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~~COMMENDED~~
Empire Essay Competition (Bristol Branch) - April, 1949.

Motto :-

"Knowledge is Power" stated - but the

same of his fundamental
facts are erroneous
general effect is sound

Subject of Essay. CLASS A. Though I suspect that there
are a good many unacknowledged quotations.

"Citizenship and nationality in the
Commonwealth as it affects my country" I would
not put it more than B++

Summary

MARGARET BEST
PRIZE

Introduction : a survey of the present
situation in relation to the history of the Commonwealth.

The inherent principle of the British
Colonial system in relevance to the present situation
in the Commonwealth.

Citizenship and nationality as the logical
outcome of this principle.

Problem of India ; how can a republic
remain within the Commonwealth?

The beneficial effect of Citizenship and Nationality
upon the relations between the Dominions
and the United Kingdom.

The material advantages of the Commonwealth.

The spiritual and social advantages of
Citizenship and Nationality in the
Commonwealth as they affect Great Britain.

The symbolic significance of the
Commonwealth ; its principles and its
values

Conclusion ; Citizenship and Nationality
may have made an ostensible difference
to the Commonwealth but inherently, its
position is the same, even strengthened.

ESSAY

Whilst I write, the eyes of the whole world are apprehensively focused upon the London conference of Commonwealth Prime ministers. This meeting has assumed momentous importance, and rightly so, for the subject under discussion is the Commonwealth, and those decisions which are reached, will have far-reaching consequences. The nineteenth century witnessed a prodigious development in the formation of the British Empire; wide expanses of land were won and civilization began its inevitable development; in the face of French, Russian and German rivalry, the British Empire became the greatest imperial institution of the world, both in size and in principle. But now, in this modern era, a new imperial situation has dawned and the interests of multitudinous peoples are in jeopardy; and there is a pronounced need for enlightened statesmanship, toleration and sympathy.

There is no life without growth, and the story of the Commonwealth and an explanation of the contemporary situation derive from their gradual evolution up to the present day. The nineteenth century was an age of imperial progress; the present century is an age of adaptation to that imperial progressiveness.

Lugot once said that the Colonies were fruit, which, when mature, fell from the tree which had nurtured them; this analogy is better understood as the principle of "Trusteeship", a conception which is the only gospel of salvation for Empire. Public prestige and the appeal of a lucrative source of private profit are not the tenets of the British Imperial system; "aggressive imperialism" and "exploitation" are ugly words, in no way applicable to the Commonwealth system. We have departed from that faith of Rhodes and of Kipling in the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon; the principle of "Trusteeship" is one by which relatively backward peoples are placed in a state of Colonial Tutelage, until, by a gradual process of evolution they are emancipated and granted the privileges of adulthood.

This is the principle of the British Colonial system which explains to a large extent, the desire for citizenship and nationality in the Commonwealth today. The British Colonial Empire has always been a living and developing organization progressing towards emancipation and nationhood; the position of the Colonies as potential nations has never been overlooked and it was the Statute of Westminster in 1931 which adumbrated the contemporary situation in the Commonwealth.

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the status of the Dominions was defined as :-

"Equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any respect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

So the Statute of Westminster defined the Commonwealth but during the last twelve months, momentous events have occurred which render that

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document ineffectual. Throughout the Dominions of India, Eire, Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon and Pakistan, Citizenship and Nationality Bills have become law; Dominion status was not enough and after the second world war, the Dominions wished in a vague sort of way for independence - maybe this desire is better explained by the psychologist rather than the politician but suffice it to say that the Dominions wished to be independent without at all breaking the structure of the Commonwealth.

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An ambiguous situation has been reached; on the 18th of April this year, Eire became an independent sovereign state; by international law she comes a foreign state but by mutual wish, Eire does not want to break those strong traditional ties between herself and the United Kingdom. There is a similar situation in India and Mr. Pandit

neither is the protagonist in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference; India has repudiated her allegiance to the Crown which is the symbol of unity throughout the Commonwealth. How can her desire to remain within the great structure of the Commonwealth be reconciled to her legal, international status of a Republic? This is the difficult question which must be answered if the Commonwealth is to survive; this is the momentous problem which must be solved if the prospect of world peace is to be ~~so~~ strengthened.

The desire for citizenship and nationality in the Dominions has been satisfied but, paradoxically enough, this newly-won independence should tend rather to strengthen than weaken the ties between the Dominions and the United Kingdom. Nations, like human beings, are unpredictable, and that sense of freedom which India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Kiribati now enjoy will surely incline them to ~~voluntarily~~ associate in an enthusiastic and voluntary spirit with the United Kingdom. There has been no question of animosity between the Dominions during these momentous changes; the British Nationality Bill of July, 1948, by which a subject became primarily responsible to his individual nation and then responsible to the King and Britain, was stated by

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Mr. Ede, the Home Secretary, to conform to the new conception of each part of the Commonwealth, including this country, having a separate citizenship, the sum of the citizens making up the family of British subjects or Commonwealth citizens. Far from antagonism, there has been much sympathy and understanding between the Dominions and the United Kingdom and although there is always the extremist view, almost every member of the Commonwealth is anxious that ways and means ^{should} will be found by which the ancient and historic association of Commonwealth lands can be widened and strengthened.

