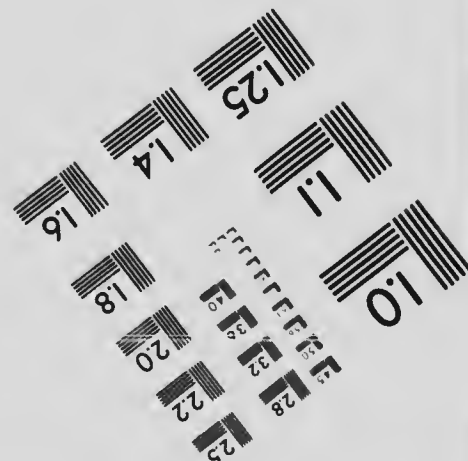
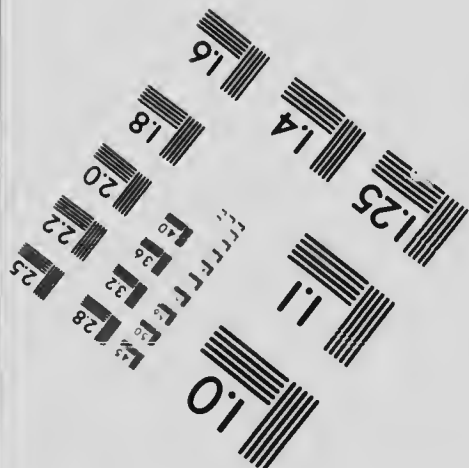
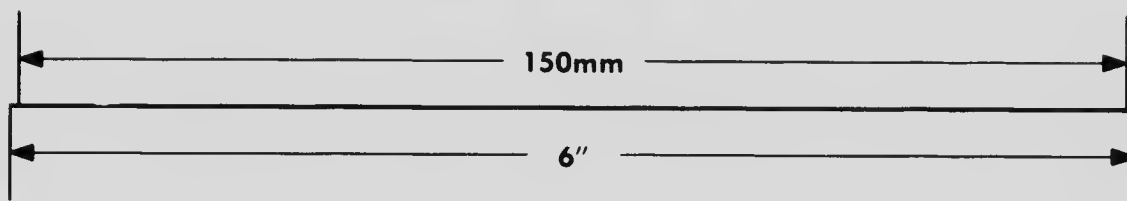
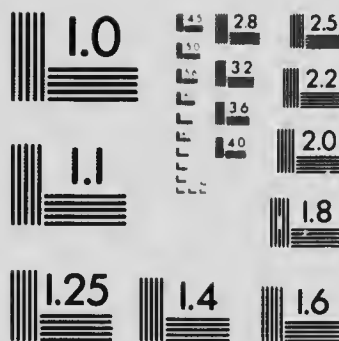
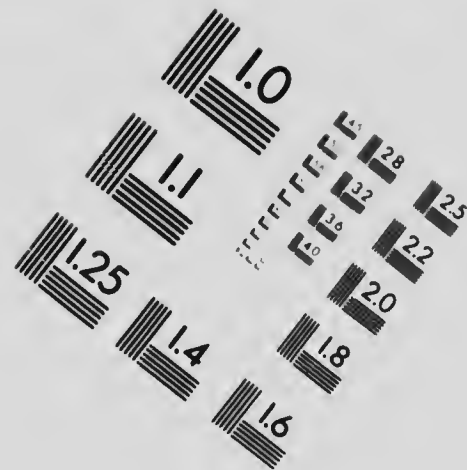
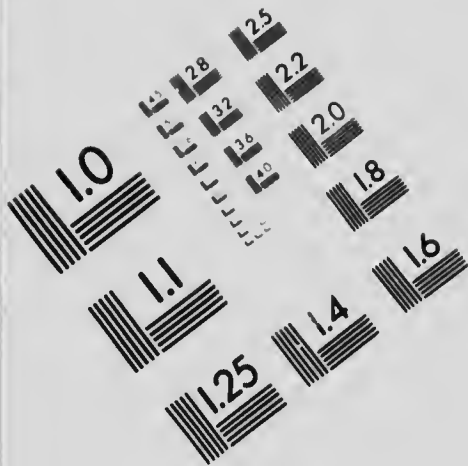


