

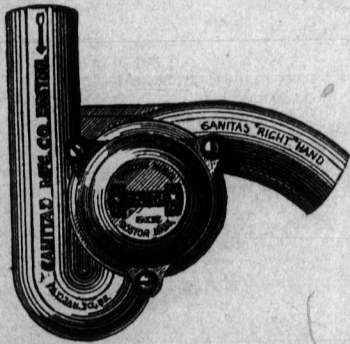
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WITHIN THE EMPIRE; AN ESSAY ON Imperial Federation.

BY Thomas Mackenzie.

CHAPTER IX.

The Federal Executive; England's Hegemony.

In the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to set forth a plan of representation for the Empire, which, if carried out, would result in transforming the present English House of Lords into the highest British Parliament or Senate.

The duties of the first three of the officials just named are, for our purposes, indicated with sufficient precision in their titles.

Among other important duties the Secretary of State for the Colonies would have to devise means for transferring systematically the superabundant labour of English cities to the wild unoccupied and untilled lands of the colonies.

In general terms it may be supposed that the Federal Ministry would manage the Imperial finances, administer naval affairs and control colonial and Indian relations, as well as the diplomatic and consular service.

of the United Kingdom would continue to have charge of the revenue from customs (excepting always the proceeds of the Imperial import duty), excise, income and other direct taxes, post office, etc., and manage the English military and volunteer systems, the civil service, administration of justice, public works, education, and all affairs affecting exclusively the United Kingdom.

The same constitutional relations which now exist in all well governed states between the sovereign, the executive and the legislature would no doubt be established betwixt the various parts of the Government of the United British Empire.

In this essay reference has already been made to the Holy Roman Empire of German nations, as exemplifying to a slight extent the nature of the closer union to be established by Imperial Federation betwixt British nations throughout the world.

Weber, the historian, tells us that Conrad the Frank, tired of his vain efforts to control the turbulent nobles of South Germany, and unable to protect his country from the inroads of the Hungarians, sent his brother Eberhard to Henry of Saxony (the Fowler), with his royal insignia and crown, offering submission and friendship, and expressing his conviction that the future of Germany lay with the Saxons.

the place is shown where the Saxon Duke received the Frankish nobles. Henry, "a man full of energy and old German simplicity," was then proclaimed as king at Fritzlar in Hesse, in 919, by the secular and ecclesiastical princes and lords there assembled.

Henry refused episcopal anointment, but called himself nevertheless "King by the Grace of God." He made use of his power with great wisdom and moderation. He did not wish to establish Imperial rule by subjecting the various races, and countries to the power of a single master and govern the whole of Germany from one central point.

So long as Henry's successors were guided by his principles and the subordinate dukes and bishops were contented with the powers allotted them, all went well; fortune favored the Germans, and such epochs constituted golden ages in the history of the Empire.

The principles of federal government propounded by Henry the Fowler, although modelled on the feudal system, were based on a just and wise foundation, and have their application even in the present day.

There are shallow grumblers everywhere; "Canada first" men and nationalists in Canada, "natives" in Australia and Africa, and in South Africa, who dream of constructing independent nations out of the fragments of the British Empire.

have sent many a colony flying off into foreign space. Let us be thankful that there is yet time to counteract any tendency towards separation by placing at the service of the Crown an Imperial Senate and Executive, and let us pray that Her Majesty may long be spared to wear the Imperial Crown.

The tendency to consider only their own interests, and to act independently of England, which has been exhibited by certain of her colonies, is a natural fruit of the commercial independence which was forced upon them at the time when the Manchester School of politicians held sway in the old country.

Compared with what the Germans had to accomplish, the consolidation of the British Empire seems any easy task. But still, if we consider the means by which the Union of the Fatherland was accomplished, we shall learn some very useful lessons.

We thus learn two things from the experience of Germany: First, that the preponderant influence and action of one member of the Bund was necessary to effect the closer union; second, that between the institution of the first weak political tie and the substitution for it of the North German Bund, and afterwards of the German Empire, the formation of a Customs Union intervened, which had the most important influence in uniting the German people.

caring for the commercial interests of the others, we have had, until a comparatively recent date, prominent statesmen advocating its dismemberment, and prominent economists of the Gradgrind school abolishing differential duties, and treating certain parts of the Empire as utterly foreign to it, from a commercial point of view. Happily, it is not too late to profit by experience, and to insist that an Imperial Commercial Union must be established, before the present loose tie betwixt the British possessions can be converted into a firm and lasting bond of union.

