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EDUCATION AND IMPERIAL UNITY

EDUCATION AND IMPERIAL UNITY, 1901-1926

by

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ABSTRACT

Under the influence of mounting foreign competition in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, many Britons sought to bolster England's world position by reinforcing the unity of the Empire. For the most part their efforts were channelled into an attempt to construct a formal political union or federation of Britain's overseas dominions. However, when the so-called Imperial Federation Movement failed to produce a viable constitutional solution to the problem of unity a number of people began to search for an alternative, non-political approach. In this connection a campaign was mounted during the first two decades of the twentieth century that came to emphasize the informal, spiritual ties which supposedly bound the Empire together.

This faith in the existence and strength of the intangible, moral bonds of Empire was nothing new but can be traced at least as far back as the days of Edmund Burke. But the Edwardians were the first to make a systematic effort to promote and mobilize imperial sentiment at home and abroad. Leadership in this field fell to three London-based imperial societies, the League of the Empire, the Victoria League, and the Royal Colonial Institute. The vehicle which

they selected to bring their message to the public was education. Indeed the slogan of what came to be known as the "Imperial Studies Movement", was "Education and the Empire".

The campaign for imperial education was an offshoot of the imperial federation movement but it was also inspired by the development of a contemporaneous effort to reform England's educational system, which, in turn, was directly related to the growth of concern with national efficiency. As a result of its varied origins the Imperial Studies campaign tended to be somewhat fragmented and its priorities were often unclear. Consequently it appears to have had very little impact on the general public. Nevertheless, the campaign was not without significance. Many of its most important leaders, such as Sir Charles Lucas, Hugh Egerton, and Arthur Newton, were historians keenly interested in developing imperial history as a scholarly discipline. These men, whose ideas were deeply affected by the circumstances which led to the growth of the Imperial Studies campaign, helped to lay the foundations of the traditional school of imperial historiography whose influence, although waning, is still noticeable today. Moreover, beyond this purely professional consideration, the campaign on behalf of imperial education is worthy of note because it displayed in microcosm many of the flaws which inhibited

the effectiveness of Edwardian imperialism as a whole.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>C.M.B.</u>	Council Minute Book of the R.C.I.
<u>Fed. Mag.</u>	Federal Magazine (Journal of the L. of E.)
I.F.L.	Imperial Federation League
<u>I.S.C.M.B.</u>	Imperial Studies Committee Minute Book of the R.C.I.
<u>L.C.M.B.</u>	Lectures Committee Minute Book of the R.C.I.
L. of E.	League of the Empire
<u>L.S.C.M.B.</u>	Lectures Sub-Committee Minute Book of the R.C.I.
N.U.T.	National Union of Teachers
R.C.I.	Royal Colonial Institute
<u>U.E.</u>	United Empire (Journal of the R.C.I.)
V.L.	Victoria League
<u>V.L.M.N.</u>	Victoria League Monthly Notes (Journal of the V.L.)
<u>W.B.E.S.</u>	Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study
W.E.A.	Workers' Educational Association

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century it was coming to be widely held that the future of the British Empire was vitally and directly related to educational modernization. The timing of this development was determined by the growth of a concatenation of economic, imperial, and domestic problems which, gaining momentum throughout the late Victorian era, came to a head and produced a sense of urgency in the Edwardian period. Foreign economic and commercial competition, mounting international tension, the transition to full democracy on the domestic front, and the rise of colonial nationalism in the overseas Empire, all these contributed to the atmosphere of anxiety which characterized the years before 1914. These factors helped to create interest in the seemingly unrelated movements on behalf of the closer political union of the Empire and the reform of the British educational system. However, these same factors served to draw attention to the relationship between the two movements and as the period wore on it became quite common for men to speak of educational reform and imperial survival in the same breath. Imperialists of many shades of opinion, politicians of both major parties, scholars from various disciplines and professional educators came to recognize a broad area of common concern and mutual interest.

In the past there had been those who had drawn a similar connection between educational and imperial regeneration. Indeed, it is interesting to note how many late Victorians, such as Sir John Seeley, W. E. Forster, Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Cecil Rhodes, to name a few, combined an interest in education with a strong commitment to the project of imperial federation. But it was only after 1900 that the complex connection between education and the Empire began to attract attention on a large scale. It was then that the phrase "Education and Empire" became something of a catchword and assumed the status of a recognizable slogan.¹

Like any slogan it attracted and embraced a wide range of followers who were often inspired by differing motivations or accepted differing priorities and consequently worked toward related but varying goals while employing a diversity of methods. In a general sense, however, it is possible to isolate two major strains of thought on the purpose of harnessing education and the Empire in tandem. Many contemporaries appear to have been concerned primarily with the question of national and imperial efficiency. Accordingly, educational modernisation was often viewed as part of a general revamping of the fabric of the nation and the Empire made necessary by the rise of foreign competition on the world stage. Thus the elderly scientist Sir Norman Lockyer could speak of the

growing significance of "brain-power" in much the same fashion as Alfred T. Mahan had once discussed the overriding importance of "sea-power" as the keystone of national and imperial preeminence.² Those historians who have studied educational institutions and ideas, and the few imperial historians who have noted the interaction of educational reform and imperialism have by and large confined their attention to this question of efficiency.³ Investigations of this sort have generally tended to dwell on the period 1895 to 1914 when the high tide of efficiency as a doctrine is said to have come and gone.

