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TO CANADIAN WRITERS.

PRIZE COMPETITION.

PRIZES of \$50, \$30, \$20 and \$10 will be given for the FOUR BEST SHORT STORIES by Canadian writers only on subjects distinctively Canadian, on the following conditions:—

- 1.—The MS. must not exceed six thousand words and must be written on one side of the paper only.
- 2.—It must be delivered at THE WEEK office, 5 Jordan Street, Toronto, not later than 1st November, 1890.
- 3.—Each competing story must bear on the top of the first page a motto and be accompanied by a sealed envelope marked with the same motto and the words PRIZE STORY COMPETITION, and enclosing the name and address of the writer.
- 4.—All the MSS. sent in to become the property of THE WEEK.
- 5.—THE WEEK will award the prizes and will be judge of the fulfilment of the conditions.

Owing to a generally expressed desire THE WEEK has decided to accept MSS. sent in for the Short Story Prize Competition whether typewritten or not.

WE have already expressed our gratification that a serious and well considered attempt has at length been made to outline a definite scheme of Imperial Federation, and our admiration of the marked ability with which that scheme has been wrought out and the clearness with which it is now presented. We do not, of course, take Mr. McGoun's pamphlet for more or other than what it really is, the outcome of the best thinking of an able and ardent advocate of Imperial Federation, put forth with the imprimatur of the Executive Committee of the Canadian League. While, however, it thus commits none but those directly responsible for its publication, and may not be accepted by the friends of the movement in Great Britain, or in other colonies, it is still to be remembered that the writer has had the great advantage of knowing the best that has been thought and said on the subject by other writers. Hence the scheme he has so well elaborated may fairly be regarded not simply as the product of a single constructive mind, but as the resultant of all the intellectual forces which have as yet been brought to bear on the subject in Great Britain and Australia, as well as in Canada. If, therefore, serious or insuperable objections are found to lie against the scheme, as now for the first time brought down from the clouds and crystallized into visibility and tangibility, it is scarcely too much to infer that these objections lie in the main against the thing itself, and not merely against the form in which it is here presented.

WHAT is the reason-for-being, the great end to be reached by the proposed federation? This is the crucial question which meets its advocates on the threshold. The regretted Mr. Forster, claimed by Mr. McGoun as "our founder," is quoted as declaring that to prevent disintegration "some form of federation is essential." Perceiving, no doubt, the insufficiency of this negative statement, Mr. McGoun proceeds to define the political idea of the movement as "the extension of the reign of individual and local liberty, together with the combination of as many peoples as are kindred in heart, in an unbroken, indissoluble union, for the preservation of political rights, and for resisting injustice and oppression whether of individuals, provinces, nations or races." He admits that "it almost argues temerity in a federationist to declare what he really means by Imperial Federation." The thoughtful and dispassionate reader who will subject the above statement of the idea to a close analysis will, we think, agree with us that the author's apprehension was not without cause. Imperial Federation in any conceivable form involves radical and in some respects almost revolutionary changes in the political status, institutions and relations of the federating countries. Especially is this true in regard to the colonies. Such changes are always serious matters. They involve dissatisfaction, expense and hazard which should not be incurred without strong necessity or obvious utility. The need should be real and deeply felt, the end clearly defined, the gain unmistakable and tangible. Can any one of these qualities be predicated of the above definition of the political idea of Imperial Federation? Whose individual liberty and what local liberty are to be extended, and how can this extension be brought about by the projected federation? Whose political rights are to be conserved? What are those political rights and in what way are they now menaced? Which of the individuals, provinces, nations or races is to be emancipated, or safeguarded? From what injustice and oppression are any of them now suffering? Does not the logical law hold good in politics that the greater the extension the less the comprehension? Is it not manifestly impossible for a number of practically self-governing states or provinces to enter into a political union of any kind without surrendering, to a greater or less extent, rights and liberties previously possessed? And what is true of the Province or State is necessarily true of every individual subject of it. It is quite conceivable that the advantages to be gained by such a union may more than compensate both the community and the individual for the surrender asked, but in a case like that under consideration the burden of proof must rest on the advocates of the change. Will it be seriously argued that entrance into Imperial Federation can of itself mean an extension of local and individual liberty? We are glad that it is not proposed to construct the union on either geographical or racial lines, but it is almost self-evident that every step taken towards such union by virtually independent states must cost, and one of the primary tasks of those who seek to bring about so great a change must be to show that there is ample compensation for every necessary sacrifice; that in a word the gains clearly outweigh the losses.

