

They speak with the voice
ye them! Give weight to their

I have an appointment for dinner with another Canadian Sub. whom I met crossing from Boulogne. I think his father is Smith, who owns the talc mine not far from Aunt Bessie's place in Frontenac—you will remember. I asked him if he wasn't one of the so-called Canada First Group at 'Varsity. Think I met him there. But he became apologetic at once. Said he wasn't a nationalist. Somehow I think London is getting his goat. It won't get MINE, anyhow.

Will write in further explanation to-morrow.

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM BROWN.

LONDON, March 16th.

DEAR MR. BOURASSA,—I hope I made it clear to you in my letter yesterday that I am a loyal British subject and an Imperialist, and a Centralist, and that I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself for ever having dared to utter an opinion against the great British Empire. I was feeling a little bit that way when I wrote you yesterday, but not nearly as much as I do to-day. Just in case I may have appeared lukewarm yesterday, let me tell you right here that I'm ashamed I ever thought of such a thing as Canadian autonomy—at least the kind of autonomy I was dreaming about. Nationalism is a low, vulgar and traitorous doctrine, and I don't mind you knowing it.

This—is a man's country. Canada is a sort of barren suburb, a wilderness. There are ideals and heroes and the signs of great things here. Canada is as drab and as grey as a slab of Kingston limestone. I used to think English manners of speech were an affectation. I see now they are really the proper way to speak decently. What I used to take for virility in a Canadian is only vulgarity. What I used to think was honest bluntness, was only a stupid lack of sensitiveness. We have no traditions in Canada. We have no great public ideals—except second-hand and diluted from England.

To-day I was taken to lunch by an Englishman who has something to do with the War Office. I don't mind telling you that it was an experience for me. We don't produce that kind of man in Canada. Canadian social arrangements tend to create only "self-made men" and self-made men are NOT the finest kind of men, as I used to believe. Education, culture, and tradition—these things are to be found here and are not to be found in Canada. Why, we think in Canada that the English are slow and that we are cleverer in business ways than they are. What rubbish! The only difference between English and Canadian or American business methods, is that the Englishman is much more efficient—but much less given to talking about himself.

I mentioned in my last letter that I saw the British Fleet. Well, if you had seen it, as I did—moving out across a certain stretch of water in battle formation, you would have felt as I felt—inarticulate with pride. You would have felt, as I felt, bitter, to think that you had ever raised the piffling question of Canadian self-government in the face of the call for money to support that fleet.

This country is alive, intense, vivid, alert and homogeneous. Canada is raw, crude, unformed—fit only to be a fringe of Empire. I dined last night with a fellow, William Brown, another Canadian subaltern whom I had met on the boat coming across from Boulogne. He happened to mention that he had once been a member of the Round Table. I felt ashamed to let him think I was a Nationalist—a once-was-but-never-again. I have been seeing a REAL nation!

Yours truly,

JOHN SMITH.

LONDON, March 16th.

MY DEAR UNCLE,—It is the power of Britain to make me love Britain—that makes me turn from my own ideas of Imperial centralization. It is against the impulse of my heart. It is contrary to the dictates of my instinct. I should like, as I walk through the Abbey, or along the

Thames, or as I pass Nelson's Monument in the Square—to say: This is my country. This is the home of my race. This is where I belong. This is the land that commands my affection.

I say it is because I FEEL this way, that I am compelled to THINK the other way. Emotionally I am an Imperialist. Intelligently—I am, not a Nationalist, but something which you, I fear, would mistake for a Nationalist. I feel that Imperial Centralization is and MUST BE impossible. And I say this NOT OUT OF A DESIRE TO THWART THE AMBITIOUS DREAMS OF MEN LIKE YOU, but because any other way of thinking would, to my mind, jeopardize the whole British Empire. I would rather have the British Empire continue as it is, or have it turned into a system of independent nations linked by alliances supported by the strongest of all bonds—natural affection—than have it destroyed, as I feel it would be destroyed by internal difficulties under some system of absolute centralization.

