

"Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre."

2 Consider the importance of the years 1880-1890 in the history of the British Empire.

The guiding principles in Europe during the years 1815 to 1870 were those of nationalism and liberalism. To them it was given to repair the swordes wrought by the French Revolution and the war which followed it. By 1870, however, the States of Europe had achieved nationality and in most cases some kind of constitutional government, and nationalism and liberalism developed, as a natural result, into the imperialism and socialism which have formed the 20th century. The European countries, having settled their home affairs, began to look abroad for colonies, and the result was the great colonizing activity of the years 1880 to 1900. England had already as many colonies as she could well manage and was loath to extend her territory, but she was forced into the scramble by the competition of the other powers and by the danger which this caused to her lands across the seas. So it happened that in Africa during this time she gained 3,500,000 sq. miles of land, three times as much as the entire German Empire, and a larger tract of land than that gained by any other power except France whose Empire was partly desert. The country thus gained was inhabited by backward peoples and so presented entirely different problems from those arising in the other parts of our Empire.

This departure was therefore doubly important:

This extension of territory did not mark the whole of the imperialist movement in England, it was characterised also by a desire for greater unity among the existing colonies. Since the granting of responsible government to Canada, New Zealand and most of Australia, there had been a wide-spread belief in England that nothing could prevent the break up of the Empire. The result was a great lack of interest in it, even Disraeli, whose enthusiasm at a later date is well known, referring to them as a millstone round our necks. But this indifference faded especially after 1878, for about that time the European countries, and especially Germany, adopted a Protectionist policy and England was thrown back on her colonies for trading purposes. Three suggestions for increasing the unity of the Empire were made but the first, Imperial Union, was hardly practicable. It would have meant that the Colonial Parliaments would become subordinate to the Imperial Parliament which was now impossible, and that Colonial representatives would interfere in the local affairs of Great Britain which would be very inconvenient. This scheme had little support and died out as Imperial Federation became popular.

The idea of a Federation of the Empire arose from the success of the examples set in Canada in 1867 and in Germany fourteen years later. Its increased facility of communication particularly the laying of the Atlantic cable in 1866 made it possible so during the seventies

Sir George
Parkin?

the English people had become more and more accustomed to the idea and by 1883 it was fairly wide-spread. The publication of Seeley's "Expansion of England" in that year gained many more converts and as a result the Imperial Federation League was set up in 1884. This society made use chiefly of propaganda, and in 1890 Sir Charles Dilke was sent on a tour to the various colonies to excite some enthusiasm there. He found, however, that they favoured an alliance or closer co-operation rather than federation, and this being so, the ultimate failure of the scheme was certain although it was not absolutely abandoned until 1917.

Co-operation had also been suggested as a means of increasing unity, and the question arose as to whether consultation should be carried on between the governments of the colonies direct or through intermediaries such as High Commissioners, Residents and the like. But while this was being considered France and Germany were gaining territory in Africa and pushing into the Pacific until they came perilously near to Australia. Since no agreement was likely to be made for some time, the Imperial Federation League suggested that a conference should be summoned in 1887 to consider some of the most pressing questions relating to the Empire. This conference was not formal and had no constitution, it consisted only of men from the governments of the colonies who had come to England for the Queen's jubilee, but interesting discussions were carried on about

various matters such as trade, defence and the Pacific Cable. This was an exceedingly important event, the example was followed in 1897 at the Second Jubilee and in 1902 at the Coronation of King Edward, and a special conference was called at Ottawa in 1894 to consider peace issues only. As it were by chance the only possible way of advantageous co-operation was found and the beginning of the wonderful system which now unites the Empire came within the ten years 1880 to 1890.

It would be well now to consider in greater detail the extension of our territory. The greatest expansion was in Africa, for with some islands in the Pacific and the American continent which was barred by the Monroe doctrine, this was the only land as yet free from European domination. A survey falls easily into three parts, Egypt, British East Africa and Nigeria which were conquered because of the competition of other countries, and Rhodesia, an extension of the older colony in the Cape.

At the beginning of our period Egypt was governed with the advice of the Dual Control which was established in 1878. In 1881 a rebellion under Arabi Bey broke out. He forced the Khedive Ismail to put the government into his hands but was met by a protest from the English and French in 1882. Shortly afterwards France withdrew, owing to the downfall of Gambetta, and England was left to suppress the rising. Arabi Bey was defeated at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir in

1882 with the result that the Dual Control ceased and British occupation of Egypt was begun. It was intended to continue only for a short period until, as Lord Dufferin said, we could teach the Egyptians to govern themselves, but it was found that to abandon Egypt would be difficult, and year after year the occupation went on. In spite of the delicate position of the British officials, who were nominally only advisers to the Egyptian government, useful reforms, such as the reorganisation of the army, were carried out and Egypt generally has prospered.