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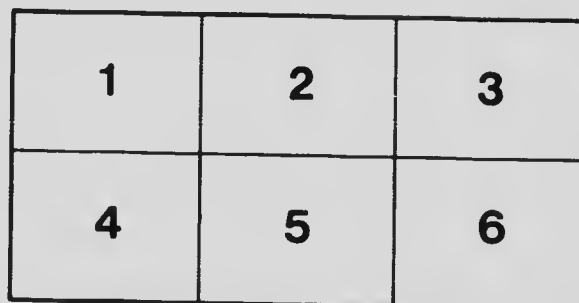
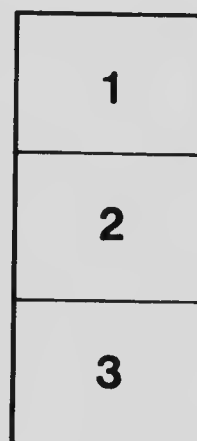
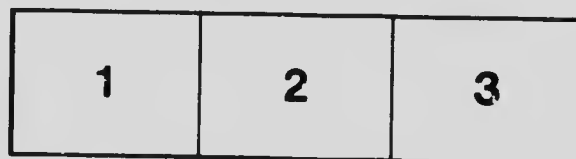
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# The Unity of the Empire.

W. C. Milner

HALIFAX, N. S.

NO.

793

THE ALUMNI ORATION  
DELIVERED THE 20TH  
OF JUNE, A. D. 1907, AT  
THE ENCÆNIA OF KING'S  
COLLEGE, WINDSOR, N.S.

BY

SILAS ALWARD, D.C.L., K.C.



PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Unity of the Empire.





## The Unity of the Empire.

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The Alumni Oration, delivered the 20th of June, A.D. 1907. at  
the Encaenia of King's College, Windsor, N. S.

By SILAS ALWARD, D.C.L., K.C.

With flag and banneret, with strains of enlivening music, and with thunder of cannon, in a few days the six millions of this great Dominion will celebrate, in fitting manner, the completion of forty years of national existence. From a few disjointed Colonies, with but slight bonds of cohesion, with hostile tariffs, with restricted trade and with contracted intercommunication we have, in this short span, grown into a Commonwealth, which has already challenged the admiration of many countries and attracted the attention of the world. We boast, if boast be permissible, of a territory almost limitless in extent and fabulous in the wealth of its resources; a commercial marine, which carries our sea-borne traffic to all shores; a volume of trade totalling in value over six hundred millions of dollars; a system of railways aggregating twenty thousand six hundred miles, being within ten per cent. of the mileage of the United Kingdom; a great highway with its bands of steel stretching from ocean to ocean and two others in course of construction; and a form of government the freest and best yet devised by the wit or ingenuity of man. And all this, accomplished in four decades, is but earnest of what we yet shall do. The Statesmen, who conceived the scheme of Confederation, who laid its foundations and reared the superstructure, builded better than they knew. As is often the case with great en-



terprises they encountered what seemed insuperable difficulties. It was said no permanent union was possible with such incongruous elements; that trade could not be forced from the Maritime Provinces to the Upper, no more than water could be made to run up hill; that our trade was naturally with the people of the neighboring Republic; and with much more that has long since been forgotten. All subsequent steps taken for the development of the country met with like opposition. In 1868, when Parliament introduced an Act for the purchase of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company, for the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars, it was opposed on the ground that this Great Lone Land, with its Arctic cold and herds of buffalo and wild Indians, was unfitted as an abode for civilized man, and that its purchase for such a sum was a reckless expenditure and could not be justified on the grounds of economy. Yet, as fact is sometimes stranger than fiction, out of this Great Lone Land have been carved three flourishing Provinces, into which are pouring annually hundreds of thousands of immigrants from all parts of the world, attracted by their marvellous fertility of soil. Their yield of wheat last year amounted to over one hundred millions of bushels. Of two of them, the last created, it has been said:—"Put together the whole German Empire, the Republic of France and your England and Scotland and you shall find place for them in these two new Provinces." And also, when it was proposed to construct a railway across the Continent it was met with most determined opposition. In 1880 a resolution was moved in the House of Commons to suspend construction at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and members were implored not to ruin the credit of Canada for the sake of twelve thousand white people in British Columbia. It was said the sea of mountains beyond the foothills presented an impassable barrier to its further construction. Yet, in 1885, eighteen years after Confedera-

