opinion that the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the component parts of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the war, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities. They deem it their duty, however, to place on record their view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs, should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important portion of the same, should recognize the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations, and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action, founded on consultation, as the several Governments may determine."

Following the declaration as set forth in the preceding resolution, Sir Robert discussed at considerable length the approaching conference and the place that Canada's representative would hold therein. In this way he presented to Parliament a most interesting and instructive history of the conditions out of which our present status has arisen. He pointed out that the British Empire, after all, was a very modern organization in respect to both its vast possessions and the methods by which it is governed. Quoting statistics he indicated that at the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1814, the population of the British Empire was computed to be about 62,558,650 persons, while at the present time the population within the boundaries of the British Empire is no less than 445,388,500 persons. Pursuing his review he showed that the constitutional development within the Empire was of even more marvelous growth, and of this he wished to speak particularly. This development was most marked since the beginning of the 18th century, and particularly in this country. During the reign of the Georges the Government of the United Kingdom was, in form, but not in reality, based upon representative institutions. Only a small portion of the people were represented in Parliament, the majority of the seats were under control of an oligarchy, most of whom had seats in the House of

Lords. The Government was indeed responsible to Parliament, but the Parliament was not representative of the people. It was under this system that the American revolution took place, and he trusted that our friends of the great neighboring Republic would sometimes remember that the Parliament of the United Kingdom at that time was not by any means representative of the people. It was a tribute to the respect of the British people for law and authority that these conditions continued as long as they did; and doubtless that continuance was in some measure due to the fact that from the middle of the 18th century to 1815 the Empire was very frequently involved in war. As a matter of fact, democratic government did not come into effect in Great Britain until after the Reform Bill of 1832. It was supposed at that time that the reform then made would be final, but it was followed by the reform enactments of 1867-68, by those of 1884-85, and finally by that of 1918. Up to 1834 in Great Britain ministers were regarded rather as servants of the Crown than of Parliament. Sir Robert Peel took office after Melbourne in 1834, and the events which followed his acceptance of office marked a new departure in the position of the Ministers with regard to the Crown. It is perfectly clear, he pointed out, that the King has the constitutional right to dismiss his Ministers, but only in the interest of the State and not at pleasure, and only when the grounds for dismissal are justified by Parliament, or to a new Parliament after dissolution.

From 1791 we had in Canada for more than 50 years representative institutions on a broader basis than those of Great Britain, as the franchise was wider and more evenly distributed, but we had not responsible government. In both cases the reform was not effected without disorders. From 1830 to 1832 there were serious riots in Great Britain. In truth, the Reform Act of 1832 effected a political revolution in Great Britain, but fortunately without civil war. In Canada we had the beginnings of responsible government in the early 40's. Lord Durham's report laid the foundation, but some limitations which he advocated were soon swept away. The task was not accomplished without difficulty. British statesmen were convinced that responsible government was entirely unsuited to the colonies, and could not safely be applied to them. They frequently predicted and were perfectly sincere in their belief, that the granting of the conditions out of which our present status has arisen in the North American colonies marked the first stage of a movement which would speedily and inevitably bring about the disintegration of the Empire. It has had precisely a contrary effect, and the reason for this seems very plain. If there should be errors in an administration controlled by the people of a country, the remedy lies in the hands of the people themselves. But if there are errors in the administration by a government controlled by the Governor or by the Colonial Office, the criticism turns upon the Governor, as an Imperial officer, or upon the Colonial Office in its administration of the affairs of the colony. Naturally all this tends to weaken the tie which binds the colony to the Mother Country. Sir Robert emphasized the point regarding the movement for responsible government in Canada as the basis of the present constitution of the Empire. A group of free democracies, enjoying complete powers of self-government in their domestic affairs, and acting in close association with the Mother Country, has proven during the late war that unity is strongest when

