

according to its own desires. The old idea of world power, world empire, has meant the downfall of all who pursued it; it has meant enslavement of conquered and unconquered alike, but the new idea of world democracy, with perfect freedom means the liberation of the world, the adoption of the brotherhood of man and the abolition of war. And, indeed, for Great Britain and her dominions to be anything but democratic would mean her downfall, as has been demonstrated in many past empires. Autocratic empires stand condemned; for any empire in a domineering way to demand tribute as our Prime Minister suggests, would be driving nails in its own coffin. It is a sin against the light of civilization.

The British Empire is bound together by the democratic spirit, and underneath that is friendship, love and truth. These are the forces that bind the British Empire together as one country, one community, one family. Its strength is not based on mailed fist, on fire and sword, on bursting and blasting, but on emotion of heart and soul. It is said by Chamberlain that the British Empire hangs together by a mere thread, yet what may be said to be a mere thread can carry an electric current which will put great machinery into motion. The thread which binds the British Empire carries a force of sympathy and sentiment which could be a potent factor in the history of the world.

Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the past; we have examined the conditions in the present, and the comparison assures us to a reasonable degree of certainty that the British Empire should not be deviated from her path of independent democracy, good-will and trust in all races and nations of the world. If she be not so deviated, then the future of the British Empire will be prosperous even more than the past has been.

The British Empire, supposedly secure though she may be, must not forget the power of other nations. There are other great nations than Britain and with these she must cooperate, as was indicated in the speech of the Prince of Wales when he said: we wish for preferences; we wish for cooperation with all the great nations. Even if we give a British preference, there must be no animosity between the British lion and the American eagle. The best path of safety for the British Empire is that on which she can walk with the other nations of the world in peace and harmony.

Having given a picture of the empire, let me deal briefly with the preliminaries that led up to the recent imperial conference. The

evolution of the independence of the dominions took place very gradually. In the first place Alexander Galt attempted to make a treaty through the British ministry with the Spaniards. That was refused. He then went to Spain to make a treaty with the Spanish government and they told him that the only way in which it could be done would be through the British ministry. That expedition failed. Later on Sir John A. Macdonald, in making a treaty with the United States, wished to be called in consultation whenever treaties were being put through. That was refused. Sir John was led into the outer chamber and after the treaty was completed he was allowed to sign his name under that of the British minister. He resented those conditions and tried hard for future freedom for the dominion.

Later on, in 1887, we find the first imperial conference called to deal with defence, and the question of the Pacific cable came up. There we find the vested interests trying hard to get hold of that conference. At this conference and at every conference from then till now we find the cloven hoof of vested interests struggling to acquire economic privileges whereby they could obtain money without giving proper value. This was done under the name and guise of patriotism. Sir John Pender was the chief leader defending the vested interests against Mackenzie Bowell who fought for the Dominion of Canada to prevent it from paying extortionate prices to British firms. Sir John Pender said that the trust was primarily a public spirited, rather than a private earning corporation. However, the efforts of Mackenzie Bowell, and Sanford Fleming in particular, resulted in success so far as the Pacific cable project was concerned.

The third conference in 1897, was of a little different type. There you find the spirit of Joseph Chamberlain, and the leader of the Dominion of Canada was Sir Wilfrid Laurier who joined with the other colonial premiers. They had a great deal of discussion over the different questions that arose. Joseph Chamberlain went throughout the British Empire, proclaiming the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race; Laurier approved British preferences.

In the fourth conference in 1902, the same question arose, Chamberlain maintaining the idea of centralization, Laurier maintaining imperial reciprocity in trade as the surest step towards the unity of the British Empire. At this conference three questions arose which have a considerable bearing on the recent imperial conference. The three ideas which were most ardently discussed at that time were