

soldier to defend it. Its only defence is the gratitude we owe it for the liberty and the security we enjoy under its shadow. Is there a Canadian who, comparing his country with any other country, no matter how great the freedom enjoyed there, does not feel proud of the constitution that protects him.

He went on to say that although the French had been defeated in the battle of the plains of Abraham they had made a conquest, "the conquest of liberty. We are a free people; we are in the minority; but all our rights, privileges and customs have been preserved. These rights are part of the country's constitution."

I recall also certain words of Jan Christian Smuts, a Boer, who fought the British at the turn of the century, inflicted many grievous reverses on them, but in the end was obliged to surrender and experience the bitterness of defeat. And let me say that defeat in war is a very bitter thing. In an article he wrote on the British empire a short time ago, in which he was not uncritical of some events of the past, he said:

But to-day the British empire is the widest system of organized human freedom that has ever existed in history.

I have mentioned the work that lies ahead. I recall the words of Herbert Morrison, one of the leaders of the Labour party in Great Britain, a socialist who has done outstanding work in this war. In an interview with him that appeared not long ago, he said, speaking of the administration of the colonies:

Critics of the empire, of whom I am often one, are quick to point out the regrettable exceptions to our standard of good government. The mistakes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are better not forgotten, but remembered, so that we may not repeat them in this enlightened age. We have established a good system of law and public administration throughout the one quarter of the earth's surface, which is our empire. We have brought order and sown the seeds of citizenship in hundreds of uncivilized communities. We have spread education, public health, social services and increased incomes in many lands. This has been no easy task, and in most cases we have carried on government while leaving nations' cultures intact. The British people have a right to be proud of this contribution to the advancement of human society. . . . The future of this empire will not be decided by argument, bitter or otherwise. It can rise to new greatness only by the determined efforts of its people. We have unlimited and inspiring tasks ahead of us. We have vast unsettled lands, great treasures of undeveloped wealth, and the combined talents of millions of people. In the last fifty years, as the growth of our commonwealth has proved, the British empire has come to stand for free political fellowship. Perhaps a hundred years from now there will be ten or twelve or more free dominions.

In view of the policy I have advocated, that an agreement or understanding be entered

into between members of the British commonwealth of nations, and announced to all the world, that if any one of them is attacked or obliged to go to war all the other members of the commonwealth will come to its assistance, it is hardly necessary for me to say that I was disappointed at the joint statement issued by the prime ministers at the conclusion of their conference in London on May 17 last. I have no complaint to make of the policy which that statement contained to the effect that a joint all-out effort would be continued to bring the war to a victorious conclusion, but I was disappointed to find that it contained no post-war statement of policy that would bring the members of the British Commonwealth of nations closer together. True, it said that:

After the war a world organization to maintain peace and security should be set up and endowed with the necessary power and authority to prevent aggression and violence.

I realize that the word "should" had to be used and not the word "will", because the other great nations that are engaged in the war were not present at that conference. But there was no statement in that document of what was to be the policy, or any policy, of the members of the commonwealth as between themselves. I expected that something would have been said on this important subject, something of a reassuring nature, which would make for closer cooperation, collaboration and understanding both in peace and in war.

It failed even to support the proposal of the Right Hon. John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, that a permanent secretariat be established. I favour that proposal. I believe it is practical. It does not affect our national sovereignty. Many of us would like to know why it was not adopted, who opposed it, and for what reasons. I realize of course that the meetings of the prime ministers were held in strict secrecy, but I think we might have some explanation of why Mr. Curtin's suggestion was not approved. May I pause here to say that in my opinion the words "national sovereignty" should be given a wide interpretation when used between nations that bear allegiance to the same king. Mr. Curtin still supports the idea of a permanent secretariat. In an interview he gave to the press when he was here in Ottawa he is reported as saying:

I have asked for more frequent consultation and I have also asked that we shall have a constant study of common problems. I feel that having regard to the changing character and personnel of these conferences it is desirable to have some permanent element associated with the department of state in which particular problems will have continuous examination. I used the word "secretariat" in Australia in the same sense that I want some system to regulate