

Probably the
best of the
examples

All good - and
sometimes very
good X

The Royal Empire Society's Essay Competition
1947.

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33 Avon St.,
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1ST
PRIZE

Pupil at Waitaki Boys' High School, Dunedin.
N. Z.

Class A.

'The Nations of the British Commonwealth must speak, if not with one voice, at least in harmony, in the councils of the world'. Discuss this comment in the light of post-war developments.

Summary.

The subject is dealt with under the following headings:-

1. Trends in international affairs since the war. Effect of atomic Power - formation of Eastern and Western 'blobs' - but United Nations established.
2. Present Position of the Commonwealth. Facing grave difficulties in international trade - but high prestige - changes within the Empire since the war - potential wealth and power - growing importance of the Dominions.
3. Responsibilities of the Commonwealth. - Size and population - policy and beliefs - Commonwealth as an international organization - its part in the post-war world.
4. Relations between Great Britain and the Dominions. Effect of the war - new sense of nationalism - its results and its effects on relations since the war - lack of

co-operation on some matters resulting in a wrong impression in foreign countries. - practical policy does not justify the outspokenness of the Dominions. Need for a uniform policy in foreign affairs, but the Dominions must not be overlooked. - example to the world.

5. Relations of the Commonwealth with the United Nations
Unqualified support - but imperial security must not be neglected on account of this. - practical help - need for Commonwealth co-operation and support.

6. Relations with the United States and Russia.
Deterioration of international relationships - emergence of Russia in world affairs. - role of Great Britain as the conciliator of East and West.

7. Conclusion. - Position of the Commonwealth in a changing world - danger of another war - Commonwealth must be united to prevent this and to guard the peace. - tremendous moral influence for peace and world co-operation.

The two years which have elapsed since the end of the war, have been momentous ones for a world slowly regaining control of itself, after the most disastrous and devastating struggle in history. During this period of and tremendous importance to the future of the world, the whole picture of international affairs has changed. Although the noise of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has long since died away, and the dust subsided, the spectre of atomic power has loomed ever larger in the minds of the various leaders and peoples. The world has witnessed, with increasing anxiety, fear and suspicion slowly poisoning the international relationships which were so promising at the end of the war. This grad-

This is
changing
structure
What the world has witnessed
fear and suspicion

Nazi

-nal trend has been shown in many ways - Russo-American distrust, with all its repercussions round the conference tables, the formation of so-called Eastern and Western 'blocs', and the uncompromising attitude of Russia in the United Nations. Against this general background of gloom, however, there have been some encouraging signs. The United Nations has been established, supported by all the Great Powers, many of the peace-treaties have been signed with Axis satellites, and with Italy, and at the conferences, frank, open diplomacy has replaced the secrecy of former times.

Today, the British Commonwealth of Nations, although facing grave difficulties in international trade, still retains its position as one of the leading powers of the world. The Commonwealth, alone of all the allies, fought right through the war, and by virtue of its position as the bastion of democracy, and the sacrifices which it made to the allied cause, its prestige never been higher. 'The only association of peoples which has a footing in every continent and a front on every ocean,' having played its part nobly during the war, must make sure that the fruits of victory are not wasted by international discussion and suspicion in the years of peace.

W. K. Hancock

Since the end of the war, great changes have taken place within the Empire. Field-Marshal Smuts recently said, 'The Commonwealth of Nations has arisen, and the new pattern is spreading through the whole of the Empire, both at home, and abroad, wherever the British flag flies.' The 'new pattern' has included the voluntary gift of independence to India and Burma, an action which is without precedent in the history of any great colonizing power, and which gives a marvellous example for other countries, with colonial possessions, to follow. In addition, Great Britain was the first country to place her mandates under the Trusteeship Council of the