In the same year 1882 there was a revolt in the Sudan under El Mahdi who gained several successes which greatly increased the strength of his following. The English were unable to defeat him and it was decided to withdraw from the Sudan. The man chosen by Gladstone's government was General Gordon whose good qualities were many, but who was inclined to change his views and to disregard his orders. He decided on his arrival in the Sudan to hold it against the Mahdists, but to do this he needed help from England which arrived just two days too late to prevent his death and the fall of Khartoum. The Sudan was then abandoned but the Khafia, the Mahdi's successor was continually giving trouble to Egypt and at length in 1899 he was defeated and the country subdued by Kitchener.

The region inland from the island of Zanzibar was under the Sultan of that country but both England and Germany had influence

there. In 1886 the Society for German Colonisation obtained from the German Emperor a charter of protection over a large part of the Sultan's mainland territory. England was alarmed and in 1886 an agreement was made with Germany defining the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar and recognizing that a certain tract of land was under the British sphere of influence. In the following year the British East Africa Association was formed and a grant of land given to it. This association became in 1888 the British East Africa Company which began to settle the land which it had gained. Trouble arose with Germany over the boundary between this colony and German East Africa but in 1890 an agreement was made. The limits of the colonies was finally settled, Heligoland ceded to Germany and in return our protectorate over Zanzibar and Pemba was recognized.

The other most important gain during this period was British Nigeria. In 1884 the National African Company had bought out two French commercial companies on the Lower Niger. In the following year an agreement was made with Germany defining the British sphere of influence and in 1890 the boundary between this land and the Cameroons was settled. In 1886 the Company received the royal charter and became the Royal Niger Company. It did much good work in ^{the} district by developing new markets and preparing the way for direct imperial control. In all it added 350,000 sq. miles, a tenth of the British gains in Africa, to Great Britain's

possessions. Finally the limits of Nigeria were settled by an agreement with the French defining the northern ^{boundary} limit. This was signed in 1890.

Among these gains we must mention also the British Somaliland ~~proctor~~ protectorate, which was set up in 1884 and is governed by India.

The expansion into Rhodesia originated from the Cape, and in fact from one man there, Cecil Rhodes. During the early eighties the Boers from the Transvaal were again trekking north, south and west. They formed in Zululand the new Republic which was recognized by Great Britain in 1886 and incorporated in the Transvaal two years later. In Bechuanaland also they established the Republics of Stellaland and Land of Goshen. But Rhodes did not wish to allow this and Sir Charles Warren was sent out in 1884 to defeat the Boers. The republics were then dissolved and in 1885 South Bechuanaland became a Crown Colony. It was finally annexed to the Cape in 1898. At the same time, in 1885, a protectorate was declared over the remainder of the land.

Rhodes wished to close Matabeleland to the Boers, and accordingly in 1888 he concluded a treaty with Lobengula which barred this country to foreign enterprise. In the following year the British South Africa Company was set up to colonise and develop the country and in 1890 pioneer expeditions went out and forts were established at Salisbury, Victoria and Charter. In the same year the Transvaal withdrew

all claim to the land north of the Limpopo.

At the same time Rhodes had concluded a treaty with the African Lakes Company which had gone bankrupt. This gave him the right of trade in that district. He then asked the Imperial Government to proclaim a protectorate over Nyasaland and to allow the Company to administer the rest of Central Africa. This was done and the Lake country prospered. In 1895, however, the Company directly took over its administration.

Barotseland also desired British protection. It had been refused and a man named Ware had bought Lewanika's dominions. With him Rhodes made a contract and the control of this territory was handed over to him.

In 1895 all the land which had thus been gained largely through the influence, wealth, and energy, of Rhodes, was united under the title of Rhodesia, a magnificent ^{tribute} ~~memorial~~ to his work for the Empire.

The same expansion of France, Germany and England took place in the Pacific. During the eighties British rule in Sarawak had been extended until most of the Sultanate of Brunei had been acquired. Both of these countries were placed under British protection in 1888. In the same year a protectorate was placed over British North Borneo which had been governed by the British North Borneo Company since 1881. In 1883 the German Colonial League agitated for the annexation of New Guinea which alarmed Australia. She protested, but Great

Britain wished at all costs to keep on good terms with Germany and as a result Germany gained most of the island and Australia only the southern parts known as Papua.