it is based upon freedom and autonomy. He said it was not unworthy of remark that the initiative in this movement came from this Dominion, and that their point of view has been fully recognized in Great Britain. He said he did not think the case for conferring upon the British colonies in North America complete powers of self-government was anywhere put forward more strongly, more forcibly, and more eloquently than in the four famous letters written by Joseph Howe to Lord John Russell in the summer of 1839. He here contrasted the outlook of British statesmen in 1839 with that of their successors in 1907. On April 14, 1837, Lord John Russell, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the House of Commons, spoke as follows: "The case, as it is brought before the House, is this. The House of Assembly of Lower Canada have asked for an elective Legislative Council, and for an Executive Council, which shall be responsible to them, and not to the Government or Crown of Great Britain. We consider that these demands are inconsistent with the relations between a colony and the Mother Country, and that it would be better to say, at once, 'let the two countries separate,' than for us to pretend to govern the colony afterwards." The resolution which he then supported, and which was passed by the House of Commons, contained the following paragraph: "Resolved, That, while it is expedient to improve the composition of the Executive Council in Lower Canada, it is inadvisable to subject it to the responsibility demanded by the House of Assembly of that province."

Continuing his review of the subject, Sir Robert here contrasted the words of the resolution of Lord John Russell, above quoted, with the words and action of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman seventy years afterwards, when he said: "Let us see what is that most significant event of the past year which has rung through the world and astounded the world. It is the establishment of complete self-government in the Transvaal, and the constitution of a freely elected government, at the head of which is a man who perhaps was the ablest and most successful soldier of those who led the Boer people in the determined war against us a year or two ago. I believe in my soul and conscience that in the whole history of our country there has never been a finer example of true British policy or of grander achievement." Sir Robert said he would not attempt to trace, although it would be interesting to do so, the various steps in the development of full autonomy in this country and in other dominions. These steps had been gradual but certain, and the great statesmen of both political parties in Canada have contributed to the progress through which we have reached our present status. He would speak only of those who have passed away. There were others, but he alluded especially to John A. Macdonald, George Brown, Alexander T. Galt, Georges Etienne Cartier, Edward Blake, Charles Tupper, John S. D. Thompson, and Wilfrid Laurier. He then said he believed the present Prime Minister (Mr. Meighen) would stand as strongly for our full autonomy and all our constitutional rights as any of his predecessors. Coming back then to the subject of Imperial Conferences, Sir Robert pointed out that the Imperial Conference received its present form in 1907. It sits under the presidency of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and in his absence under that of the Colonial Secretary. It was initiated under the name of the Colonial Conference in 1887 for the purpose of consultation. That consultation was originally between the Colonial Sec-

retary and the governments of the Dominions as subordi- but the Conference now exists for consultation between the Government of the United Kingdom and the governments of the Dominions on the basis of equal rights and equal status. He then went on to show that under some vague theory of trusteeship the Government of the United Kingdom conducted for many years the more important questions touching the foreign relations of our Empire; but he would like to remind the House that these did not include everything that might be classed within the term "foreign relations." A recent writer, a brilliant Australian, Mr. H. Duncan Hall, has pointed out this consideration in his recent work, "The British Commonwealth of Nations," from which Sir Robert quoted a paragraph of considerable length.