Field-Marshal Smuts.
imperial

India gift
Burma
already
without
neither India
nor Burma
were ever
colonized

by the British

authority/

United Nations. However, in spite of having signed away some of her richest possessions, Great Britain still has tremendous potential wealth in the Empire, and is undoubtedly, at present, the leading colonial power of the world. If the Commonwealth, led by Great Britain, uses its influence to promote good and peaceful relations between all countries it will be playing a major part in preserving the peace of the world. In Europe, especially, the United Kingdom has much ^{influence} and is one of the main European powers. With Germany and Italy stricken as a result of the war, France battling against internal dissension, and Russia, in spite of all her influence in Eastern Europe, engaged in the tremendous work of reconstruction, Britain, despite her grievous war wounds, is one of the few European countries which has still maintained a stable form of government, and good relations with most of its neighbours. But, although Britain may still have to show the way, the Dominions, should carry equal shares of the important task of promoting good relations. They must gradually come to play a greater part in world affairs, and help Britain more and more, as she has helped them so many times in the past. The Commonwealth must mould itself into an 'instrument' through which we, with others who share our objectives, can operate for our common good in peace as in war.

Mr. L. St. Lawrence
ent.
100 limited
to the subject
of the essay

The British Commonwealth, covering about one-third of the area of the world, and containing one-quarter of the world's total population, has tremendous responsibilities in the post-war world. Considering its size and population, it is small wonder that the Commonwealth should have a major voice in world affairs. But the same factors make it imperative that the policy of the Commonwealth, since it is of such importance, should be a sane and just one. For over a century now, Britain has followed a policy which by gradual change, slowly yet surely lifts the dependant to independence of the kind which goes to

J. W. Pick.

make the Commonwealth a unique connection, the kind of independence which recognizes the interdependence of all. It is a signatory of the Atlantic Charter, subscribing to the theory of freedom from fear and want, and freedom of speech and religion, and as a firm ^{believer} in a democratic form of government, the Commonwealth must shape its policy that it may bring the world to value correctly the independence which recognizes the interdependence of all. For there is really no more successful an international organization than the Empire, and if the principles which have made it what it is, can be satisfactorily applied to international politics, then the world would be in a much more peaceful state. If the Commonwealth works towards this end, it will be more than fulfilling the responsibilities which are entailed by its dimensions. The Commonwealth has fought twice within twenty years the rise of dictatorship, but this was only following a policy centuries old. We now have the second chance this century to make the world a better place, and the Commonwealth must not give way to too much idealism. However, idealism there must be, but of such a nature that it is mixed with sound common sense and a practical outlook on the many problems which face the post-war world. If the Commonwealth does not follow this policy it is unequal to the responsibilities of so many subjects, and has betrayed the cause for which it has ^{so often} fought.

The war vitally affected the relations between Britain and the Dominions. For the first ^{time}, the Dominions fully realized the implications of independence and nationhood. They all, of their own free will, followed the lead of Britain in declaring war on the Axis powers, but it is interesting to note, that for some days in 1939, the Union of South Africa hovered on the brink of neutrality. They all, as independent nations, sent contingents to fight abroad and helped in the general war effort to the full extent of their resources. As the course of the war progressed, however, the independence of the Dominions, but their

dependence on Britain in spite of this, was thrown sharply into relief. It was heavily emphasised, so far as Australia and New Zealand were concerned, when Britain, incapable of conducting the war in Africa, the Atlantic, Burma and Malaya, in addition to protecting her Australasian Dominions from the threat of Japanese invasion, handed over a major share of the task to the forces of the United States. The war swept away many things, but none so important as the system of independence and dependence, which had existed in the Empire, up to that time. It rudely shook the Dominions out of their 'day dreams', planted them firmly on their own feet, leaving them to fend for themselves, and sowed the seed of a new sense of nationalism, which has since then pervaded imperial relations, and has become very marked since of the war. It would be ridiculous to suggest that the Dominions, filled with a new realization of their nationhood as they are, could exist as independent countries outside the Commonwealth. For example, Britain is still New Zealand's best customer for her primary produce and if she lost that custom she would be ruined economically. Realizing this, the Dominion is glad to remain within the Commonwealth, but since the war has decided to bear a larger share of the burden of Empire, this could be said to hold with the other Dominions too. For 'The United Kingdom remains the keystone of the arch which supports the British Commonwealth....' and it is now the task of the Dominions to share some of the weight of the arch.