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tion, this great undertaking was carried to successful completion. The veil of the Great Lone Land was lifted, the sea of mountains crossed, and now this national highway is changing the current of trade and travel of Continents. The Canadian Pacific Railway now owns and operates 13,000 miles of railway, together with a fleet of 186,000 tons, yielding annually a revenue of over seventy millions of dollars. In view of what has been achieved in the past and the status already attained, it becomes us to pause and seriously consider the question, whither are we drifting? Well has it been said:—"We have reached the parting of the ways." The overshadowing question of the hour is:—"What is the destiny of the Empire?" Its solution, it would seem, can only be solved in one of two ways: Either separation or Imperial partnership. Separation, with each unit striving as best it may to work out its destiny with the almost absolute certainty of being finally absorbed by some more powerful neighbor. Or Imperialism based upon the principle of mutual support and joint responsibility. Firmly united we would stand four square to all the world. Federated, other nations recognizing our power would court our friendship, thus leaving us to develop our resources, preserve our commerce and advance our financial interests. Federated, we would constitute so great a power as materially to lessen the possibility of war, thereby subserving the best interests of humanity. Since 1887, the period of the first Jubilee Conference, attention has been focussed upon this most important question. The Diamond Jubilee Conference, ten years after, as well as the Coronation Conference of 1902, served to accentuate its importance. A still greater impetus has been added by the Imperial Conference just closed. What, it may be pertinently asked, has been accomplished by the Imperial Conference of 1907? The following may be claimed as some of the results achieved: First, the Conference is made a permanent institution to be

hereafter styled "Imperial," and held every four years, and not as in the past, an occasional occurrence coincident with some great national state function, as Her late Majesty's Jubilee, twenty years ago, her Diamond Jubilee, ten years ago, and the Coronation of King Edward in 1902. Second, an Executive Committee, or Secretarial staff, is to be created as a permanent bureau, in the Colonial Department, the purpose of which, during the intervals of the Conference, is to keep the Home and Colonial Governments supplied with information; to attend to the execution of their resolutions; to conduct correspondence on matters relating to their offices; and to gather data bearing upon the industrial, commercial and political interests of the United Kingdom and her far flung Colonial system. This will, doubtless, tend to facilitate the work of the Conferences and keep alive the interest from sitting to sitting. Third, a fund is to be raised, called the Empire Education Fund, the object of which is to promote knowledge respecting the outlying portions of the Empire, so as to enable the people of the Empire to think nationally and not parochially. Fourth, the Conference of 1907 marks the conversion, or at least the committing, of the leader of the Conservative party, Mr. Balfour, to the principle of preferential trade within the Empire so ably championed in the Conferences of 1897 and 1902 by the great Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain. This question will, doubtless, be made one of the issues when appeal is next made to the people. The great self-governing Colonies, the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and Cape Colony adopted some years ago the principle of preferential trade, each Colony passing the necessary legislation to carry into effect a preference on the goods of the Mother Country imported into these respective Colonies. In the Conference of 1887 it was proposed by one of the representatives, that for the purpose of encouraging trade a

