

WHILE THERE IS TIME

1931. Here is what happened. It was felt during the Great War that formal recognition should be given to the altered status of the Dominions. But nobody knew just what the altered status was. Imperial Conferences in 1926 and 1930 drafted clauses to explain the status. The Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Eire and Newfoundland) severally requested and consented to the submission of a measure to Parliament. Hence the Statute.

But has it been accepted? Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland in their "request" called for ratification by their parliaments. New Zealand ratified. Australia never has. Newfoundland ceased to be a Dominion in 1935. Eire in place of ratification traversed the statute with an Irish Act which leaves nothing of the Imperial connection except that the King of England is King of Ireland outside of Ireland. What that means only the Irish know. South Africa traversed the Statute with a Status of the Union Act, giving full legislative sovereignty to South Africa. Canada did nothing, thereby tacitly accepting the Statute. This creates the paradox that there is now no way to amend the Constitution of Canada except through the Imperial Parliament—as if the Statute had never been passed.

And what does the Statute say anyway? It is a riddle of the Sphinx, a Delphic oracle like the American Constitution of the States Rights days. Presumably the British Empire is indissoluble and also