

task is not beyond us when we consider that there are operating throughout the world to-day huge commercial communities and societies successfully controlled by boards of directors in London.

The necessity for greater imperial unity cannot be over-estimated. The constituent states of the empire are growing rapidly into a state of adolescence, which speaks well for their future careers. At the same time, there appears to be some danger that unless that growth is wisely and courageously guided the unity of the empire might be broken or the imperial tie loosened. I do not say that the colonies are in favor of adopting that suicidal policy of separation. (Let Canada separate from the empire and what would be the result?—an united North American Republic, or, on the other hand, let Australia, with her dearth of population and her vast uninhabited northern territory, adopt the same policy, and what would be the issue?—she would be inundated by a mighty Mongolian tidal wave.) But what I do contend is—separated as the colonies are from the motherland by thousands of miles of ocean and without any bond of common interest between them, there is urgent need for something that will link them together and to the mother country in a chain that would be hard to sever. With the tendency towards colonial alienation, with the growth of other great European powers, with the awakening of the Mongolian races, with the presence in the out-lying parts of the empire of vast tracts of unpopulated territory, with latest dissention amongst certain of the dark-skinned peoples in the realm, and with keen foreign competition in the spheres of industry and commerce, there is indeed

urgent need for the closest possible welding together of the various constituent states of the empire. Apart from these disintegrating forces the government of the United Kingdom itself is a mass of contradictions, anomalies and fictions. The cabinet, one of the strongest executive organs on earth, is now almost "unknown to the law." In theory the so-called Imperial Parliament could revoke the parliaments of the colonies to-morrow. In practice, however, it has no such opportunities. The self-governing colonies, then, for all practical purposes, are separate kingdoms with the same king at their head. The states of the empire stand on an equal footing except that the government of one of them represents all the rest of the community of nations, and is gracefully permitted, in consequence, to undertake and pay for maritime defence. Monarchy, then, is the only binding link; what then is empire? you ask. That imperium, the power of sovereignty, the right residing in some quarter to issue a command which must be obeyed, resides nowhere. Only in Asia is this true imperium exercised. Again, though the elector in the colonies has never forfeited any imperial rights he may possess in common with the elector in London, he is, as a matter of fact, absolutely excluded from all control in the administration of India. Supposing that the mother country should be drawn into a quarrel with some other power over something connected with India, the colonies would be placed in a very dangerous position, not having a voice in the question under dispute. Here, then, is a point which shows the loose cohesion of the fabric, and indicates that Great Britain has by good fortune escaped, rather