

a. fail to impress itself upon the whole world in due course. So that
[t this struggle involves issues which transcend even the interests and
s the future of our own Empire and which embrace the whole theory
d and practice of government for all the future generations of the
e world. If the militarist and autocratic ideals of the Prussian
n oligarchy can assert themselves in world-wide dominance, the
it progress and development of democracy will either have been stayed
r forever or the work of centuries will have been undone and man-
n kind must struggle anew for ideals of freedom and rights of self-
il government which have been established as the birthright of
e the British people. Thus the powers of democracy are themselves
O on trial today and the issue of this conflict concerns not only the
O existence of the British Empire, but all the world-wide aspirations
e that have found expression in the freedom which its people enjoy.

In so far as this Empire may be said to possess a constitution,
it is of modern growth and is still in the stage of development.
One can hardly conceive that it will ever distinctly emerge from
e that stage or attain a status in which constitutional development
e is no longer to be anticipated. Indeed, the genius of the
e British people and all our past history lead us to believe the con- ←
e trary. The steps in advance have been usually gradual and always
o practical; and they have been taken rather by instinct than upon
f any carefully considered theory. But the very liberties of the
h Empire made possible results which no absolutism could foresee.
s Thus the unity of purpose inspiring the British Dominions and
s their participation in this war upon so vast a scale has amazed the
s Prussian war-lords. Also it has shattered their confident belief
o that the military resources of those Dominions were entirely negli-
s gible. It is within the bounds of probability that the four free
e nations of the overseas dominions will have put into the fighting
s line 250,000 men if this war should continue for another year.
r That result, or even the results which have already obtained, must
e mark a great epoch in the history of inter-imperial relations.
s There are those within sound of my voice who will see the over-
r seas Dominions surpass in wealth and population the British
e Islands; there are children playing in your streets who may see
s Canada alone attain that eminence. Thus it is impossible to believe
d that the existing status, so far as it concerns the control of foreign
f policy and extra-imperial relations, can remain as it is today. All
e are conscious of the complexity of the problem thus presented; but
s no one need despair of a satisfactory solution and no one can doubt
a the profound influence which the tremendous events of the past
t few months and of those in the immediate future must exercise
upon one of the most interesting and far-reaching questions ever
presented for the consideration of statesmen.