The Citizenship and Nationality Bills that have been passed by the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australian Parliaments establish the principle of national citizenship whilst retaining for the members of that particular Dominion the British citizenship common to all members of the British Commonwealth. These Bills have in no wise weakened Empire ties, but are the logical development of the Statute of Westminster; they are the manifestation of a strong, healthy and progressive Commonwealth, despite the fact that certain legal clauses have been rendered null and void. But the dominant problem concerns the status of India, Burma and Kiel, now all independent republics along with the other Asian Dominions, Pakistan and Ceylon;

how can these countries remain within the sacred precincts of the Commonwealth whose members, by dint of the Statute of Westminster, are "united by a common allegiance to the Crown"?

General Smuts has recently stated the one obvious view: - "There is no middle course between the Crown and a Republic; you are either in or out." This is quite a reasonable and justifiable statement but there is a world-wide desire that the Commonwealth should survive and preserve its material and moral advantages. India's attitude to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth is essentially friendly; there is no vindictiveness for past grievances, but a vague though widespread desire for association. Should anyone, in an age suffering from the ravages of past wars and the fears of imminent wars, ignore the wish of a country to perpetuate world peace and fraternity between men. There is a refreshing spirit of camaraderie and enthusiasm for a new conception of the Commonwealth by which India can remain a member, even if she becomes a Republic. It is with a feeling of thankfulness and relief we can note that at a late-night meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in the Cabinet Room, in Downing Street on Wednesday, the 27th. of April, nineteenth hundred and forty-eight, this conception was decided in principle.

and that India will continue to be, to all intents and purposes, a member of the Commonwealth. This will involve the promulgation of a new legal formula which, whatever form it takes, will symbolize the extension of the bounds of democratic freedom, a principle which reflects the spirit and steadfast purpose of the Commonwealth.

India has recognized the Crown as the "symbol" of the Commonwealth; the King is the expression of a great spirit of unity, he is a tradition which binds together diverse peoples and a cohesive force in a world split by dissension and controversy; that the Commonwealth is to survive and flourish in its newly found position is a great triumph for world peace and democracy. The fact that the three Asian Dominions are taking part in the Commonwealth as free members augurs well for the future; the extremists are in a minority and there is an influential sect in Pakistan who are ready enough to continue acknowledging the titular sovereignty of the King if it can be shown that there are practical advantages by doing so.

There has been no desire on the part of Great Britain to deny freedom to subject nations; the inculcation of democratic principles will prove to be a strong basis of fraternity between the Dominions

whatever ^{the} outward form they assume by dint of
Treaty or legislation. Democratic ties and the potent
force of tradition will never allow the Commonwealth
to fall from the tissue of our history; the Commonwealth's
approval of the Western Union illustrates the desire
to establish world peace on a democratic basis.
The Commonwealth is a family of one people who
believe in the same principles of Democracy and
as such, the revolutionary changes that are happening
within its structure cannot fail to affect Great
Britain.

How does citizenship and nationality in
the Commonwealth affect Great Britain? It has
already been stated that the Commonwealth is one of
the few guarantees of world peace; a safeguard
against the danger of international animosity
precipitating the world into a war, and as such a
salutary institution in the Commonwealth situation
decidedly affects Great Britain. But what of the
material advantages of membership of the Commonwealth?

The Commonwealth involves security of defence,
supply of vital commodities and is a vital
bulwark against the danger of Communism. Great
Britain is recuperating from the rigours of an
exhaustive war and it is largely dependent on
the generosity of the Dominions, especially Canada,

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because of her dollar resources, whether this country rapidly recovers. Despite the recent movements of citizenship and Nationality, the attitude of the Dominions has in no wise changed from the time when they helped during the world war although their entrance was not obligatory. The conception of the British Empire in former days as a family has stood us in good stead; aggressive imperialism was not a tenet of the British system but rather the policy of "live and let live". There is a great spirit of friendliness and goodwill in the Commonwealth, and tradition exerts a considerable influence on the Dominions. The Commonwealth would serve as an ideal criterion ^{for} a world colonial court ensuring international peace and goodwill in an age when those qualities seem recardite if not non-existent.

