

its own form of national life on the basis of almost perfect freedom from outside control. And now we are confronted with a loose system of free—in their haste, some would say, even sovereign—states throughout the world, bound by those deepest ties: the sense of kinship, the inheritance of a great past of heroic achievement in all the higher activities of life, and common ideals for the future. But, so far from regarding this as final, it is only a transition stage in that vast process of development which, reaching far back throughout the past, we hope will last for many centuries to come. A crisis moment has been reached and we are at the parting of the ways which lead for ever in opposite directions. If the British Empire, built up by the self-sacrificing efforts of many generations is to stand—if its power and influence are to be felt increasingly for good throughout the world—nay, if its scattered members are even to maintain their own position and continue to expand, they must be brought together in some closer union. An imperial state made up of highly developed parts, but as a whole unorganized, in reality is weak. It invites attack from any enemy on the watch to strike a deadly blow the moment it can do so.

In many respects the condition of the British Empire of to-day resembles that of the Confederation of the Thirteen Colonies at the time of the Declaration of their Independence in 1776. That Confederation was merely "a firm league of friendship" between sovereign states to secure their defence. Congress dealt only with states, not with individual citizens. It had no means of raising revenue other than the voluntary contributions of the individual states. The individual states were so jealous of their rights that they forgot their duties. "The central government,"