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The Origin of Empire Day

IN a recent number of *Canada*, there appears the following letter, which may be of general interest: "In your issue of May 30th, in speaking of Empire and Victoria Days, you say:

"Empire Day is, of more recent origin. The first resolution for an Empire Day observance was passed by the Hamilton (Ontario) School Board on December 2nd, 1897, on the suggestion of Mrs. Clementina Fessenden, of that city, and the first observance took place on May 22nd, 1899."

"This is correct so far as the city of Hamilton is concerned, but it is not the origin of Empire Day, nor were the schools in Hamilton the first to celebrate it.

"Empire Day originated in the request of the United States Commission of the Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893, to nations represented at that Exposition to celebrate their national holiday in their national manner, provided the day fell within the time in which the Exhibition should be held in Jackson Park. As the Commissioner for Canada, this request came to me, and I submitted it to the Hon. A. R. Angers, the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, who had charge of the Canadian exhibits, with the suggestion that it would be an important thing to demonstrate the unity of the Empire in the city of Chicago, inasmuch as it was so little understood in the United States. To this end, Canada, instead of celebrating Dominion Day, should join with the representatives of the United Kingdom and other colonies to celebrate a common day as Empire Day. The Minister heartily approved of the suggestion, and submitted it to the Cabinet, which adopted it, and I was instructed to carry out the proposal. Owing to the delay in completing the preparations for the Exhibition, a suitable public demonstration could not be made on May 24th, but it was determined that a dinner should be given, by the Commissioners of the United Kingdom and of the Colonies, in Chicago. Through some disagreement in the British Commission, the scheme fell through, and Messrs. Dredge and Harris, two of the British Commissioners, requested that they might be allowed to give a dinner, which, under the circumstances, could not be refused. Failing in the original proposal, the Canadian Commission had a large meeting in their own building, in which all the parts of the Empire at Jackson Park were represented, and speeches were delivered by Commissioners and others, the most striking being one by a Brahmin from India, and the other by an Arawa Indian from British Guiana. This meeting, being reported in the newspapers, attracted a good deal of attention, and British residents of Chicago held a meeting, and, upon the refusal of the British Commission to lead in the matter, asked me to arrange for a larger Empire meeting, which was held in August of that year, and was attended by several thousand people. This meeting attracted still further attention to an Empire Day celebration, and it was taken up, especially in the Province of Ontario. Before leaving for Australia, in 1894, I was invited to take part in an Empire Day celebration in my own town, Oshawa, organised by the school authorities. It was conducted, as it is now, by the hoisting of the flag, and addresses were delivered, I think, by the mayor and some members of the Board of Education and others. You will see, therefore, that the city of Hamilton, in-

stead of leading the way, followed some three years after Oshawa, and, I think, some other towns.

"Mr. James Dredge, one of the British Commissioners who attended the first meeting in the Canadian building, has passed away, but I think Mr. Harris, the other member of the Commission who attended at that meeting, yet lives, and will doubtless remember the proceedings.

"Yours very truly,

"J. S. LARKE.

"The Commercial Agency of the Government of Canada, the Royal Exchange, Sydney, N.S.W."

British Treatment of United States Athletes

(New York Life.)

OUR representatives at the Olympic games in London covered themselves with glory, winning very nearly half the events, and very nearly twice as many as the representatives of the United Kingdom. Considering what a distressful time they had—how the crowds hooted them, and the games—officials made it doubly difficult for them to win anything—they did wonderfully well, and must be phenomenally light on their legs. We read in the papers that the managers of the games, which were under British auspices, treated the Americans with the grossest unfairness. President Sullivan, of the A. A. A. U. S., who was there, is quoted as saying that the meeting from the beginning was mismanaged, and that "it is well known that the (British) A. A. A. people made up their minds to ignore the United States, and to ignore our wishes because they thought they had a chance to win." And yet the Americans got off with the lion's share of the trophies.

Were they really so mistreated, and unfairly dealt with? For our part, we would like to hear the other side. Athletic contests are prone to be productive of hard feelings, absurd suspicions, and acrimonious charges, as, witness the literature of our own intercollegiate sports. If our college lads can't compete without more or less bickering, must we be altogether surprised that the Olympic managers failed to give entire satisfaction to an assortment of athletes not schooled to any special standard of deportment and stimulated with a preponderant infusion of Celtic blood? The Irishmen were first rate athletes, and won most of the victories for our team, but we have known it to happen before that British management was unsatisfactory to Hibernian critics.

Autos in New York

(New York Life.)

THAT is an excellent ordinance that the New York Park Board has adopted, barring from the parks automobiles that give out smoke and bad smells. Such automobiles are a nuisance everywhere in cities, but especially in the parks, where people go for air, and have a right to expect it to be clean. Everybody knows that when automobiles smoke, or smell excessively bad, it is because the chauffeur does not know his business, or fails to attend to it. An auto properly run is not very much of a nuisance. To deny the parks to such as pollute the air is a very moderate concession to the noses, health and lawful pleasure of the people who use the parks. The smoky automobiles should not be allowed in the streets, either. They are already under ban in Paris and in London, and they must be disciplined here also. That will come presently. To keep them out of the parks is a good beginning.