

Canada and Imperial Defence

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

The great problem of the twentieth century to British statesmen throughout the world, is the federation of the empire, or the drawing together of its scattered parts into a closer union.

The last century saw the rise of national states based on community of race, language, or religion. Greece was united; Italy ceased to be a geographical expression; the German Empire was founded; the United States entered upon their career of expansion. But the new century already sees signs of a larger growth. The national states which rose upon the ruins of the Roman Empire are now in turn giving place to wider political organizations. The day of the small states, like that of the ancient city-states, is gone and the world-state has come. Russia, Germany, France, England, even the United States now stand for political and economic interests that are world-wide. To the statesmen of the British Empire, therefore, the supreme question of the hour is the protection of its vast interests throughout the world and the welding together of its scattered parts into a still larger whole.

The question of a preferential tariff lies beyond our present scope. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that the question of the defence of the empire has been combined with that of the trade relations of its various parts. The obligation to bear its share of the burden of imperial defence on the