

# WHAT INDEPENDENCE INVOLVES

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THAT Canada has achieved complete liberty of action in all international matters is now beyond argument. As the resolutions of recent Imperial Conferences declare, all the Dominions including the United Kingdom are of "equal status" one with another, and are free to adopt such foreign policy as each may desire. The question which will increasingly present itself for solution is what course will Canada follow in her future foreign relations. Upon the answer may depend the survival of the Commonwealth in the post-war world. The other Dominions are now, apparently, ready to speak in foreign affairs with a common voice; but if Canada refuses equal function (to use the expression of Lord Halifax), with the other Dominions, the whole structure could be destroyed by the different Dominions entering into opposing alliances.

In considering this matter it is well to put from the mind Tennyson's Utopian dream:

"In the Parliament of Man,  
The Federation of the World."

Human nature being what it is, this grandiose concept can never be realized in the foreseeable future, for the very simple reason that defeated nations never entirely forgive their conquerors. Many Frenchmen have not yet completely forgotten the Wars of the Grand Alliance, the Napoleonic conflict, and the many other struggles which have taken place between Britain and France since Duke William landed from Normandy. This fact has been proved by occurrences that have taken place in France during the last five years, the reason for which has in many instances escaped those who live in the United Nations. Is it to be thought, then, that Germans, Japs and Italians will take part in such a "Parliament" after the war? Since they number together at least two hundred million people, if they do not, there can be no such assembly. It has already been amply demonstrated that the absence of the United States from the League of Nations reduced that body to the status of a debating society. What then must practical Canadians do, in order to make themselves safe in a world in which other nations will still covet their neighbor's goods?

It is clearly seen now that the present way of life on the Western Hemisphere would be lost if the United Kingdom were to be subjugated by an anti-democratic aggressor. It must also be accepted as a fact that democratic institutions cannot necessarily be made "articles of export." It is futile to talk of not being involved in European wars. The wars of Europe become the wars of the world when the major powers of that continent resort to arms. They spread. Canada can be attacked. The United States, a great world power, gigantic in its wealth and productive capacity, was attacked by a nation six thousand miles from her shores, without notice, and her Pacific battle fleet was almost completely crippled.

It is then evident that whether Canada likes it or not, when the United Kingdom is involved in a major war, Canada is *ipso facto* at war also, not only because it is essential for the American continent to defend that island for its own protection, but because "blood and race" did call and will call again, notwithstanding what any Canadian statesman may think or say to the contrary.

Since Canada, then, is definitely going to be involved in any major conflicts of the future, she should take some part and have some voice in the diplomatic discussions and exchanges which nearly always precede and often prevent a call to arms. To refrain deliberately from taking part in such conferences, on the ground that they are not of Canadian concern, and might involve Canada in hostilities, is only to play the part of the ostrich with its head in the sand. Canada differed from the other nations of the Commonwealth in the matter of the oil sanctions against Italy, and thus helped to make possible, without such intention, the war of the Dictators. This Dominion is a small nation, and therefore cannot hope by itself to guide the world towards peaceful paths. It can, however, in agreement with the other nations of a powerful Commonwealth help to accomplish this object.

In this attempt to find some Commonwealth unity before the world that would prevent the Dominions from forming alliances in opposition to one another, it is not necessary to fear offending other nations. The people of the United States now know that they stand or fall with the British Commonwealth. Russia realizes, too, that she requires strong allies in order to survive. It surely cannot be that there is fear of offending Germany, Japan and Italy. This smacks of appeasement

which only brought disaster to the world, although the thoughts and desires of those who supported that policy were of the best. If it can be determined that some common foreign policy is desirable, finding the necessary formula on which all Dominions will agree should not be beyond the resources of Canadian statemanship. When that is done, the British Commonwealth will be a powerful instrument for the preservation of the peace of the world. Other nations need not fear a powerful Commonwealth, the warning given by Isabella to Angelo would be heeded:

Oh it is excellent  
to have a giant's strength; but it  
is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.

The Prime Ministers of Australia, South Africa and New Zealand have called for agreement. It can hardly be that this Dominion will dissent in the face of the considered opinion of all the others. If the Canadian Prime Minister has indeed, as has been said, officiated at the London funeral of a common foreign policy, he did so unauthorized by the people of Canada.

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