It has not been sufficiently recognised that the connection between education and the Empire had some further implications in the minds of many contemporaries. If it was assumed that educational reform could increase Britain's competitive efficiency, it was also widely felt that education could be of real use in the struggle to promote imperial unity. These two priorities, efficiency and unity, were not seen to be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they came to be viewed as two sides of the same coin. It was merely a question of emphasis. Ideas mixed and mingled within the minds of individuals as well as within various groups. To say that Richard Burdon Haldane was primarily concerned with efficiency is not to deny that a wide range of ideas including a desire to unify the Empire, inspired his thought. On the other hand, one of the prime spokesmen

for those who were concerned with the importance of education for the question of imperial unity, Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, also took a keen interest in the promotion of scientific education for the sake of efficiency.

Those who coupled education with the cause of imperial unity were, like their contemporaries who fostered efficiency, motivated by a concern with current problems. Yet they also owed something to an older imperial tradition, even if they themselves did not always realise it. Since the days of Edmund Burke many imperial thinkers had assumed that the unity of the Empire rested, in the final analysis, not on the formal links afforded by constitutional arrangements, but on the intangible bonds forged by mutual affection and a common heritage. In 1775 Burke had warned his colleagues in Parliament that "a great empire and little minds go ill together".⁴ Little minds, he asserted, were wont to picture the unity of the Empire as residing in legal formulae and administrative machinery. The result of this mechanistic outlook, he argued, was the sort of intolerance and inflexibility which had precipitated the confrontation with the Thirteen Colonies. In Burke's opinion the only lasting bonds of Empire were those founded on mutual affection and a shared inheritance from the past.⁵ "These are ties", he claimed, "which though light as air, are strong as links of iron".⁶

Burke, of course, was speaking at a moment of

imperial crisis when feeling ran high among Parliamentary factions. The "vulgar and mechanical politicians" against whom he inveighed were his political enemies. Nevertheless, his insistence on the importance of the intangible links of Empire had a significance which went beyond the ins and outs of day to day politics in the eighteenth century. It was to surface time and time again throughout the nineteenth century.

Richard Cobden, spokesman of the so-called Manchester School of free trade anti-imperialism, was a staunch opponent of the administrative, military, and economic waste supposedly involved in formal colonial expansion.⁷ He and his colleague, John Bright, viewed with equanimity the possible sundering of constitutional ties with the colonies. Cobden argued that this would result in no disaster. Furthermore, he contended that no damage would be done to the actual foundations upon which imperial unity rested. On the contrary, he complained that people merely misunderstood the true nature of the imperial relationship.

People tell me I want to abandon our colonies;
but I say, do you intend to hold your colonies
by the sword, by armies, and ships of war?
That is not a permanent hold upon them. I
want to retain them by their affections.⁸

In later years this line of thought was continued and expanded upon by William Ewart Gladstone. In his mind the unity of the Empire was entirely dependent upon goodwill and sentiment and he did not "regard it as bound

up essentially in the maintenance of any administrative function whatever".⁹ Freedom and voluntarism, not constitutional chains, were the keys to promoting smooth imperial relations.¹⁰ In the last resort, he felt, "the silken ties of love and affection" were the forces which would serve to bind the Empire together.¹¹ Accordingly, Gladstone cautioned his contemporaries against pressing the political side of the connection too hard.

I predict that if you leave them [the colonies] that freedom of judgment it is hard to say when the day will come when they will wish to separate from the great name of England. Depend upon it they covet a share in that name. You will find in that feeling of theirs the greatest security for the connection.¹²

Even Goldwin Smith, long viewed as the archetype nineteenth century separatist, echoed Gladstone's opinion. Smith was widely known as an opponent of formal constitutional ties within the Empire. Indeed, shortly after emigrating to Canada he spoke with optimism of the benefits which would accrue to that nation if she were to amalgamate with the United States. In later life Smith's position on this issue softened somewhat but he remained one of the chief spokesmen of those who saw full autonomy from Great Britain as the pathway to the realization of Canada's true destiny. Yet Smith in a real sense was no anti-imperialist. In fact he consistently argued that the connection with the colonies "which is really a part of our greatness -- the

connection of blood, sympathy, and ideas -- will not be affected by political separation".¹³ On the contrary, he predicted that "when our colonies are nations, something in the nature of a great Anglo-Saxon federation may, in substance if not in form, spontaneously arise out of affinity and mutual affection".¹⁴

Ideas such as these continued to find expression throughout the nineteenth century. No long term effort, however, was ever made to tap these supposedly latent reserves of sentiment until after 1900. It must be emphasized that formal political federation was the goal after which the vast majority of metropolitan imperialists strove in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods.¹⁵ In fact there had never been any strong reason to seek an alternative to this line of approach. Only when the failure of the formal concept of imperial unity and the need to win the allegiance of the rising democracies of the Empire became apparent were some imperialists driven to appeals for the unification of the Empire based on the ultimate factors of sentiment and heritage.