Apart from what was set forth in the quotation just referred to, Sir Robert said that there were higher questions of foreign relations hitherto determined by the British Government as to which of the Dominions in the future must have a recognized voice and influence. To that question the Constitutional Conference, as provided by the resolution of 1917, must address itself. He would not hazard any prediction as to the method which might be adopted. He believed, however, that the voice of the Dominions would exercise an important influence upon the great questions which affect our foreign relations. He was, moreover, confident that this influence will be so exercised as to assist in the avoidance of treaties or understandings which might involve the Empire in war. Indeed, at the present day, he thought Great Britain might hesitate to engage in war against a strong public opinion in either Canada or Australia. Further, he said the voice and influence of the Dominions should tend more and more to turn the attention of British statesmen to the enormous task which confronts the Empire in the governance and development of the vast possessions which are included within its limits. He said of course that he spoke entirely for himself in the observations which he was presenting to the House; but he was free to say that, personally, he should regret to see the Empire engage in difficult commitments, whether in Eastern Europe or Western Asia, or elsewhere. He thought we had quite enough on our hands at present. He regarded the effectual exercise of voice and influence by the Dominions as highly important, and even essential, for the following, among other reasons: If the British Empire should be involved in a serious war, each Dominion must take its responsible part in the common defence or withdrawal and become an independent state. A self-respecting people could hardly enjoy the advantages of union with other parts of the Empire during peace and take no responsibility for the common security in time of danger or trouble. If we exercise no voice or influence we are committed either to ignominious withdrawal from common responsibilities, or to take part in a war as to the cause of which we have had no voice, although our united influence might have prevented its outbreak. He went on to show that the genius of the British people does not lend itself to violent or sudden changes; rather it proceeds cautiously step by step, and as the need arises. The Imperial War Cabinet, so called, served its purpose sufficiently well during the war. It consisted of the British War Cabinet and the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, each Prime Minister being, of course, responsible to his own Parliament. In reality the Imperial War Cabinet was the development of the committee on

Imperial defense in which, rather than in the Imperial Conference, questions of defense and foreign relations had been discussed between Great Britain and the Dominions for several years before the war. Continuing his review of the part Canada had taken in these Conferences, and particularly her part regarding the war, and after war conditions, he emphasized the status of Canada at the Peace Conference, and afterwards at the Labor Conference in Washington and in the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva. These, he said, had already been discussed in the House.

After continuing his interesting discourse on these very important matters for a considerable time, Sir Robert said in regard to the forthcoming Conference that he had little to say, as the subjects which were intended to be brought into discussion therein had been mentioned in the agenda which had been brought to the attention of the House by the Prime Minister. He declared, however, that it seemed to him, unless there are unexpected and unforeseen developments, the occasion is altogether inopportune for considering the problems of Imperial defence or the responsibility to be undertaken by the various parts of the Empire in that respect. He was thoroughly convinced that he had not undergone untold sacrifices merely to learn that there is to be no respite from the intolerable burden of armaments. Much depended upon the attitude of the United States towards essential co-operation for ensuring the peace of the world. He was confident that such co-operation would not be withheld, whatever may be the decision of that great country with respect to the Covenant of the League of Nations. The movements for the determination of international difference by peaceful methods have been more important and more marked in the United States during the past quarter of a century than in any other country. He said he believed Canada had the highest opportunity for development, influence and usefulness in every sense, as a nation within the British Empire. For many years we have claimed to be a nation. On this subject he quoted the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking in the Canadian House of Commons at the Imperial Conference of 1907 as follows: "There were many who believed that these relations should be based upon the principle that the young daughter communities should be simply satellites revolving around the parent State, but others there were who held—and in my estimation rightly held—that the proper basis of the British Empire was that it was to be composed of a galaxy of nations under the British Crown." Later on, on February 3rd, 1910, speaking on the Naval Service Bill before the House of Commons, Sir Wilfrid said: "This policy is in the best traditions of the Liberal party. This policy is the latest link in the long chain of events which following the principles laid down by the reformers of the old times Baldwin and Lafontaine, step by step, stage by stage, have brought Canada to the position it now occupies, that is to say the rank, dignity and status of a nation within the British Empire." Sir Robert pointed out that we could not assume or accept the status of nationhood, without accepting its responsibilities. He earnestly hoped, however, that the burden of providing for defence would be much less in the future than in the past.