There is but one country that can take the lead in the direction indicated, and exercise a political and commercial preponderance, a hegemony, within the British Empire, namely, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. It is surely high time for English statesmen to abandon their attitude of indifference, adopt a positive policy, and no longer allow it to be said that the first move towards closer union must come from the Colonies. Such a position is unworthy of the prestige, power and wealth of England; who, if she desires a flourishing and enduring Empire, must take the lead, in creating and maintaining it.

This view is supported and the opposite notion, (that the Colonies should make the first move) is condemned in an admirable letter from General Tottenham of Tasmania, published in *Imperial Federation* for February, 1889. The General's contentions are these:—The offer of a substantial share of influence in shaping the foreign policy of the Empire must come from the mother country; the request for representation will never be formally made by the colonies; we cannot afford any longer to content ourselves with inert admiration of the "ideal" of Imperial Federation. A careful survey of the situation in Canada leads to the same conclusions. It is true that new branches of the League are being formed here, but those which have been in existence two or more years show no signs of steady progress. The federalists' admiration of his "ideal" is not contagious, and his enthusiasm has no effect upon those whose mental vision is only open to the prospect of material advantage. It seems plain to such people that, under the existing arrangements between Great Britain and her Colonies, the latter have the best of the bargain, and therefore it is not to their interest to disturb it by making any "request for representation."

Why in these days of "buying in the cheapest market," should common colonists desire any change? They are proud to be loyal subjects of the Queen, although they do not pay one cent of the household expenses of Her Majesty, or towards the annuities of the Royal Family. They enjoy the advantages of the diplomatic and consular service as much as the inhabitants of the British Isles, and entirely without cost. During the civil war in the United States Canadians made abundant use of the good offices of the British Embassy at Washington, and Canadian tourists in European capitals would, no doubt, in cases of difficulty apply to Her Majesty's representatives there. It is also well known that in negotiating trade treaties all the expensive machinery of the Foreign Office is placed at our disposal gratis. Even the British parliament is occasionally called upon to legislate for us, and the Colonial office sometimes interests itself in our behalf, all out of pure generosity and without even so much as hinting at recompense. Added to this is the stupendous advantage which the Colonial Empire enjoys, absolutely without cost, in the protection of its shipping and shores against spoliation and aggression from every quarter. Still, to common calculating natures and sound, sordid businesslike men there is nothing in all this to cause them to wish for any change. They are very comfortable and contented and it is evident that from a material point of view there exists no reason why the colonies should make the first move towards a closer political union of the Empire.

Similar arguments might be brought up if the trade question is considered. Even in that respect the colonies are advantageously placed seeing that the control of their tariffs is in their own hands. Besides, proposals for closer commercial intercourse coming from any of the Colonies could not command sufficient attention elsewhere. When a British Commercial Union is broached in Canada, the first remark invariably is "What would England say to such a thing." Next the question is asked, "Do you imagine she will ever abandon Free Trade?" Indeed no progress towards a British Zollverein is possible unless under the initiative and leadership of the Mother Country. Let her but first hold out her

hand, and it will be at once and firmly grasped by her daughter nations throughout the world.

One of the strongest arguments in favor of such action on the part of the United Kingdom is the fact that no other part of the Empire is legally capable of inaugurating legislation looking towards Imperial Union. That power is in the possession of the parliament of Great Britain. There is nothing to prevent the passage, at its next session of a measure to secure the permanent unity of the Empire if English legislators really had the welfare at heart of the various British nations throughout the world. The parliament of Great Britain has the legal right to apply the remedy, for the present loose state of things, since it possesses supreme legislative authority and can make laws for all the colonies and dependencies. In this matter it would, however, without doubt, legislate, subject to the approval of the other parliaments and governments interested. The remedy has already been mentioned in this essay, but it deserves frequent repetition. Let the English parliament levy an Imperial *ad valorem* duty on all alien goods arriving in any and every British port over and above the different local tariffs there in force. Let the proceeds of this particular duty collected in England, be kept separate from her other revenues and applied only for naval defence and Imperial purposes. Let her require that the same proceeds in British possessions beyond the sea be remitted to the Government at home, and devoted to the same purpose. Let it also be enacted that any part of the Empire declining to agree to this arrangement should have its products treated exactly like those from foreign countries, and subjected to the payment of the Imperial duty. There cannot be any doubt as to the manner in which this action would be received by the well disposed Colonies and the Crown dependencies. They would be only too willing to contribute in this way to Imperial defence, and obtain at this price a preference in the markets of Great Britain. A similar preference would await the manufactures of the mother country in India and the colonies, while foreign nations seeking these markets would be obliged to pay for admission and thus contribute to the Imperial defence fund.

