

The Wayside Philosopher

ABRACADABRA

THE RECENT IMPERIAL CONFERENCE AND CANADA'S NATIONAL STATUS

It had been our purpose to write at length on the status of Canada as a Nation, reviewing those steps and circumstances that, by means of our War and Post-War experiences, led us forward until we stood a Nation among Nations, yet, withal, an integral part of the most glorious Empire Earth has thus far seen.

Further, it would have been necessary to have quoted or referred to that long list of authorities, British and Foreign, that evidenced our occupation of the proud status of Nationhood.

Worthier and abler hands have taken the task in hand. The recent Imperial Conference set at rest the lingering doubts of some fearful ones in Canada, and elsewhere, and supplied for those who can read, only in the printed page of text-book, or textual document, the meaning and progress of events, as they affect the Constitutional History of a country, their needed proof.

The average reader, or thinker, was not alone to blame in this. Men, lawyers among them, with more or less pretense to knowledge of Constitutional Law, shut their eyes to the passing events of our history, pronunciamiento after pronunciamiento, State-paper after State-paper, Treaty here and Declaration of Foreign Government there, and clung, obstinately and persistently, to the position that Canada had remained, through all the changing scenes since 1914, a Colonial adjunct and appendage of Great Britain. Balfour, Baldwin, Bonar Law, Lord Shaw, the Irish Free State Leaders, the Government of France, the United States, Belgium, Italy and other Countries, were all mistaken. They, and they only, were right.

When an eminent Professor of International Law, unable to distinguish between opposite and contrary truths, declared our Nationhood to be an impossible position, they, unmindful of the fact that theories have been overborne by circumstances continually in all lines of human experience, cried out "Behold! a Solomon!"

Then came the Conference and from its Council Chambers went forth the clear and incontrovertible statement that the self-governing units of our Empire were Nations beyond challenge of doubt.

Here was something they could grasp. It was printed. It was authorized by an Assembly or Conference. It must be true!

So to their disbelief succeeded belief. Their acclaim of the Conference statement was most joyous. A second Magna Charta had been given and, like children, they accepted, unquestioningly, a document which only told them what world events had been telling them for some years. But there it was in print. It must be so. The simplicity even of the supposedly deeper thinkers is not yet a lost thing.

What did the Imperial Conference, which has been hailed by some as "The most important Conference ever held," do towards establishing Canadian National Status? Nothing but record the statement that it found the fact to be that Canada was a Nation. Not a Colonial restriction was lifted; not a step forward taken. To the satisfaction of all but the slaves of the printed page, the Conference recorded a fact established for some time.

Search the records of the Conference most carefully. There was, there could be, no attempt to raise the status of any self-governing Empire possession, but, giving thought to the cry in certain quarters for authority, duly written and issued, by someone, somewhere, to which the

utterers might cling and cry "Blessed assurance," it penned a statement of the fact as it found it to be.

For the document we are thankful. That document does not, however, make the last Conference the most important ever held. To warrant acceptance of that title we must know something of its programme beyond its mere statement of a widely known and, almost, universally recognized fact.

Scarcely has the jubilant acclaim of the above mentioned statement died down, than we hear discussions of the impossibility of our present status as at once a Nation and a member of a league of British Nations in the world's greatest Empire.

For those whose logic cannot solve the apparent contradictions of our National relationships within and without the Empire, let us leave for consideration the fact that the British Constitution, whose existence they will probably accept,—seeing there is so much printed authority for its existence,—is based, if Constitutional authorities are to be believed, on these principles, viz.:—The will of the King is the will of the people; The will of the people is the will of the King; When they have reconciled these principles they will, perhaps, be able to admit that the apparent logical difficulties in our position are as trivial as would be the cry that the British Constitution has no existence.

Canadians have an interest in our National Status. Not the sham interest of proving its existence, but the real and vital one of determining what that Nationality shall represent in the world's affairs.

Nations, like individuals, have their own peculiar characteristics, teach their own truths. Not "Are we a



How better can you
end the day than
by holding a long-
distance telephone
conversation with
a friend?

B. C. Telephone Co.