duty of an equal rate on all imports entering the Empire from foreign countries should be imposed, and that the revenue derivable therefrom be applied towards the expense of defending the Empire. The Imperial Government declined to accede to this proposition. When it was proposed in the Conference just closed to reaffirm the following resolution, passed in the Conference of 1902: "That this Conference recognizes that the principle of preferential trade, between the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, would stimulate and facilitate commercial intercourse, and would, by promoting the development of the resources and industries of the several ports, strengthen the Empire," Mr. Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressed the mind of the Imperial Government in opposition to the settled policy of the Colonial Premiers, with the exception of Mr. Botha, Premier of the Transvaal, as set forth in the above resolution. Not only did the Imperial Government enter its *Non Possimus* against tariff reform generally, but even refused a resolution offered to impose a duty of the trifling amount of one per cent., on foreign goods, to be hypothecated for purposes of defence. In this debate it was shown beyond question, so clear and so convincing were the arguments put forward by the Colonial Ministers, that preferential trade as a means for the consolidation of the Empire, had passed the stage of discussion and had become a settled principle. The question, consequently, simply remains in abeyance, and nothing more can be done until the people of the United Kingdom agree to abandon the strict interpretation of free trade to the limited extent asked for by the Colonial Premiers. A change of ministry would, doubtless, settle it once and for all. When adopted it will mark a stage in the direction of Imperial Federation, since nothing so tends to unite and bind the people together as intimate trade relations. The Premier of Australia has well said:—"Reciprocity alone is the com-

mercial tie which will demonstrate the unity of the Empire, and assist to make it a potent reality." The late Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, touched the crux of the question in these significant words:—"We live in an age of a war of tariffs. Every nation is trying how it can, by agreement with its neighbour, get the greatest possible protection for its industries, and at the same time the greatest possible access to the markets of its neighbours. \* \* \* It is in this great battle Great Britain has deliberately stripped herself of her armour and her weapons by which the battle is to be fought. You cannot do business in this world of evil and suffering on those terms. If you fight you must fight with the weapons with which those whom you are contending against are fighting." Fifth, if the Colonial Premiers failed in their preferential tariff scheme a most important point was gained in the last resolution adopted by the Conference for the establishment of a new independent mail, passenger and freight route through Canada to Australia and New Zealand, popularly designated the All-Red Route, bringing these last named Colonies within three weeks' journey of the Mother Country, instead of as now six weeks by the Suez Canal. For the purpose of carrying this enterprise into effect financial aid will be asked to be contributed by Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in equitable proportions. The transit to these distant countries will be made swift and easy. To Canada such a project will be fraught with inestimable advantage, since the greatest commercial highway of the world will pass from one end of the Dominion to the other. If the Imperial Conference of 1907 had accomplished nothing else, this of itself would be sufficient to demonstrate its utility. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, our Premier, is entitled to the credit of introducing and carrying through this important matter of national policy. These are some of the advantages achieved by the Imperial Conference of 1907. Above and beyond these may be added the indirect

benefits flowing from the free interchange of thought on all great questions of national import by leading statesmen from all parts of the Empire; also the like free discussion of the same subjects in the leading journals of the world. In all of the Conferences, from the first in 1887, the question of Imperial Defence has occupied a prominent place on the list of subjects for discussion. At the last Conference, Australia, New Zealand and Cape Colony, respectively, tabulated the following resolutions on the Conference *agenda*: By Australia—That it is desirable that the Colonies should be represented on the Imperial Council of Defence. By New Zealand—That the question of an increased contribution by the Australasian Colonies to the Australasian-New Zealand squadron should be considered, together with other matters connected with Colonial Defence. By Cape Colony—That this Conference considers necessary the organization of a plan of Imperial defence by which the contributions of each Colony should be equitably fixed and provided for.

Dr. Jameson, the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, has been most insistent upon this question of Colonial assistance towards defence of the Empire. He believes it would be another link, between the United Kingdom and the mighty circle of her Colonies, which might materially assist in the consummation of a closer union. In the Conference of 1902 Mr. Chamberlain, in emphasizing the question of the Colonies taking a share in the burden of maintaining an efficient navy for mutual defence, made use of the following pregnant words:—"If the United Kingdom stood alone, as a mere speck in the Northern Sea, it is certain that its expenditure for these purposes of defence might be immensely curtailed. It is owing to its duties and obligations to its Colonies throughout the Empire; it is owing to its trade with those Colonies—a trade in which, of course, they are equally interested with ourselves—that the necessity has been cast upon us to make these enormous preparations."

