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Colonial Opinion and Ireland

CANADIANS ARE NOT LIKELY to sympathize with Lord Lansdowne's side of the Lansdowne-Redmond controversy. It is important comment on the opinion of the Empire-at-large that the public in the Colonies are almost certain, in a case like the one in point, to take the side of the Irish people in general as against those men in England who still regard Ireland with mingled fear and hate and embrace every opportunity to hamper and, if possible, defeat the political development of the Irish people. Our British traditions, so fair and inspiring in the main, are stained with the shame of Britain in Ireland, and what is sadder is the fact that even the modern British statesman seems unable to shake himself clear of that strain of distrust and hate that at the mention of Ireland converts an otherwise fair-minded man into an oppressor.

The Irish to-day have a new influence to bring to bear in their cause, and that is colonial sentiment. The Protestant Irish whom England drove from Ireland to America, went over-seas and in time helped win independence for the United States. Montgomery, the American General who led the expedition against Quebec, was an Irishman born. If England fails to-day to redeem her record in Ireland it can mean only a postponement of the date. Colonial opinion is growing in favour—not of the Irish necessarily, but in favour of justice! It can have no patience with the local bitternesses betwixt Ireland and a section of the English.

Our Secondary Enemy

A MAN WHOSE OPINION we respect though we differ from him on most things, wrote recently saying: "If you don't approve of centralization of the Empire, what do you believe Canada should do? Surely she should not sit still and do nothing!"

Certainly she should not sit still and do nothing. At the present moment she is doing a fairly respectable amount of work in the war, and will continue to do so. It is only in connection with inter-political agitations that one would have her do nothing. While we are fighting let us fight only and waste no breath on home controversies. But, when the war is over let us take up the problem of Empire relationships in earnest.

"Are you one of those," writes our friendly critic, "who would have Canada continue to sponge her defence from England?"

Far from it. Our debt to England should be estimated—not exaggerated. Plans for repaying it openly, frankly and fearlessly discussed, and then—plans for building up gradually a complete Canadian self-containedness, not in a spirit of abandoning the Empire or turning our backs on our common relationship, but in that same spirit which prompts wise travellers in the desert to carry many water-bottles instead of one; or in the spirit of ship-builders who build a vessel in water-tight compartments.

Nationalism is the surest guarantee of the continuance of the British predominance.

Centralization means—refusing to use water-tight compartments—putting all your water in one bottle—or all your eggs in one basket. The greatest enemy of this Empire after the Germans—is centralization.

The Latest Commission

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT GOOD this new Railway Inquiry Board is going to do for us, and there is no use pretending about it. It is another of our numberless commissions, another case where the Government has deputed another large task to a group of civilians—and so got rid of it for a while. Smith, Drayton and Paish are excellent men. That is the best part of the whole scheme. But if they are only to report on the FACTS of the railway situation in Canada, then we are bound to say the facts are already available and

any fairly brainy civil service officer could have collected 'em and laid them out in lucid manner for the Cabinet to ponder. But if this commission is to go a step farther and make recommendations from the facts—well, that is deputing too much of the authority of Parliament altogether. The future railroad policy of Canada must be determined by the men we Canadians have elected to guide the state, not by hired experts. Railway experts are not properly the judges of a public question; they are judges of railroads and the judges of public questions are, or ought to be, our legislators. If they feel themselves incompetent they should say so at once and resign. The breeding of "commissions" is a distinct disease, and ought to be treated as such. If Ottawa gets a recommendation re railroads, from these gentlemen, it will either reject it, or accept it, or leave it in abeyance. In the last instance our money is wasted. In the second instance it is equally wasted because the Government should have been able to think the thing out for itself. And in the first instance, also, it is wasted. We appoint governments to govern or get out—not to hire experts.

It is curious to observe how reluctant any Government is to depute its authority on any matter touching patronage. Patronage IS a public matter. Of course it is. It wins elections. But thinking out railway problems is mere statecraft and as such—to be avoided.

The Indian Commission

SPEAKING OF COMMISSIONS: British Columbia has just received the bill for its "Indian Commission." It has cost a quarter of a million dollars, half payable by the Ottawa Government. Its members—mostly selected by pull—drew thirty dollars a day, "rain or shine, Sundays and holidays," as the Victoria Times remarks. Their auto hire amounted to six thousand dollars. One little steamboat trip cost them over a thousand dollars for the boat alone.

And what is accomplished.

A report?

Who will read it?

Much more important—who will act on it?

Mark our words—not a soul!

Bourassa's Mistake

HENRI BOURASSA WOULD be a useful and praiseworthy citizen if he could refrain from muddling up big issues with small ones. If, for the sake of a big, self-reliant Canada he would only forego a little of his racialism and ultramontanism he could do excellent service in building up a true Canadian spirit. The other day he bewailed the lack of man-like, independent spirit in our so-called statesmen, lamenting their passion for toadying to the officials of the mother country, deriding their eagerness to let others lead and others decide while we paid the piper.

