

mission could serve the interests of the whole country better than any other body could. There is undoubtedly a feeling of dissatisfaction among the people of the West. It may be that some of the dissatisfaction is uncalled for; but the feeling of suspicion is there—that in some way certain interests are absorbing an undue amount of the value of our product in its passing through the various hands; and if it is only to allay this suspicion, and to show that this feeling is unfounded, I think the \$40,000 set apart last year for the prosecution of such an inquiry would be well spent. To me it was a disappointment when I read in the newspapers the statement of the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Robb) that that inquiry would not take place because there seemed to be no demand for such an investigation. I shall not deal at any great length with this matter; undoubtedly we shall have occasion to discuss it at greater length as the session goes on.

But there is one subject on which I would like to make a few remarks. It arose naturally in the matters dealt with by the 5 p.m. Prime Minister when presenting to us a statement as to the correspondence that had taken place between this government and the government of Great Britain—I refer to the question of the British Empire, or the British Commonwealth of Nations as some are pleased to term it. The British Empire is something unique. We have had nothing like it in all the course of human history. I have been reading with great pleasure during the last few months H. G. Wells' "Outline of History," and it is a wonderfully interesting book. He gives us a picture of the rise and fall of republics, kingdoms and empires; but in all the pictures which he presents to us of these various states and communities that have been created since the dawn of civilization there is nothing that in any way resembles the British Empire of to-day. It is something unique in that it is built upon mercy, justice and freedom. I appreciate the reference made by the honourable member (Mr. Putnam) who moved the Address yesterday to the expulsion of the Acadians, the hon. gentleman pointing out that such a thing could never be done again by British people. I think sometimes we forget to pay tribute to the great men of the past; and I think it were well to again remind this house of the great men who constituted the government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—those statesmen who, after the South African war with all its bitterness, determined, in spite of the most strenuous opposition of

their opponents, in spite of the prophecy of dire calamities that would follow, granted self government to the people of South Africa. Here again I want to emphasize that I believe that good politics, good morals, and good religion are built upon the same foundation. We can imagine what would have been the difference in the condition of South Africa when the great world war broke out, if the opponents of the British there had been turned into enemies instead of warm friends which they proved themselves to be. I am fearful sometimes of attempts at exact definition of our Empire relationship. I am convinced that the existing bonds will be strong in proportion to their elasticity and will become weak in proportion to the success of the attempts to secure rigidity.

Then there is the closely allied question of national obligations. There are some phases of this problem that are undoubtedly difficult of solution. There are some phases of the problem for which I have not been able to secure a solution in my own mind. Nevertheless there are two principles that seem to me to be fundamental, and to my own mind seem to be as clear as crystal. The first of these is the solidarity of humanity. We cannot, even if we would, separate ourselves from the rest of the world; no nation can live to itself alone. And here again let me refer to H. G. Wells. He says something like this: That we know more of the world of six thousand years ago than any living man at that time knew. And why? Because the people living in one part of the world, no matter how high the state of civilization, had no possibility of coming into contact with the people of other parts of the world. So, I believe his statement is correct that we know more of the world of six thousand years ago than any man living at that time knew of the world. He gives another illustration: He says that when the Spaniards came to America, they found two highly civilized communities, one in Mexico and the other in Peru, and yet neither one of these knew that the other existed. Such a condition of things is impossible to-day. There is no such thing as a self-contained nation. There is no possibility of any nation remaining aloof from interest in the general welfare of nations. We cannot remain aloof, even if we should decide in our own minds that it was desirable for us to do so. No nation can live to itself alone. We, therefore, must take some part. What that part may be may concern us at times and cause us great differences of opinion; it may not always be clear to our