It is to be hoped all of the seven self-governing Colonies will soon be brought to recognize the importance of becoming cocontributors towards the common object of securing an effective command of the sea, in order to protect the trade and secure the safety of all parts of the Empire. The Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, Cape Colony and Natal, however, are now contributors, to a limited extent, for the general maintenance of the navy. The Dominion of Canada still refuses to enter into any arrangement as to a direct contribution. The sum total of the population of the seven self-governing Colonies amounts to sixteen millions, more than one-third of the population of the United Kingdom. The population of the Dominion of Canada is more than one-eighth of that of the United Kingdom. Is it just, is it manly, that the eight millions of overtaxed artisans of England, Scotland and Ireland should have added to an ever-increasing burden the additional tax of contributing to the support of a Navy to shield us from foreign aggression or encroachment and to patrol the marine highways of our far spread commercial enterprises? The objection raised, on the part of Canada, against contribution towards Imperial Defence is, she would have no control over its expenditure, and it would be used towards the maintenance of a Navy exclusively directed by the British Admiralty. It is the old, old question of taxation without representation. It is claimed an Imperial Parliament should be created representing all the great self-governing Colonies, before contribution should be exacted for the general purposes of defence. Is it to be expected that Canada, which ranks seventh in the list of Maritime Nations, with a registered tonnage of seven thousand vessels, can much longer owe the safety and protection of her commercial marine to the generosity of the Motherland? Here we stand confronted by the great question pressing upon us for solution: "Is the Federation of the Empire within the range of practical politics?" Organically to

cement and rear a solid enduring fabric, on the broad lines of equal rights and free representation, is surely possible. This vital question must soon be settled. Not to advance is to retrograde. The larger self-governing Colonies are now arranging commercial agreements with other countries. The bonds of mutual trade not only make for friendship, but are most effective in uniting nations. If we temporize and delay the opportunity may be lost for achieving what we now so ardently desire, closer union with the great heart of the Empire. We need not stop to inquire, how or by what means this important question is to be carried to a successful issue? When it shall have been demonstrated that the safety of the Empire depends upon its accomplishment, British Statesmanship will be found equal to the emergency, as it has been in many a trying crisis in the nation's history.

It is said when Bismarck faced the difficult problem of Germanic unity, a problem more difficult and intricate than that now confronting British statesmen, he counselled patience. He said:—"As long as we have the impulse to unity in the soul of our people, almost any scheme will work. But if we once begin to squabble about details and impose a cast iron constitution no scheme on earth will work. We cannot coerce the national life into narrow channels, but if we foster that life it will make in time proper channels for itself." It was the love of Fatherland that rendered possible the union of the twenty-six petty Kingdoms, Principalities, Duchies and States of Germany. It is love of country that renders its people willing to submit to taxation, most grinding, in order to drill an army and equip a navy sufficient to safeguard its commercial highways and preserve inviolate its national honor. Does the flame of patriotism burn less brightly on British Altars? Does the Anglo-Saxon heart beat less responsive to the well recognized truth, that eternal vigilance is requisite to hold what arms have won? It cannot be. Let us, then, face with equal courage a problem not



more difficult than that already solved by Germany. Acting on the salutary advice of the great German Chancellor, let us cultivate the impulse to unity in the soul of our people. Let us foster the spirit of national life, then this great scheme of Imperial Federation will gradually assume practical shape, and result in certain accomplishment. This spirit of unity is making, we trust, for solidarity in all parts of the British Empire. It was this spirit that welded the disjointed members of the Saxon Heptarchy into the Kingdom of England; that fused the group of Isles in the Northern Ocean into Great Britain; that, across the seas, in Greater Britain, created and solidified these two great Federations—The Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia; it was in this spirit Dr. Jameson spoke, when he expressed the hope that, at the next Imperial Conference, the Empire may have another Confederation composed of Cape Colony, the Orange Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, and Rhodesia; and it was in this spirit our Premier spoke, when at Guildhall, in referring to the prediction of the Prime Minister of the Cape, he said: "That is truly an Imperial Policy, and, so long as the British Empire is maintained on these bases, I venture to assert that it rests upon foundations firmer than rock, and as enduring as the ages."

