

haps that is not to be desired. But what is desirable and what is essential is that there should be a free and frank exchange of views.

I am of course well aware that there are eminent members of this Association who look upon the control of Canada's constitution by the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, and the control of Canada's courts by a committee of His Majesty's Privy Council for Great Britain and Ireland, as links of empire. And so they were under the old dispensation — under the order of superior and inferior. But we have the high authority of the War Cabinet of Great Britain and of Sir Robert Borden and of Earl Grey and of many others, including the Prince of Wales, that "the Dominions are no longer colonies, but sister nations of the British nation". In other words the only true bonds are the bonds of which Edmund Burke spoke more than a hundred years ago — bonds "light as air though strong as iron", the bonds of sentiment—bonds that grow stronger the lighter they are and the less they are felt. A common kingship is its sufficient expression. With all deference I venture to suggest that those who cling to the lesser so-called links of empire have their faces turned to the past.

Then there is that once large and still respectable school of political thought that looked, and still perhaps looks, for a partnership of the Britannic Dominions in an imperial federation. I am not proposing to discuss now any of the various plans that have been put forward from time to time for a closer political union of the spots marked red on the map of the world. I content myself with pointing out that Canadian and Australian and South African national

autonomy is the antithesis of imperial federation, and that imperial federation is inconsistent with the representation of Canada and Australia and South Africa in the Assembly of the League of Nations—as inconsistent as it would be for the state of Massachusetts or Texas to claim such representation. Canada has elected definitely in favour of membership in the League of Nations and by that course she has elected in favour of autonomy and against imperial federation.

This election was not the result of argument but of the development of events. In the language of the War Cabinet of Great Britain the question was forced to the front by the common effort and sacrifices of the war.

When a youth attains to manhood he assumes the rights and with them takes on the responsibilities of manhood. In assuming the rights of nationhood Canada must accept the responsibilities. In no other way can she play her part in the great world drama which is now unfolding so rapidly and which will continue to unfold whether any individual nation does its whole duty or not. Thus can only Canada assist in the vast schemes of world betterment whose focus at the moment is in England—thus only can she be a branch of the great tree of international probity, comity and fellowship whose leaves — justice, freedom, right, truth and open diplomacy—shall be for the healing of the nations.

The Canadian Bar Association is honoured in having as its guests at this meeting representatives of the best traditions of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, Great Britain, and the off-spring of her loins, the family of commonwealths known as the United States of America.