What would be the position of any colony which might refuse to comply with England's requirements? It would not cease to be part of the Empire, and would, no doubt, continue to enjoy gratuitously the same measure of protection which England so generously affords it at present. But its products would be subject to the extra Imperial duty when sent to England, while similar goods from the loyal colonies would be free from this tax. In course of time the obstreperous colony would find its circumstances quite intolerable, and no doubt be glad to improve them by accepting the proposal of England and making its contribution like the rest of the Empire.

The practicability of this plan is undoubted. It may be carried out by England at any moment, so great is the power she yields by reason of her enormous trade. Everything depends on her willingness to use this power for the purpose of securing Imperial unity, procuring an Imperial Defence fund, and incidentally encouraging her home and colonial trade. Alison expresses himself as follows with regard to the importance of the latter as compared with foreign trade:—"These facts illustrate the important, and to a commercial state vital distinction between the foreign and colonial trade as they affect the market for manufactures and the means of national security. It may safely be affirmed that, on a due and general appreciation of this distinction, the existence of the British Empire in future times will in all probability depend. Experience has now abundantly proved that, even as a trading and manufacturing state, we are dependent on our colonies, if not for the largest, for the most growing part of our exports, and that it is in these that both the most eventually important and enduring market for our domestic industry is to be found."

A study of this subject for the last six years has convinced the present writer that there is no other way in which a revenue for Imperial defence can be so readily obtained as the one above outlined. Nor is there any better plan for securing the permanent and willing adhesion of the colonies to the Empire. All that is necessary is prompt action on the part of England. To borrow a simile from the game of whist—she has the game in her own hands, but, to win it, she must lead trump.

The end has now been reached of the argument in favor of the plan of Im-

perial Federation laid down in Chapter I of this essay under the letters A B and C. As far as possible this plan has been elaborated and details given in the subsequent chapters although such a proceeding is not looked upon with favour by our fellow federationists. It is, however, gratifying to find that that distinguished advocate of the cause, the Rev. Principal Grant of Queen's College Kingston has also felt himself obliged to descend to particulars. Although in his earlier efforts he disapproved of putting forward any definite plan for the accomplishment of our object; yet, in his last lecture delivered in Toronto he formulates certain proposals which, when examined, will be found to approach quite closely to the scheme which has been propounded in this essay, and stated more concisely under the letters A, B and C of its first chapter. Principal Grant's proposals are as follows:—"Let us, at any rate, do what Australia has done—enter into a treaty, according to which we shall pay so much a year for a certain number of ships, to be on our coasts in peace, and in war at the disposal of the Empire. That would be tantamount to saying: "You have shared our risks, we will share yours; we will pay part of the insurance that is necessary to guarantee peace; we are educating officers for the army, and we are willing to give a much needed addition to the fleet." That would be a first step towards the attainment of full citizenship. What would be the next? We could ask that our voice should be heard in some constitutional way before any war was decided on, and we would have the right standing ground from which to urge a wise system of preferential trade in the common interest. These three things are in my opinion connected, and I have ventured to indicate the order in which they should be taken." These three steps are the same in essence, as my A B C of Imperial Federation. But they are placed in a different order, and Principal Grant's third point, is included in the proposal A, which accomplishes two things at one stroke; i. e. provides an Imperial revenue and establishes preferential trade. The following statement compares the two plans:—

Principal Grant proposes:

1. To provide an auxiliary fleet.
2. That the colonies should have a constitutional voice as to peace or war.
3. That a wise system of preferential trade should be urged.

Corresponding to these are the proposals put forward in this essay, if placed in the following order:

- A. To contribute to the cost of the present navy.
- B. That the colonies should be represented in an Imperial Senate.
- C. That an Imperial revenue duty be levied on foreign imports.

I shall not advance any additional arguments to show that, in first adopting and working for the step defined under A, Imperial Federationists are "putting their best foot foremost." But I shall allow the editor of "Imperial Federation" to speak, who in September, 1887, penned the following noteworthy passage on this point:—"We freely assent to the proposition that the colonies ought to be represented in the councils of the Empire, but this, though true, is not the whole truth. The shadow of representation is useless without substantial identity of interests among the people represented. Take the most obvious case of a question of peace or war. Would it be any consolation to Victoria or Canada, when their territories were invaded, to have been represented at the Council which decided upon war, if their own representatives had dissented, and the vote had been carried against them by a majority? Upon such questions, something more than a majority, something more nearly approaching a unanimous decision is requisite. But this unanimity can only be obtained when a whole nation, or every part of a scattered Empire, has the same interests at stake, and appoints their representatives in the same spirit. This is the reason why we aim first at identification of interests, and secondarily at constitutional readjustment."



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