

Now, it is quite possible that in time and for certain common purposes, Britain's colonies will ask her to reconsider her position, and to see if some articles cannot be added to a revenue list on which some small tax shall be laid. The money is wanted for common purposes, and if one section of our empire says that it is too much in love with the philosophers' stone of free trade ever to change it for the cash of mutual good, there a "question" will also arise, which will give rise to some valuable weighing of balances of advantage. I don't know whether any of the States of America will ever think it necessary not only to have their armed militia under their separate and "sovereign" control, but also to make their state frontiers the boundaries for different tariff arrangements. That is about the position of the British Empire at the present day. The sentiment for alliance is held to be so strong that it makes light of these little pecuniary matters, but they are serious if left to fructify into widely different fruits. You have the same with regard to local taxation in the States, and that local taxation maintains armed militia forces, so that you need not labor too much to see the similarity in the position of the two great English-speaking nations. But a likeness does not make the matter much better, and the United States is in advance of the British Empire in that it has common taxes for common purposes.

Now this conference at Ottawa was in some respects a remarkable development. There was something very new even in the locality where it was held. I remember my father coming back from a Cabinet council and telling us boys that the capital of the new Dominion of Canada had been fixed, and that the name of the town which was about to receive this unexpected honor was By Town or Ottawa. We tried to find the town in our maps of America, and failed to find it. The place was not considered worth notice. At the conference delegates from all Anglo-Saxondom, except the United States, came there to discuss mutual support, and how intercommunication had best be carried on by steamer and ocean telegraph lines, and, further, how best these communications could be defended, and how the funds could be raised to provide for that defence. Wide questions, indeed, opening up many subjects which, as the French say, "give to think!" There were Australians asking how they could co-operate in laying a cable that should bind together