The territory thus gained by Great Britain during the period of colonial activity was large and wealthy, but the sole importance of these annexations does not lie there. It was our expansion in Africa which led to the strained relations with other countries, especially France and Germany. Imperialism may therefore be said to have shaped the course of European foreign policy during those most interesting years until the outbreak of the war. The rivalry between England and Germany as world-powers was bound one day to bring war, and it so happened that this came in 1914. Again it was the imperialistic ambitions of France and Germany in the East which led to the federation of the Australian colonies, who felt the danger to themselves by the nearness of these countries. They had been told in regard to the New Guinea question that more attention would be paid to her demands if she would unite, and the pressure from without, by giving the separate colonies with the varied differences one common interest, made this possible.

We have now dealt with the general importance of these years to the Empire. There remains to consider the most important events in each separate colony during the period.

Canada was by 1880 a strong federation and the chief interest of these years is her increased prosperity. In 1881 the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was founded, and four years later the great railway stretching across the continent was finished. The corn lands in the interior could now be made profitable and agriculture progressed in the Central Provinces. In 1887 also the Sault Ste - Marie Canal between Lakes Superior and Huron was begun, and two years later the Canadian Pacific Railway began to run steamers from Vancouver to Yokohama, cutting out much of the American trade from San Francisco. One incident in these years shows the advance made in a few years by the united colonies. A rising of half-breeds took place in the West in 1885. It was much more dangerous than that of 1870 but was put down by Canadian volunteers alone, while, fifteen years earlier British regulars had been called in to help. All these facts show the growing enterprise and prosperity of the Canadians.

As a contrast to Canada, the chief question in Australia at this time was the possibility of federation. In 1881 an Intercolonial Conference to consider the Chinese Question was called, and Henry Parkes suggested a central authority to deal with such matters. In 1885 therefore, an act passed the Imperial Parliament enabling a Federal Council to be established, but it was not to be representative of the people and

its powers were to be restricted, so Parkes opposed it and New South Wales stood aloof. Questions of defence against the European countries now began to be pressing, and in 1887 the colonies united to share the cost of hiring a small squadron from the British Admiralty. They were advised at the same time to take similar joint action in regard to their land defences. On another question, Chinese immigration further agreement was made between the colonies. These isolated events created a desire for co-operation in the colonies and a national government for Australia seemed near at hand. It was delayed by the rise of the Labour party who were against it, but in 1901 the Commonwealth of Australia at last came into being.

The year 1885 was ^{important} ~~significant~~ for a ^{significant} ~~important~~ departure. In that year the first colonial contingent of troops was sent to fight on the side of the mother country in the Sudan. The example thus given was followed, to the surprise of the European wars, in the Boer war, and to an even greater extent in the Great War of 1914 to 1918.

During this period 1880 to 1890 New Zealand was in a state of depression, but the effects of this were in some ways good, for new fields of enterprise were opened. Coal mines were more energetically worked, new manufactures were set up, and the export of frozen mutton, now so important, was begun. There was besides these remedial

measures little of interest in the country.

South Africa during this period is chiefly important because of the expansion into Rhodesia and elsewhere, but the growth of a spirit of nationality is also very interesting. This was shown by the Afrikaner Bond Congress in 1882 and in the setting up of a Bond party in Cape politics. There was also a movement towards federation, seen in the Conference of delegates from Cape Colony, Natal and the Orange [River] Free State, to discuss federation on a basis of internal free trade and a uniform tariff on imports from other countries. Nothing was done however, as the Transvaal held aloof, and in 1889 at the new Convention at Bloemfontein Natal also withdrew as she did not wish to raise her low tariff.

Opposed to this spirit of African nationality, there was the national sentiment of the Boers, particularly those in the Transvaal. The country had been annexed in 1877 because of the trouble caused there by the Zulus. After the defeat of Setlwaie in the Zulu war of 1879, however, they revolted and won back their independence by the Pretoria Convention. Soon after this the Transvaal became very important as a mining district owing to the discovery of mines at de Kaap in 1882 and of gold in Westwaternrand in 1884. The Sheba mine was also found in 1885 and the town of Johannesburg quickly sprang up. This meant that miners from all the European countries flocked into the Transvaal, which until that time had been almost

exclusively Dutch. Among these were many English. The Boers feared that their nationality would be absorbed and adopted the expedient of making five and later ten years residence a necessary qualification of voting. This proved very irritating to the immigrants, the Uitlanders as they were called, many of them being used to free institutions. It was their position which led to the Boer war and the final subjugation of the Transvaal and the Orange [River] Free State which were given self-government in 1906 and 1907 and which were included in the Union in 1910. Thus we may say that these ten years saw the making of modern Africa.