Would they
agree?
Australia
New Zealand

Vera M. Dean

Reviewing the San Francisco Conference 1945, an American journalist wrote in 'Foreign Affairs', under the heading of 'No Anglo-Dominion Bloc', the following: 'The many contrasts, and even conflicts, that emerged between the views of Britain and those of its Dominions definitely dispelled the myth of an Anglo-Dominion bloc, which as matter of record, had never existed in the League of Nations. Australia.... and New Zealand.... opposed Brit-

ain on a wide range of subjects, notably trusteeship, and re-
 peatedly questioned the British interpretation of the Yalta voting
 formula. Canada... showed little interest in trusteeship but
 made an outstanding contribution in its carefully thought out
 proposals for expansion of the functions and authority of the
 Economic and Social Council. India's principal delegate,
 Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, distinguished himself as chair-
 man of the Committee on Economic and Social Co-opera-
 tion by his skill in reconciling conflicting points of view
 and his forward-looking spirit. Perhaps in no realm
 have the Dominions shown to a greater degree their new
 feeling of independence, than in that of foreign affairs. At
 the numerous conferences, which the successful conclu-
 sion of the war occasioned, they have been very marked
 in their outspoken views and policies. Unfortunately,
 these have often diverged greatly from those of Britain
 and, although within the Commonwealth these conflicts of
 opinion are recognized to be the result of an ultra-
 nationalistic feeling, made without any sense of disloy-
 alty to Britain and the other Dominions, to foreign
 observers they present a very different picture. 'Unfortu-
 nately' was used advisedly, for in this difficult transition
 period, when Britain depends so much on the support of
 the Commonwealth to retain her position as a world pow-
 er, any differences of opinion, however superficial, are
 bound to lower the prestige and influence of Britain and
 the Commonwealth as a whole. That this phase will quick-
 ly pass is without doubt, since the Dominions will soon
 realize that in a world of power politics, the position of
 a small, independent, under-populated state is very dif-
 ferent from that of a member of a powerful, united com-
 monwealth, in which all work together and help each
 other over difficult times. The very smallness of their
 size and population would relegate them to the position
 of weak powers, if powers at all, and as a precocious
 infant soon becomes adults, so would their outspokenness

I think this
 is an
 error-
 statement

was
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 as a comp-
 arison of the smaller Dominions

H. O. Hodson

What does he
mean by
'justifying'?

soon exasperate the major powers. The world 'must not be misled into thinking that they, (their outspoken opinions), represent the real convictions and intentions of the Dominions concerned, in the face of hard facts.' In any case, their practical behaviour does not justify this policy, as seen by the signing of the Canberra pact between Australia and New Zealand, and the agreement between Canada and the United States. If this policy of nationalism is carried too far, the Dominions, by persisting with it, may bring about the exactly opposite result to the one that they had hoped.

Chief
London Correspondent
of the 'New York
Times'

Therefore, even at the risk of being accused of forming a bloc, it is vitally important that the Commonwealth should have a uniform foreign policy, for the good of all included in the imperial framework. This does not mean, however, that the Dominions should be deprived of an opportunity of expressing their opinions. Rather, in an era when 'The power of Britain within the Empire is hardly more than equal so far as the Dominions are concerned', it is becoming increasingly necessary in the interests of both the Commonwealth and the world, that the Dominions should have some influence in shaping the foreign policies of the Commonwealth. A system could be introduced whereby before each conference the Dominion representatives could meet with those of the United Kingdom, discuss the problems likely to arise and formulate an harmonious policy. Something of this nature was done before the Paris Conference, held earlier this year, but the value was lost when Australia ignored the general policy decided upon, and pursued her own course. Unanimity is not necessary and, perhaps, not even desirable, but, whatever the cost to the national sensibilities of the Dominion or Dominions involved, some form of Commonwealth harmony is essential, if all are going to work whole heartedly in the cause of peace. In these unsettled times when the world seems to be dividing into pro-American and pro-Russian factions, if the bond-

Has the
Commonwealth
suffered
enough?
Is it
flourishing?

-monwealth is to keep its identity as a separate entity, the Dominions must be prepared to sacrifice some of their independence for the good of all, and decide upon a common foreign and economic policy. This would not entail any form of Imperial Government, but merely a curtailment of the independence which could prove such a boon, or, if abused, such a curse. If the Commonwealth could achieve this - a voluntary sacrifice on the part of the components for the good of the whole - the world would have been set an example, and given a pointer towards true co-operation and lasting world peace, the like of which could not be found anywhere in all its history. By doing this, the Commonwealth would enter a period unsurpassed by any in the annals of its history, and worthy of all for which its traditions have stood throughout the centuries.