In point of cold fact, Bourassa's derision is well-founded, but ill-timed. He forgets that we are only following an old Canadian tradition—the tradition of docility, loyalty and obedience. It will take time to develop that self-reliant spirit which is as much desired by wise Imperialists as by ardent Nationalists. And he forgets that now is not the time to make the change. A change there must be, and will be—but after the war, not now. At present our business is to fight and to win. Ottawa's lack of self-reliance does not seriously affect that issue and need not be seriously raised now. In the future it will be cured. Our soldiers, returning to Canada, will be the first to insist on self-reliant Canadianism in politics as well as in other things.

A Useful Explanation

ARTHUR HAWKES—for whose political idiosyncrasies our eye is much too slow—does the country a real service in elucidating to the readers of the Toronto Star some of the real reasons why the French-Canadian has not enlisted. Large bodies of fairly decent folk seldom pursue courses contrary to general approval just for the love of being wrong; though the words traitor and coward come easily to the lips, and though the Toronto News itself has hurled them at Quebec with careful aim, we have felt reluctant to believe that French Canada was refusing to send recruits for the reasons Upper Canada seemed anxious to believe. Mr. Hawkes reminds us first that the young French-Canadian marries early. He tells us next that many of the Roman Catholics in Quebec, especially the older folk, have no great love for the skeptic France of only recent years. In short, Hawkes has unearthed

one or two of the "grouches" of the French, which should be understood and "treated" before condemning our fellow Canadians. We ultra-loyalists who have made of our so-called "voluntary system" something much more to be dreaded than conscription (and much less honest) may be loth to consider any of these elements in the case of the French. It is infinitely easier to condemn a man offhand and without a hearing than to cool one's ardour and do even-handed justice. Mr. Hawkes' service consists in showing some of the sores that need treatment before we can expect a change in Quebec.

Ruled by Women

LET US NOT BE CLASSED as one of those who talk only of the evils to come after the war.

Let us assail the present thriving evil of co-education. It is in our midst. Its fruits are to be seen in an older orchard—the United States, just across our border. The war, thank heaven, has made males of our men, but what has happened in the United States is likely to happen here, too, as the years pass. Co-education unsexes women and unsexes men. It is reducing the all important "differential" of the sexes. It is only too truly what its advocates claimed it was: a softening influence on the young male, making him "gentler," more polite—prettier. It is a hardening influence on the young female. Familiarity begets contempt. The necessary differences of manner that should accompany differences of sex are lost.

To-day the American people, as we have had occasion to remark in these columns ere now, are turning feminine to an alarming degree. American men are sentimentalists and emotionalists of the worst type. The shops and books and newspapers of the United States are apparently designed for women—and women in male attire. Many factors have helped bring about this state of affairs, but the least important of them is not co-education. American boys have been petti-coated by generations of co-education, woman-rule at home, and woman rule at school. We are in danger of the same thing in Canada.

Straws in the Wind

NORTH PERTH, an Ontario constituency, has just changed its habitual heavy majority for the Conservatives into a fair Liberal majority. This may not mean all that the Liberals would like to think it means, but their interpretation is not very far out. The Conservative position in the country is, for the present, not quite favourable. Nova Scotia, Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia! These are straws of some importance.

Not a Favour at All

THE MINISTER OF CUSTOMS promises to grant as a favour British Columbia's demand for a Canadian customs official at New York, to facilitate the shipment of goods in bond to British Columbia. The Minister has no business making it a favour. It was a right too long withheld from the Pacific Province. He should really make it an apology and an explanation. Why in the world was that New York officer not appointed before?

Two Sides

TWO ERRORS CAUSED the Camp Borden unpleasantness. One was Sir Sam Hughes'.

He should have foregone whatever gratification was to be had in seeing a review in his honour. The other was the error of the men, an error to be excused perhaps on account of the heat. It is easy to be wise over other peoples' troubles, especially when sitting in a cool office. Nevertheless, it is not we, but all history, that says: the quality of the soldier is endurance, silence under suffering, patience and obedience; and to profess to be a soldier is to profess these qualities. Possibly Camp Borden will be serene ere these lines are on the press.

Waterloo and Perlin

WITH NATIONS IT IS NECESSARY to establish and maintain national identity. That is one reason for opposing the centralization of the British Empire. But with cities the policy of separation is bad. Berlin and Waterloo (Ontario) are talking of joining and of not joining. Some of the Waterloo people oppose the scheme bitterly. So also Port Arthur and Fort William have discussed and rejected union, informally. These are two cases where centralization is wise. Money, time and friction would be saved by amalgamation.

But not so in the case of geographically separated nations. Centralization in that case spells disaster.