WAIVING the "previous question," the first great practical problem that confronts the constitution-builder in framing this unique political structure is that of Government. Mr. McGoun meets this boldly with his Imperial Parliament. The basis of membership for the new House of Commons for the whole federated Empire is to be population. This part of the problem is patiently and skilfully wrought out. We can but indicate the result. This is in brief an enlargement of the present British House of Commons of 670 members by an addition of 90 members for Canada, 56 for Australasia, 10 for Cape Colony, 10 for India, and 28 for all other dependencies, making an Imperial House of 865 members. Instead of taking the present representation in the British House, Mr. McGoun would prefer to reduce it to half the number. Could this be done and its reduced membership of 336 be made the unit of representation, the new Imperial Commons would be composed of 451 members. Shrewdly recognizing, however, the present impossibility of effecting such a reduction in

the representation of the people of the British Islands, our author assumes the larger membership as the basis of his argument, and we must, of course, accept that basis. Leaving all other colonies and dependencies to speak for themselves—and unless we greatly misread human nature, some of them would have a good deal to say—let us look at the question mainly in relation to the Mother Country and to Canada. Most other schemes that we have seen have assumed the necessity of depriving the present Imperial Parliament of its old-time supremacy, and reducing it to the rank of a mere local legislature, subordinate to some new and supreme Imperial House to be constructed out of material furnished by the whole empire. Mr. McGoun most prudently shrinks from the herculean task of persuading the British Parliament to surrender the major part of its power, prestige, prerogative and historic renown, and step down into a secondary place, and proposes to effect the desired change without so grievously wounding the *amour propre* of the most august legislative assembly in the world. And here it might be asked, in passing, whether the fact admitted or implied, that the existing British Parliament cannot be either superseded or subordinated does not settle the whole question of the proposed Federation, by making it possible only on the condition of accepting, in some form or other, the virtual supremacy of that Parliament in all concerns relegated to the domain of the proposed Federation? To withdraw certain of the more important matters which are either now under the control of our own Parliament, or which it is desirable should become so at an early day, and place these again under the authority of even an enlarged British Parliament would, it strikes us, be a singularly unpropitious beginning of the promised extension of the sphere of individual and local liberty. So startling a proposal must needs be looked at from two points of view, viz., that of the Mother Country and that of the colonies. Would the people of the British Islands be easily persuaded to accept an addition of 195—about twenty-nine per cent.—new members to their House of Commons, members in whose election they would have no voice, but who would come from all quarters of the globe to take equal part with their own chosen representatives in determining all questions, legislative and administrative? True, Mr. McGoun wisely postulates that the present decentralizing tendencies in Great Britain shall have brought about the establishment of a local legislature or its equivalent in each of the great divisions of Great Britain and Ireland. This would simplify the task of the federationists materially, no doubt, yet, granting that, can any one doubt that nine-tenths of all the measures and other business discussed in the Commons would still be matters concerning the people of the British Islands alone, and in respect to which Canadian intrusion, to say nothing of that of South Africa or the West Indies, would be deemed an impertinence? From the Canadian point of view the Imperial Parliament scheme is so full of objections that we scarcely know where to begin. The selection of the representatives from the Dominion House, involving the absence of ninety of its ablest members during many months of the year, the election of these by the Commons instead of directly by the people, the large powers of control and veto of Dominion and Provincial legislation transferred beyond the ocean, the fact that the Imperial Commons would be after all not the legislature of the Federation, but simply an extension of the British House of Commons, etc., suggest themselves to the mind as so many insuperable obstacles. And then the further facts that not one-tenth of the time of this enlarged British Parliament would be occupied with questions of more than local concern; that all its legislation would be subject to revision or rejection by an Upper House constructed on the basis of the House of Lords, and so with a large hereditary element in its membership, and that the people of the "tight little isles" are expected to accept an Imperial Government in which even the principle of proportionate representation is departed from, and "the Cabinet offices divided more evenly among the great divisions of the Empire," the United Kingdom not necessarily having even a majority, are facts of such a kind that the bare statement of them seems to us the best proof of the utter impracticability of the scheme.