I know that in expressing this view I may be hurting you deeply. It is not intentional. It is my conviction that the Empire can only be strong as its parts are strong, and that the parts can be strong



SOME years ago, before the Duma of Russia had been organized, a new minister, George Bakmeteff, was sent from Petrograd to Belgrade. One of his first official acts was the dismissal of a Professor of History, in the University of Serbia, a Russian, Paul N. Miliukoff. To-day Miliukoff is Foreign Minister of Russia, and Bakmeteff is Russian Ambassador to the United States. Will Miliukoff turn the tables on Bakmeteff?

only as they are based on strong local or national feeling. Centralization is a menace to the growth of healthy national feeling. It is like offering Canada to a child when you want it to eat bread. It will take the Canada and forget the bread. So men's ideas will be lifted above the hum-drum basis of healthy citizenship in their respective parts of the Empire, and drawn here to London.

I think I hear you protesting that London need not remain the centre of the Empire, but I am afraid that argument can no longer convince me. London must be now and at all times the Mecca toward which Britishers turn, if not their hearts, at least their interest. If I did not know your sincerity I might be inclined to join with those rash Nationalists who say you are insincere in suggesting that Montreal or Toronto might ever be the centre of the Empire. I know you say such things only in order to show how open-minded you are, and what sacrifices you would make—sacrificing even London—to the ideal of a centralized Empire. But you can't centralize London. If I am to remain a good Canadian I must sooner or later run away from London and run away from England. It is the power

of this land to attract men that makes me see the danger of sending delegates from far-off provinces of the Empire to sit in Council here. Do you remember? It was the complaint of the Scotch that their Princes, once sent to London, became English? Well, it would be the same with most of our Canadians if sent to represent Canadian interests in London. The modest representative would be oppressed by the greatness and majesty of this glorious England. The philosophic man would be tempted to feel that after all this was the part of the Empire worth saving—and he would scarcely have the heart to fight hard for some necessary Canadian interest that happened to be in conflict with the interest of the United Kingdom. The weak man, aiming at social distinction and the pleasures of wealth—would be entirely under the behest of London. He would feel the poverty of his own Canadian surroundings compared to the wealth of beautiful—and not only beautiful, but desirable—things here. The staunch Canadian, fired with passionate zeal for Canada, filled with the enthusiasm for her future which Canada MUST have in her public men—would be sure to inject a jarring note into an Imperial Parliament.

Patriotism is not a large-minded affair. To be strong it must thrust its roots deep down into the soil. Like the art of which George Moore writes, it has its beginnings in parochialism. While our intellectuals may, it is true, develop a sense of Empire compatible with local patriotism, such a development will not, I think, be possible on any large scale. The result will be two classes of men throughout the Empire. The men of imagination and vision—Imperialists, and the men without much imagination, without much vision but with intense local affection. You may say—well, let us have these two kinds of men. But I reply—then you are creating a peasantry, and to do that is to confess the reactionary.

OUR country—Canada—is hard enough to comprehend in one's mind. There are few Canadians who grasp the conception. We must try to make more of them, but we shall not succeed in doing so if, while we wish to teach them Canadianism, we are offering them also Imperialism.

No sacrifice is too great to keep the British Empire from going the way of all Empires. But the old Empires were Empires in substance. Ours must be an Empire in spirit—for it is the spirit that lasts. Your dream, my dear uncle, is of an Empire of substance, and it would betray you. Mine is of an Empire of spirit—with the lightest of bonds. Such an Empire cannot be overthrown, but will strike deep root into the earth wherever it touches.

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM BROWN.

P.S.—I have just met a young fellow here, John Smith by name, who used to be a Nationalist in Canada. He confesses that to me just now, but adds that he is now of a different mind. The glory of England has caught him. I admire his taste. But I daren't side with him. I owe my affection to Canada. Otherwise I should be a traitor to the Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen, who found Canada. Only by giving my first affection to Canada can I make their work permanent.

Over in France I knocked against quite a few Australians and New Zealanders—the fellows who took Pozieres last year. Once or twice, meeting them in the estaminet back of my battery we talked politics and especially Empire politics, and I was impressed with the fact that the Anzacs are more characteristic Britishers than the average Canadian, and that, as such, they have an interesting point of view with respect to the Empire and its problems. They are not nearly as sentimental as Canadians nor as emotional. (I think we have contracted these diseases from the Americans). The Anzacs think first, last and all the time of Australia. They value the Empire—but Australia first. They have no doubts about the Empire—because they have no doubts about Australia. They are narrow-minded, a little parochial, you might think, but they are rugged citizens and virile custodians of our British traditions of independence and self-reliance.

W. B.