

1st Subject

The Royal Empire Society Essay

Jeanette Fire

5th Oxford

North Hackney Commercial Secondary School

Class B.

"Britain is not the only country in the Commonwealth which has dependencies. Which of the Dominions have colonies, protectorates or mandates to look after, and what problems do these involve?"

19

Introduction

"Lord make the Nations see"
That men should Brothers be
And form one family
The Wide World O'er"

When these sage words were written, it is possible that their writer had one particular family in mind,

"The British Commonwealth of Nations," which is in itself an example to all nations who are sceptical of the idea that it is possible for a number of nations to work harmoniously together for social and economic progress.

In the Peace Conference of Paris 1919, each of the Dominions had placed under its care various "Mandates" and "Protectorates" to guide and protect, just as they themselves had been guided and protected in their "infancy". Of these Mandates there were three kinds: "A" Mandates: These were granted in respect of Turkish territory in which ^{the} people were almost ready for self-government. "B" Mandates: These concerned territory, chiefly in Africa, where the people were in a backward state of civilization and could not govern themselves. "C" Mandates: These were granted in respect of isolated territories such as the Pacific Islands, or very undeveloped territory, such as the former German South-West Africa, where it seemed desirable that the mandatory power should assume fuller control governing the lands as part of their own.

Each Dominion, that has one or more mandates and/or protectorates, fully realizes that its task, which is to make the country fit for habitation, to develop its trade and natural resources and to educate its people towards self-government, for the future benefit of their country

is a hazardous one.

In the case of the "C" Mandates or Protectorates the administrative task becomes far more difficult. For the only type of territory which is allowed in the "C" class, is the type which is so backward that self-government would not be possible until many years had passed. Indeed the administrators may meet with hostility, for not only may the natives not understand civilised procedure, but also they may not like it. Therefore it is absolutely imperative that the mandatory power which has to govern a "C" mandate is allowed to assume complete control of it and to govern the lands as part of its own.

At this juncture it is necessary to stop and note which of the Dominions has Mandates or Protectorates, to note which category they are in and to discover the problems which these mandates involve and to see how the Dominions are tackling the problems which confront them.

Australia

The Australian Government had placed under its care New Guinea, Papua is not included but for the time both territories are controlled by one administration.

The "Sydney Morning Herald" 9/2/46 announced that Australia was proceeding to place the former Mandated Territory of New Guinea under ^{the} International Trusteeship system established by the United Nations.

What type of commitment is the International Trusteeship Association undertaking? Commenting upon it Professor Isles L. Professor of Economics of Adelaide, now with Belfast University, bluntly announced "It has not yet been decided by the Australian Government whether policy in New Guinea will be - a place whose full resources are to be exploited in the interest of Whites by White Private Enterprise or as a place in which the development of Native Health, Education and Welfare is the over-riding consideration."

estimated at

Statistics show the lack of development in New Guinea is indeed great. e.g. New Guinea has only 5 doctors amongst a population of ^{but} 1,500,000 which may prove nearer 2 million. Further evidence of conditions of New Guinea, is the report of Miss Camilla Wedgewood an anthropologist, which stated that the "stamina of New Guinea natives is poor and the incidence of disease high". Statistics again show that at one clinic, of 92 deaths 18 were of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 19 of Lobar Pneumonia & 12 of Tropical Ulcer. Other diseases such as Dysentery, Malaria and Ankylostomiasis were the causes of the other deaths. Ankylostomiasis (hook-worm) is very much prevalent among native populations.

However disease is not the only problem with which the new administrators have to deal. Native Employment is another. Under the Papua-New Guinea Act, gazetted on November 29, 1945: Main Provisions were this: that all native employment must be recorded; no person under age must be employed; no contract must exceed one year; the minimum wage for men must not be less than 15/- per month with no more than 44 hours per week (in comparison with 5/- per week pre-war). All daily food must be given to the employees free of charge. The wife of the employee and all of his children under 16 years must also be given free food during the term of employment. After cessation of the term of employment the employee must return to his village and continue with normal village life for at least 3 months and when wishing to commence further employment must register again with the employment officer before leaving his village. This method prevents the exploitation of native labour over a period of years by unscrupulous white plantation-owners. It also insures that the native will have some experience of communal village-life.

New Guinea is ruled by a Provisional Administrator with one Supreme Court and one Public Service Association.

In its present condition, New Guinea is not

very attractive to white settlers. However if the white administrators and settlers can overcome their hardships in this country, it will be well worth their while, for New Guinea can grow and produce, Tea, Coffee and Cocoa (and these have world-wide markets). Also, if in a few years time Australia could waive aside her all-white policy for a year or so, it might be possible to bring to her medical colleges, special bands of prospective Guinean medical students, who could then return to their country and assist in the war against disease. (It is obvious that 5 doctors for the whole of the country are quite inadequate if New Guinea is to become a healthy country).

Let us hope that with wise planning and wise statesmanship New Guinea will become a healthy progressive country of which Australians will proudly say "New Guinea was once our mandate".

