

LETTER No. 2.

OTTAWA, October 26th, 1905.

Members of the Canadian Club.

On the 21st instant I ventured to address a letter to my fellow members, giving expression to the thoughts which arose in my own mind, on hearing Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Geoffrey Drage, speak on the great subject which they brought before the Canadian Club on that day. In my letter of the 21st I ventured to suggest that these gentlemen would do well to reverse the sequence of their proposals. Before they left Ottawa a few days afterwards, they appear to have decided to do so.

Yesterday they addressed a public meeting in the rooms of the Montreal Board of Trade, when Sir Frederick informed those present to the effect that he and his colleagues had discovered that the time was not ripe for the first part of their proposal, viz. the formation of an Imperial Council, but that the strongest reasons exist for immediately instituting an Imperial Intelligence Department.

It is a matter of much satisfaction to me that these gentlemen have reached this wise conclusion. An Intelligence Department controlling the circle of state telegraph cables known as the "Empire Cables," during a portion of each day for the exchange and transmission of mutual knowledge between all the great political groups of British people would prove, as I have elsewhere pointed out, to be of the highest practical value. By such means, information of common interest collected in all parts of the Empire would be published simultaneously in the daily newspapers of each country. The effect would soon be to remove much of the ignorance which prevails, and gradually bring the whole British people in both hemispheres to a good understanding of each other through an intimacy heretofore quite impossible of attainment.

The question of an Intelligence Department comprehending all that I have indicated in my first letter—the completion of the chain of Empire Cables and their limited free use by the Press in the interest of the whole people, is no side-issue merely. It is infinitely more. It is a prime necessity in the development of the Twentieth Century Empire; without taking this first step I doubt if any real progress, any forward advance whatever can be gained. An Imperial Intelligence Department such as that outlined cannot fail when instituted to prove a distinctly formative influence in working out our destiny. What then is our common duty?

I enclose an editorial from the Montreal Star of yesterday as a sample of the comments which we may look for generally in favor of the modified proposal of Sir Frederick Pollock and his associates.

Yours faithfully,

SANDFORD FLEMING.