Hon. Mr. Mackenzie King, Leader of the Opposition, followed Sir Robert Borden in the discussion of this important question. After referring at some length to the admirable presentation of the subject presented to the House by Sir Robert Borden, he went on to state that it would be proper that the Prime Minister, when he should go to the Imperial Conference, should be bound by certain emphatic declarations of the Canadian Parliament as to what course he should take, and upon the different subjects that might be brought up therein, and after discussing this new departure relative to our representation at an Imperial Conference, he moved the following amendment: "That all the words after (Continued on page 3.)"

Mortgage Sale.

To be sold by Public Auction on Thursday, the Ninth day of June, A. D. 1921, at the hour of Twelve o'clock noon, in front of the Law Courts Building in Charlottetown, all that tract, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being on Lot or Township Number Twenty-two in Queen's County aforesaid, bounded and described as follows: On the West by fifty acres of land leased to Alexander McDonald, and hereinafter described, on the North by sixty acres of land leased to Donald McDonald, now or lately in possession of John McLeod, on the East by one hundred acres of land leased to John McInnis, now in possession of Alexander McLeod, and on the South by the Anderson or Bedeque Road, the said piece or parcel of land being known and distinguished as farm lot number two hundred and forty-two, containing by estimation fifty acres of land, a little more or less, being the land described in a certain Indenture of Lease, bearing date the Twenty-seventh day of March, A. D. 1869, between Charlotte Antonia Sullivan of the one part, and John McKenzie of the other part, the said lease being filed in the Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands in Charlottetown. Also all that other tract of land on Township Number Twenty-two aforesaid, bounded and described as follows: Commencing at a stake fixed in the north side of the Road from Bedeque to Charlottetown, in the east boundary of one hundred acres of land conveyed to and now in the possession of Neil McLeod, thence running north by the magnet of the year 1764, along the said east boundary for the distance of one hundred and one chains, thence south fifty-three degrees east six chains, or a sufficient distance to give a breadth at right angles of five chains, thence south to the first mentioned Road, thence following the courses of the same northwesterly to the place of commencement, containing by estimation fifty acres of land, a little more or less, saving and reserving thereon the public Road crossing the said land, being thus described and bounded in a deed from the Commissioner of Public Lands to Alexander McDonald, bearing date the Twentieth day of March, A. D. 1894. Also all that other tract, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being on Lot or Township Number Sixty-seven in Queen's County aforesaid, bounded and described as follows, that is to say: Commencing on the southeast corner of a farm of one hundred acres, formerly owned by Donald McKenzie and hereinafter described, and on the north side of the Anderson Road, thence north along the east side of the farm at one time in possession of the said Donald McKenzie for the distance of one hundred and four chains, or to land now in the occupation of John Munroe, at one time in the possession of Donald Nicholson, thence easterly along John Munroe's south line to the place of commencement, containing by estimation one hundred acres of land, a little more or less. Also all that other tract of land on Township Number Sixty-seven in Queen's County aforesaid, bounded and described as follows, that is to say: Commencing at a square post fixed in the north side of the Anderson Road, in the eastern boundary of Plot Number Seven, formerly in possession of Murdoch Lamont, now Donald Lamont, thence by a line running north the distance of one hundred and three chains to land formerly in the occupation of Donald Nicholson, thence east along Nicholson's south line the distance of ten chains, to the western boundary of the one hundred acre tract above described, thence south along the said western boundary ninety-seven chains to the said Road, and thence following the courses of the same westerly to the place of commencement, containing one hundred acres of land, a little more or less. The four above described tracts of land containing in the aggregate three hundred acres of land, a little more or less.

The above Sale is made under Power of Sale contained in an Indenture of Mortgage dated the Ninth day of December, A. D. 1910, made between John A. McKenzie of Hartsville, Lot 22, Farmer, and Margaret Ann McKenzie, his wife, of the first part, and the Under- signed of the second part, default having been made in the payment of the principal of the said Mortgage.

For further particulars apply to McLeod & Bentley, Solicitors, Bank of Nova Scotia Chambers, Charlottetown. Dated this Seventh day of May, A. D. 1921. CATHERINE McLEOD, Mortgagee.

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