

BRITONS SHOULD KNOW EACH OTHER.

The suggestion of Sir Frederick Pollock that there should be an Imperial Intelligence Department, whose task it would be to gather up in all corners of the Empire any information of value to the commercial and merchant leaders in other parts of the Empire, is a capital one. There is, perhaps, no bar to the progress of real Imperial unity today so great as our mutual ignorance regarding each other. We are always marvelling at the ignorance of other British subjects respecting us, delightfully unconscious apparently that our ignorance regarding them is quite as sublime—and ridiculous.

There are a lot of what might be called strands of Empire, to which we should pay attention, and not make the mistake of tugging all the time at the more conspicuous cables. Mr. Drage called attention, for instance, at the Board of Trade to the fact that a British subject must take out twenty-eight patents in order to protect an invention throughout what we boastfully describe as one nation. Then there is our stupid practice of giving a great postal preference to American over British periodicals which are to be distributed in this country. The blame here does not rest with us in Canada, but it does rest upon a British Government; and surely the influence of an Imperial Intelligence Department, making clear what the effects of such a blunder are, might lead to a reform.

The nearer the people of the various "Britains" get to each other, the easier it will be for the largest plans of Empire to be pressed to a successful consummation when the hour strikes. If we do not know each other better, we are certain to misunderstand some of the demands which we will each make; and misunderstanding leads directly to distrust. No Imperial Federation—or whatever it may be called—will be born in a night. It must at least be a growth, and that growth can only be wisely directed when we have an intelligent knowledge of all the surrounding conditions.