New Zealand

The government of New Zealand had placed under its care on December 17th 1920 from the League of Nations, Western Samoa (formerly a German possession). Actually until 1860 it was ruled by Tribal Chiefs, then from 1860-1889 it was ruled by chiefs directed by British, American and German Consuls. In 1889 it was governed indirectly by Britain, America and Germany. From 1889-1914 Western Samoa was a German Colony, Eastern Samoa American Territory. In 1920 W Samoa came under the rule of New Zealand. Although the Americans still rule Eastern Samoa, it is to be noticed that the Samoans themselves wish New Zealand to obtain full right of ruling the whole of Samoa. This mandate also includes the small islands of Apolima, Manono, Fanning, Namua, Nukunono and Nukunono.

It is perhaps as well to note that not all the population of Western Samoa is native although these do form a greater part of it. In 1943 March the population was: Europeans 280, part Europeans 3,027, Natives 60,957, Chinese labourers 320, other Chinese 10 and Melanesians 77, making a total of 64,661. Therefore it can be observed

that the people that the New Zealanders govern are a very varied group.

One of the problems to be dealt with is disease e.g. Yaws Ankylostomiasis (hook-worm) and Filariasis, Bacillary and Dysentery, is epidemic. To combat disease, New Zealand sends the Islands, Medical Units.

The islands are mountainous and well watered and the volcanic soils are very fertile. Copra and Cocoa are grown there. Steamers collect the products regularly at Apia in Upolu, and attempts are being made to grow Cotton and Bananas.

The natives are advanced enough to elect a council to advise the administrator about native affairs. And when the time comes for Western Samoa to continue without the guidance of New Zealand, I am sure New Zealanders will feel justly proud of the progress that their protégée is bound to have made.

South Africa

South Africa has placed under her care both mandates and protectorates, the Mandated Territory being South-West Africa, and the protectorates being Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland.

Firstly let me commence with Basutoland. It is a purely native country it has a population of 550,000. The Basutos are farmers who grow wheat and maize and raise flocks of sheep and goats. They export Wool and Mohair, Wheat and Maize. It looks a very pleasant country, but its inhabitants are forced to live on Mountain tops because of heavy rainfall and over grazed and ploughed soil has ruined the ground by increased production.

Bechuanaland, which includes the Kalahari Desert has its cattle is menaced by drought and disease. As the rainfall is too meagre for crops, it is essentially a cattle and sheep rearing country, and there it exports. As disease often runs rife among the cattle it is not unusual to see an embargo placed upon it e.g. in the case of foot and mouth disease. It has a

population of 155,000 which includes less than 2,000 Europeans. The Protectorate is under the direction of the High Commissioner for South Africa. The Resident Commissioner has his headquarters at Mafeking.

Swaziland is inhabited by the Bantu negroes. It is highest in the west, then comes a rich low veldt and then the eastern lowlands about 600 feet above sea-level, the latter is covered with bush, but are deficient in rainfall and consequently are very unhealthy. A dangerously capricious rainfall in her low rich veldt causes Malaria. Transport is also a problem here for there is no railway and the country is reached by motor-car. If rail-transport were available its exports (e.g. Maize, Tobacco, Cotton, Tin, Cattle and Hides) could be increased. And also the highland Goldfield and lowland Coalfield deposits could be developed.

South-West Africa was formerly a German colony. It has a population of 275,000 Europeans forming more than one tenth. In the north of the territory the natives are farmers. In the south sheeps and goats are grazed, but further north the grasses support cattle. Both East and West is Desert land. Only in the northern parts is rainfall adequate for cultivation. It has diamond and copper mines, and these form principal exports.

To make these protectorates become a suitable place to work and live in, much has to be done. Natives must be given modern equipment to farm their land, Scientists must find ways of irrigating the desert-like areas. Transport difficulties must also be overcome.

There is also a way in which youth can help. A Colonial Service has been formed, which comprises of well-educated young men who are eager to perform difficult duties and with a view to working in the protectorates.

Canada

Canada also has similar problems to the other Dominions in the governing of the Northwest Territories. This land is neither a protectorate nor a mandate of

Canada, but it is a responsibility with a small population of native peoples. It is governed by a Council appointed from outside headed by a Commissioner. This Council attends to municipal and minor administrations of justice, and is responsible to the Government at Ottawa. Its problems are, how to develop medical units in outlandish areas, and how to educate its far flung communities, many of which include native Indians and Eskimos. Transportation has become less difficult with the introduction of Aeroplanes, but still much has to be done about road transport. Its products are Timber, Fur and Fish.

It can be observed therefore that young people who wish to play a part in the progress of the Commonwealth, have many and varied tasks awaiting them in these mandates and protectorates. Certainly with hard work and unceasing effort, the Commonwealth will become a worthy place of which people will be proud to acknowledge their membership. Only then will the toilers rest, knowing they have fulfilled. Both's Prayer at Versailles Conference. That:

"God's Justice will be meted out to every nation under this new sun."

I cannot conclude without thanking the staffs of Australia House, New Zealand House, Canada House and South Africa House, for their most friendly advice and generous assistance.

NORTH HACKNEY CENTRAL SCHOOL
A SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS,
MILLFIELDS ROAD, CLAPTON, E.5.