The Commonwealth represents liberty, freedom and justice; it is a stronghold of democracy which has been strengthened rather than weakened by the new Citizenship and Nationality Bills, for these are manifestations of a belief in liberty and an enlightened co-operation between sister nations. Thus, whatever constitutional changes are made, the material advantages of the Commonwealth such as

preferential tariffs and mutual aid, will not be discontinued and Britain will still benefit considerably from the generosity and goodwill of the sister Dominions.

The position of citizenship and nationality existing within the Commonwealth structure is better explained by the inherent attitude towards the union of the Dominions; the whole system of the Commonwealth is based upon the assumption that Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the other dominions which have achieved emancipation after civilization has wrought its transformations, are each free to develop a nationalism of their own as distinct from English nationalism. The Commonwealth is the greatest institution for enabling men to realize the duty of governing themselves and Great Britain has played the indulgent rôle of piloting nations in their infancy through the turbulent waters of adolescence until a state is attained, warranting independence and liberty, as a right to challenge. This is the splendid system of the Commonwealth which is in fact one large family. The analogy is astounding; in their infancy, the colonies are weaned with the life-giving milk of the mother country; they are guided through the troubles and tribulations of immaturity by a kind and sympathetic parent; they are initiated into the

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system of ~~personal~~ responsibility and independence; then, when maturity is reached, the colonies achieve ~~the~~ Dominion status and are free to enjoy the privileges of adulthood. This is the inherent policy of the Commonwealth which, like the family, is a sacred institution.

The Commonwealth is a great, unified family and like human children, the colonies, having attained Dominion status, never forget their filial obligation, gratitude and love towards the mother country. This may appear grandiose ideology but it is the very essence of the Commonwealth and it must be realized, if these contemporary movements for Citizenship and nationality are to be reconciled with a strong and united Commonwealth. Citizenship and nationality in the Dominions are manifestations of a healthy, communal life and their repercussions will be by no means, detrimental ~~of~~ to the United Kingdom.

The national instinct is undoubtedly healthy and beneficial. National characteristics will exist within an international framework and the manners and institutions ^{customs} within the Commonwealth will have a refreshing diversity. Independence is the parent of progress and vitality, but the Dominions

will never forget their social obligations. The inevitable interchange of officials, students, ideas and accomplishments cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on this country. Such co-operation and friendliness will overcome the disadvantages of our insularity and exert a considerable influence upon all political, social and economic spheres.

Since the constitutional changes of the Statute of Westminster, there have been frequent conferences and meetings of Commonwealth representatives in order to adapt the status of the Commonwealth to the changing position of the Dominions. This is characteristic of the unfailing co-operation which exists within the structure of the Commonwealth and an example of men ardently wishing to live in amity and concord throughout their lives.

Thus, citizenship and Nationality within the Commonwealth is beneficial to humanity in general. The consequence of these new forces is an intense individuality and healthy rivalry between the sister Dominions which through personal contacts and sympathies, reciprocal citizenship arrangements and interchange of executives, will considerably affect Great Britain in material advantages and make a substantial contribution to world peace.

Such are the effects of citizenship and nationality upon my country. We have passed through troubled times and it is of great importance that the problem of India has been solved. There has been a unanimous demand to preserve the structure of the Commonwealth and although it at first, seemed impossible to reconcile India's status as an independent sovereign republic with the clauses of the Statute of Westminster. The fact that the Commonwealth Prime ministers have evolved a new "formula" by which India can remain within a great union of nations is of tremendous symbolic significance; the desire to preserve the Commonwealth intact is the origin of world peace and it is perhaps fitting that the British Commonwealth should sow the seeds of a peace which alone can obviate the obliteration of mankind.

Prejudice and vindictiveness does not exist within the Commonwealth; the disreputable past is forgotten and the splendid years of past achievement shine forth amongst the annals of history. The Commonwealth represents liberty, freedom and justice, citizenship and nationality may have an ostensible difference to the legal status of the Commonwealth, but essentially, in principles and

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spiritual values, the Commonwealth is the same.

The Commonwealth is something more than a paper constitution; it is a family and the wide ambit it covers represents the common interests of diverse peoples. The Commonwealth, besides its material benefits, is constituted by something of much greater value; it is a foundation of world peace in an age which is darkened by the lugubrious shadows of imminent conflict. The Empire is essentially an aspiration, unveiling the prospect of a Golden Age when all men may live together in a state of progress, peace and prosperity, speaking the same mental and spiritual language.

The outward form the Commonwealth assumes is irrelevant for the Commonwealth is a transcendent example of international co-operation, of liberty in a world threatened by insidious forces and philosophies, of guarantees of peace, fraternity and concord amongst men. These are those bonds which Burke described as "light as air, strong as iron" which will always constitute the essential spirit of the Commonwealth.

Bibliography.

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As the subject is such a contemporary one,
frequent use of periodicals and journals has been made.