For the second time this century, the Commonwealth has given its unqualified support to an international organization set up in the hope that it will be able to preserve the peace of the world. Now the Commonwealth, together with the other members of the United Nations, is engaged in securing the organization, and trying to correct the mistakes which caused the downfall of the League of Nations. Without the support of the Commonwealth, no international organization could be successful and no world peace could be kept. This support is, of course, not being withheld. Welcoming the delegates attending the General Assembly held in London late in 1945, His Majesty the King said: '... without fear or hesitation, I pledge those for whom alone I am qualified to speak - my peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire. They have fought through two great world wars from start to finish; though hard beset they did not fail mankind in its hour of deadliest peril; they will not fail it now.' Later, Mr. Attlee declared that the United Nations 'would be the overriding factor in British foreign policy', and in this he was enthusiastically supported by the

H. M. King
George VI.

Mr. C. Attlee.

Viscount Allen
-brooke.

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whole Commonwealth. Unfortunately, however, there seems to be a tendency to regard the United Nations as a 'fully established bulwark against future war', and accordingly to think that there is no longer any need to take measures to maintain imperial security, and to formulate any policy other than that of support of this organization. But it must be realized that the United Nations is only in its infancy, and ^{that} it will, many years, during which it will have to survive many severe trials and set-backs, before it has become strong enough to warrant such complete faith. Therefore it must always be the object of the Commonwealth, to formulate such a policy as would maintain its strength and security in the post-war world, while whole-heartedly supporting, and doing nothing to hinder the progress and development of the organization. Power politics still play such an important part in the international scene that, for the time being, at least, it would only be a form of national suicide to trust in a structure unstable to such a degree.

Britain and the Dominions have been foremost amongst those nations who have shown their support of the United Nations in a practical way. They have not used the new organization as a manoeuvring ground for prejudices and intrigues, but have tried, through constructive criticism, to improve the foundations upon which it is being built. The effect of this criticism is, naturally, rather spelt if it is disagreed with by nations within the Commonwealth, but when they all support and advocate the same or a similar policy, it is far more likely to be successful. The meetings of the various bodies included in the United Nations Organization, have given many examples of Commonwealth co-operation, and the lack of it. Australia and New Zealand, for example, opposed Britain over the veto, a policy which, in view of later events, had much to be said in its favour, but, nevertheless, rather damaged the fabric of co-operation between the Mother Country and the Dominions. However, when Britain placed her League Mandates, and

F. W. Rick

Toward

in addition, her colonies, under the care of the Trusteeship Council, this policy was, ^{followed} by Australia, New Zealand and, to a lesser extent, South Africa. Thus, once again, Britain and the Dominions gave a lead to the world and, "the British Commonwealth can pride itself to be in the forefront of the progressive forces, an impression which cannot be really marred by the South African attempt to gain exclusive rights to her own mandated territory." Britain also submitted the Palestine dispute to the organization, South Africa the question of South West Africa, and New Zealand the question of the future of Samoa - actions which by their inference of good will, trust and respect, have helped to strengthen the organization. In addition, it has been the policy of the Commonwealth to reach a decision whenever possible, and, in contrast to Russia, to ~~avoid~~ ^{evade} evasive tactics, and by frank, calm, discussion, to endeavour to settle disputes and solve problems. If the United Nations survives, as is the wish and hope of all the British peoples, the Commonwealth will have played no small ^{part} in stabilizing and strengthening the whole structure, and by so doing, helping to lead the world to better times. To accomplish this, however, the Commonwealth must work in co-operation, and even if one Dominion dissents it is the duty, ^{of the remainder} to co-operate to the fullest extent, and, if possible, to win the support of the dissenter.

