

democratic self-government did not flourish in the colonies, but in Britain itself, whence it was copied to the colonies. The long struggle for responsible government in Canada was supported and encouraged entirely by the example of what was being realized in Britain, and it was the sympathy and co-operation of the radical reformers in Britain with their disciples and followers in the colonies which in the end secured for the latter the peaceable recognition of their right to self-government. The imperialist element, on the contrary, steadily maintained that to countenance such claims, or permit their realization, involved the dismemberment and ruin of the Empire. It was indeed just because the democratic reform element in Britain, in demanding responsible self-government for themselves, frankly favoured conceding it to the colonists as well, that they were branded as anti-imperialists and little-Englanders. However, they steadily argued that only through such concessions could the affection and respect of the colonies be fostered and retained. How completely their policy and predictions have been vindicated history records.

Now it is chiefly because the British type of responsible self-government is so thoroughly incorporated with the daily lives of the people, and has been carried to such an efficient stage of development, alike in the mother country and the more important colonies, that it is impossible to take seriously any imperial programme which does not fully recognize this central fact. It is necessary, therefore, to recall to mind what are the essential features of that type of government.

The central factor of the British type of democratic government, which is shared by all the self-governing colonies, is the cabinet system. And the essence of the cabinet system is that a body of men, who are to constitute the executive heads of the national administration and also to direct the national legislation and policy, are mutually selected from the representatives of the people in parliament, on the understanding that they agree to support each other, under a personal leader, in a comprehensive line of policy, and who, in support of that policy, must be able to command the assent of a majority of the representatives of the people in parliament. This interdependence of the members of a cabinet, with the necessity for a continuous support on all important measures by a majority of the popular representatives, is the essence of the party system. Cabinet government is therefore inseparable from the party system, and both in turn depend upon a close attention to public opinion, whatever its quality, since this