The history of India during these years is of great importance. It ceases to be merely a list of wars and becomes a story of peaceful development. The year 1881 saw the last great border fight with the Afghans and 1885 the last annexation of land to India. The Burmese government had as usual been ill-treating our merchants and on protest refused to give compensation or improvement in their methods of government. War broke out, Mandalay was occupied and Upper Burma annexed.

More important than this was the development of India's agriculture and her political experience. Most of the Indians were agriculturalists and produced only enough for the village community, but they began now to grow cotton, tea, jute and such crops for export. Irrigation schemes were also being carried out and the method of relieving famine

was finally settled in 1883. Acts in 1881, 1885, 1886 and 1887 examined the land tenures in the various parts of India revising them so as to prevent the tenants being cheated and giving them fair rents and fixed tenure in some places. By these measures the social conditions in India were bettered.

At the same time the effects of Western civilisation in India were now beginning to be felt. A new movement was growing up among the youth in the country which had as its aim ^{responsible} ~~self~~ government for India, a larger share in the administration and a protective tariff on manufactured goods to encourage Indian manufactures. Lord Ripon who was Viceroy from 1880 to 1884 was inclined to encourage these ideas. In 1883-1885 he set up district boards and subordinate bodies and extended the powers of the municipal boards. The chief work of the district boards was to be the roads but they were expected also to take an interest in education, sanitation and famine relief. The result of these bodies was not so successful as might have been wished, but they showed that England was ready to give concessions to India if she thought her ready for them. By the Ilbert Bill in 1883 Ripon tried to do away with distinctions of race in regard to criminal procedure, and gave to the native judges the power to try Europeans. A great outcry greeted this and the bill was modified. One other good piece of work was undertaken by Ripon, the taking of the first general census in 1881 which was of great interest.

because of the facts and observations made on the numerous differences in Indian sentiment and so on. Lord Dufferin, Lord Ripon's successor as Viceroy, carried on his traditions. He it was who saw the setting up of the first National Congress in 1885 and who encouraged it in its work. This body met annually to discuss social reform and even more vital questions. It grew to share a share in the administration but never proposed any practical reform. The importance of these years 1880 to 1890 which first inaugurated the gradual development of India in the way of self-government can easily be realised.

It is in England that the socialism which characterised the end of the nineteenth century is chiefly found during this period. The Socialist doctrines affected all the Empire, and Australia and New Zealand are the most up-to-date countries in this respect, but this development did not come to them until the nineties whereas it is clearly seen in England ten years before.

The beginning of the definite Socialist movement is traced to Mr Henry George who advocated in his book "Progress and Poverty" the progressive taxation of land values as a remedy for private ownership of land. This was in 1880. One year later Hyndman founded the Social Democratic Federation which followed closely on the doctrine of Karl Marx that capital will concentrate till it is in the hands of a very few, and that the conditions of the employed will grow worse until there

will come a Revolution to change everything working for the same end but with vastly different means was the Fabian Society founded in 1883. The Fabians desired to collect information and by pamphlets and speeches to permeate the government with their views. Their Socialist state was to be accomplished by Constitutional means. Just within the eighties there came also the beginning of the Independent Labour Party formed of the Fabian Socialists and the Trade Unionists who realised that only Parliamentary action was now possible ~~with~~ since the entry of unskilled labourers into the Unions. The result was that two Labour members entered Parliament in 1892 and the Party is now exceedingly important.

But the influences which went to form Socialism were felt, in a less definite way perhaps, in all the work of Parliament. They can be perceived ⁱⁿ the small reforms of Gladstone's second ministry, in his great work for Ireland by the Land Act of 1881, above all in the Third Reform Bill three years later and in his concession to Irish sentiment which led him to introduce his First Home Rule Bill of 1885. In the Imperialist ministry of Salisbury from 1886-1892 this was even more apparent, for he was definitely influenced by Chamberlain and the Radicals and many parts of the unauthorised programme were carried through under his auspices. The famous saying of Sir William Harcourt "we are all Socialists now" is very true in the wide sense that no

one was exempt from the desire to better the condition of the lower classes.

It would not be too much to say that no decade in the history of the British Empire has been of greater importance than this one 1880 to 1890. In the internal affairs of the Empire as a whole, in its relations with foreign countries, and in each separate colony within it, great principles were working, the principles which have formed for us the wonderful Sisterhood of States which we know as the British Commonwealth of Nations.

"Laut went à paout à guisant attendre."