Today, in the sphere of international affairs, the 'Big Three' are the British Commonwealth, the United States and Russia. In their hands they hold the destiny of mankind. During the war, rivalries, ambitions and disputes were all sacrificed for the benefit of the common cause. Unfortunately, they have now been revived, and since the end of the war, mutual fear and suspicion have resulted in such a deterioration of international relationships, that the situation ^{has become increasingly grave}. Because of this Britain, supported by the Commonwealth, should make every endeavour to heal the breach between Russia, on the one hand, and the United States and herself on the other. Great

Britain is ideally situated geographically, to play this important role in world affairs. Although she feels a natural friendship with the United States, by virtue of the ties of race, tongue and form of government, her European outlook tempers that ~~extremely~~ extreme element which is found in American foreign policy, and the same thing applies with regard to her attitude to Russia. Russia, having completed her tremendous internal changes, has now emerged from her pre-war isolation to take her place in international affairs. However, this entry into the international sphere has not been marked by a policy, which by Western standards at least, would help Europe in its reconstruction. Rather, the Russians, perhaps realizing the full import of their huge manpower and material resources for the first time, have been pursuing a policy of expansion in the most blatant manner. By a process of political coercion, they have gradually built a bloc of communist countries round their western border, and these satellites are completely under Russian control. Apart altogether from the policy of expansion, which is a traditional factor in Russian foreign policy, there are the political differences between East and West - between Communism and Democracy. The Russians desire to further Communism and to this policy the opposition of the Western democracies has become very marked - so marked that the United States refused to divulge the secret of atomic power, an action which is partly responsible for all the fears and suspicions of Russia. This has resulted in a lack of co-operation which has caused the cleavage between East and West. In the face of the potential danger of Russia, the Commonwealth has a decided part to play. Bound firmly together by ties of co-operation, and not coercion, and with the moral and material support of the United States, the Commonwealth must seek to find a way in which it could have firm, but friendly, relations with the communist bloc, while constantly endeavouring to curb undue Russian expansion. Without the sup-

port of the Dominions round the council table, such a policy would be doomed to failure, and would lead only to aggravate the already stormy situation. But there is no doubt that the Dominions will support ^{Britain} in the face of such a menace to future peace, and the united Commonwealth must try to reassure Russia on the issue of atomic power, and as the link between East and West strive to reunite America and Russia. Unless it is successful in this, it may find in an expanding Russia a potential enemy of the future. 'There is only one thing which can bridge a gulf so wide and inexplicable; the power of imagination and of the comprehension that comes from imagination. Without it the problem is insoluble.' The situation in Europe, even over the last few weeks, has become such, that the outcome of the Foreign Ministers' Conference being held at present in London, is one of vital importance, and Britain is sparing no effort to bring about a satisfactory settlement. In this she is strongly supported by the Commonwealth. The preservation of peace depends on the ability of the Powers to co-operate, and 'to intensify this co-operation must be the first aim and purpose of British Foreign Policy.'

Arthur Bryant
 Leading Article
 in 'Spectator'

Arthur Bryant

Leading Article
 in 'Spectator'

Carl Bertrand
 Russell

Thus in a changing world, the position of the British Commonwealth is one of unparalleled importance. Within recent years science has devised such awful weapons, that another war would be fatal. Carl Bertrand Russell recently said 'We must ^{learn} to face this issue more honestly, and face the fact that it transcends all the old issues on which mankind is divided. Either we must establish a World Government in a very few years, or we perish.' The harnessing of atomic power makes this statement not a fantasy of the mind, but a stark fact, and the British Commonwealth must play a major part in making another global war impossible. The first essential is that the members of the Commonwealth must remain united, and in harmonious agreement, at all times. Then, as the only one of the Great Powers not seeking territorial aggrand

-icement and material gain as a result of victory, the united Commonwealth can work to conciliate the rival factions of East and West. In addition, it must constantly ^{strive} to strengthen the United Nations, in the difficult times ahead. Britain cannot even attempt this gigantic task, unless she has the full support of the Dominions and the Colonial Empire. Without this, her power and influence would be lessened to such an extent, that she would cease to be a Great Power. If the Dominions are going to oppose her, and pursue their own courses, they will betray, not only the British peoples, but also mankind. If the Commonwealth is to continue to be one of the great guardians of peace in the world, the Dominions must take their full share of the burden. But assured of their support, Britain may confidently lead the Commonwealth into the future. With its tremendous moral influence, ^{and} its support of democratic principles, - government by consent, free speech and tolerance - a united Commonwealth will slowly gather round it a band of friends, working together for the common good, and proving conclusively to all nations, regardless of their size and importance that

Wordsworth.

'..... by the Soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.'

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