

STRIKE THE PRACTICAL NOTE IN EMPIRE

The Imperial Conference and Its Opportunity

There is a spirit of unrest amongst thinkers throughout the Empire respecting its solidity and its future. During the next twenty-five years Great Britain and its overseas dependencies will have to solve many international problems, complex and varied. United action towards their solution by Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, will mean a successful conclusion. The building of a solid Imperial front for the years to come must be accomplished to-day. Yet, despite the verbal froth of Imperialism, effervescing in five continents, little that is practical can be observed. Loyal sentiments and Empire talk are handsome rubber bands, only to be dissolved at the first feeling of commercial warmth elsewhere. In the past, Great Britain has been able to hold its Empire together largely by the spirit of kith and kin, by the love for the Motherland, by sending its sons and daughters to pioneer in every corner of the globe. It has held Empire together largely because London is the world's monetary centre, and because the overseas dominions perforce have drawn their financial muscle from the world's metropolis. It has traded with these dominions as it has traded also with foreign countries.

In pioneering lands there is a tendency to overlook history. As generation succeeds generation, there is an aptitude to forget that ancestors were Scotch, or Irish, or English, or Welsh. There sometimes arises a disposition to regard British loaning power as a right of the borrower rather than a choice of the lender. To-day we may well ask whether Great Britain and its dominions are making individual and collective efforts to string together the links of Empire in a chain which knows no break. Canada is in the position to lead the way either to consolidation or disintegration.

Forty years ago, one of Great Britain's gifts to Canada was the Canadian North-West. There in years to come millions will be produced what should be the food supply of the British Empire. The Dominion is dipping into the British investors' pockets to the extent of two hundred million dollars a year. It has already had a billion and a half dollars from the same source. With that money, a network of railroads has been constructed and general development assisted. North American economics have given United States power to sell two dollars' worth of merchandise to Canada which sells in exchange one dollar's worth. The same factor, plus insufficient enterprise and desire on the part of the British merchant and the British government, plus again the hungry needs of a nation in the making, has made the Dominion, a large borrower from Britain, a considerable vendor of its products to Great Britain and an unusually small buyer from Great Britain compared to purchases from the neighboring Republic.

Great Britain has moved but little to hold by practical ties, by the strands of mutual interest in trade, industry, finance and shipping, its overseas Empires to its side. Living next door to an ambitious nation, speaking the British tongue, it is only natural that partly because of this inaction in a land three thousand miles away, Canada should begin to ape the mannerisms and customs of its nearest neighbor, that it should trade with an enterprising merchant separated only by an international boundary line, that the stream of Americanization should begin to make impression on the rocks of British foundation, that bygone Canadian-British history, unsupported by present and practical reminders, should be overlooked.

The position is further complicated by the fluttering of Canada's wings as a nation, one whose strength

among foreign nations was built upon British sinew, upon British capital and one whose freedom from ugly international crises is due to the British navy patrolling year in and year out, without advertisement, the commercial highways of the Empire. The present tendency is to wage war with tariffs and commercial treaties rather than with armored cruisers and Gatling guns. Sometimes when economic skirmishes fail, more serious warfare is necessary. Canada has assumed the position of commercial belligerent, but without the support of blue jackets and red jackets. It has named its right to dictate its trade policy and frame its trade treaties with nations in both hemispheres. But should any unforeseen and grave situation arise therefrom, the Cabinet ministers so eager to consummate commercial treaties would be still more eager for the British ministers to assume responsibility and insure peace where danger lurked. Canada is not to be blamed for its desire to make history or its laudable efforts to further trade relations to the best advantage. Canada is more to be blamed for not taking a sufficiently long view of the situation it is creating by the signing of one commercial treaty after another without proper consultation with the Home government as to the ultimate effect of these treaties upon Empire trade and other relations.

The time has come for a serious conference between the Imperial authorities and the responsible representatives of the overseas dominions. It is now that the discussion as to united action in practical realms should be heard. It is now that the views of the overseas premiers should be placed on record and compared with those of the British Premier. It is now that the happy medium in ideals should be struck. We do not wish to see each unit of the Empire striking a new path for itself. That the opinions of each and its problems must be recognized is admitted. To-day is the time for British statesmen far and near to have a heart-to-heart talk, shorn of mock diplomacy, red tape, Imperial froth, epigrammatic politeness, parochialism and time-wasting methods. The opportunity is offered at the coming Imperial Conference in London, the centre of Empire.

Happily, we have had the assurance of the Right Honorable Lewis Harcourt in the Imperial House that at this conference the Home Government will take the visiting ministers into consultation, will withhold no information they desire, and will proffer them all the useful knowledge that may be of service to them in the responsible duties they have to perform. The subjects of the programme for discussion at the conference are varied and of great importance. The most vital and not scheduled is the general and detailed policy of Empire. We care not if it is discussed in secret so long as it is discussed seriously and with the full knowledge of its far-reaching effects and its probable imprint upon British and international history.

ANOTHER AMERICAN COMPANY IN CANADA.

The Yale & Town Company, Stamford, Connecticut, manufacturers of Yale Locks, etc., have decided to establish a Canadian branch at St. Catharines, Ontario. A branch company has been incorporated under Canadian law. The city of St. Catharines has signed an agreement with the company, whereby the municipality will deed nine acres of land to the company, will supply them with free water, ten years' exemption from taxes, and fixed assessment for the next five years. In return, the company agrees to expend at least \$50,000 on building and machinery and to pay annually \$25,000 in wages the first two years, and \$50,000 for the next eight years.

The Yale & Town Manufacturing Company was incorporated in 1868 in Connecticut and absorbed the Brantford Lock Works, and the Blount Manufacturing Company. The company manufactures the Yale products, including locks, builders' hardware and art metal work, chain blocks and electric hoists. The company's capital is \$5,000,000. Its chief offices are located at 9 Murray Street, New York, the secretary being Mr. W. A. Cudlipp. The company's plant is at Stamford, Conn.