

Extract from "Factors in American History" by A.F. Pollard, M.A.,  
Hon. Litt.D., F.B.A.,

INHERITANCE AND TRADITION:

"It may not be wise for either the pot or the kettle to call the other black; but it would be even less correct to call it white. That fabulous argument probably arose because neither the pot nor the kettle possessed a looking-glass. A defect of nations is that they cannot see themselves as others see them; and the use of American history for English people, and of English history for American people, is to provide that mirror of truth. The more they change, the more they grow alike. In the whole range of our differences of opinion, whether on matters like blockade, freedom of the seas, right of search, continuous voyage, the limit of territorial waters, or on problems like union and secession, the treatment of native races, the government of dependencies, there is hardly a British precedent to which America has not appealed, nor an American principle which Great Britain has not invoked. In those contests Great Britain conceded much. America may have conceded no less. We do not need

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Of nicely calculated less or more.

What has been surrendered has been bad or doubtful principle; what has been maintained is good. Whichever country has given up the more, has rendered the greater service to the common cause, not merely of English-speaking peoples, but of humanity as a whole; and the progress of the world, particularly in the sphere of international relations, has for a hundred years consisted mainly in what the British Empire and the United States have conceded to one another."

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

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