When it finally did develop, this alternative approach to imperial consolidation took the form of an attempt to educate the populace at home and abroad in an appreciation of their imperial inheritance. The basic bond of affection could best be promoted, it was thought, through two related methods: formal education in the

classrooms of the Empire and informal public education, or what we would term propaganda. Therefore, at the same time as education was coming to be viewed as a factor essential to national efficiency and power, it was also being seen as a vehicle for the promotion of imperial unity.

Among those who maintained that education could be employed to mobilize imperial sentiment, the men and women who comprised the Royal Colonial Institute, the League of the Empire, and the Victoria League proved to be the most active. These three bodies were private, non-political societies which, though independent of one another, shared this assumption in common. Their efforts to foster imperial unification by means of education retained momentum and continuity from the earliest years of the century until well into the twenties. The ideas and projects of the people who led these societies are, when taken together, the basic subject of this thesis.

Such an investigation will facilitate the exploration of the largely neglected relationship which contemporaries drew between education and the Empire and in addition will unveil a number of undercurrents which ran below the surface of the movements for educational reform and closer imperial union. In addition, the men who led the fight for imperial education were prominent historians in their own right, men such as Charles Prestwood Lucas, Arthur Percival Newton,

and Hugh Edward Egerton. As a group they left a deep and distinctive impression on imperial historiography. The historical concepts, labels, and format which they developed while engaged in the imperial education campaign have continued to be influential even in our own era; yet curiously they have received very little in the way of scholarly attention and analysis. Thus, a study of what came to be termed the "Imperial Studies Movement" has much to tell the imperial historian about both the intellectual content of Edwardian imperialism and the origins of his own discipline.

FOOTNOTES

¹The words "Education and Empire" were widely used by the newspapers of the times as headlines under which all sorts of articles concerning the link between the two were written. The Times and the Manchester Guardian were particularly fond of this phrase and seemed to assume that it had a clear and well-defined meaning of its own.

²Sir Norman Lockyer, Education and National Progress: Essays and Addresses 1870-1905 (London, 1906). His chapter on "The Influence of Brain-Power upon History" is a direct adaptation of A. T. Mahon's title for his famous work The Influence of Sea-Power Upon History.

³It would be tedious and unprofitable to list all of the works of those educational historians who have pointed to the link between educational reform and the efficiency movement. Good examples can be found in the following: G. Haines, Essays on German Influence upon English Education and Science 1850-1919 (Connecticut, 1969); A. Kazamias, Politics, Society, and Secondary Education in England (Philadelphia, 1966) and M. Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry 1850-1970 (London, 1972). From the imperial point of view the recent work of G. R. Searle, The Quest for National Efficiency (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971) has added real depth to our knowledge in this area.

⁴E. Burke, The Writings and Speeches of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, II (Boston: Beaconsfield edition, 1901), p. 181.

⁵Ibid., p. 179.

⁶Ibid.

⁷D. Read, Cobden and Bright (London, 1967), pp. 200-208.

⁸R. Cobden, "Speech at Manchester", 10 January 1849, cited in G. Bennett, The Concept of Empire Burke to Attlee 1774-1947 (London, 1967), p. 169.

⁹P. Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy (London, 1927), p. 98.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 94.

¹¹Ibid., p. 96.

¹²W. E. Gladstone, "Our Colonies", an address delivered to the members of the Mechanics Institute at Chester, 12 November 1855, cited in Bennett, Concept, p. 157.

¹³G. Smith, The Empire (London, 1863) in Bennett, Concept, p. 218.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 219; see also Canada and the Canadian Question (London, 1891), pp. 265-66.

¹⁵C. A. Bodelsen, Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism (New York, 1968).

CHAPTER ONE
FEDERATION AND EDUCATION TO 1914

I

The attainment of formal imperial federation had been the major preoccupation of late-Victorian and Edwardian imperialists.¹ A concern with this issue was prompted by the threat posed by the rising Continental powers and the growing disadvantages of what was once called "splendid isolation". The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 had ushered in a new bellicose spirit in international relations. Europe was soon divided into armed camps and a tangled network of alliances. In all of this Great Britain had played little or no part. Yet it was becoming increasingly apparent that she would not be able to stand aside for long.

The rapid imperial expansion of the Continental powers quickly became a source of friction between them and Britain. The English and the French clashed over the control of Egypt in the eighties. The Fashoda Crisis of 1898 brought the two old enemies close to war over a remote patch of sand in the Sudan. The South African War not only demonstrated Britain's military inefficiency but also emphasized the urgent need for her to consolidate and more effectively exploit her imperial resources and to strengthen her diplomatic position by entering the alliance

structure. The understandings reached with Japan, France, and Russia concerning colonial questions in the early years of the century were not sudden reversals of policy but the outcome of a long search for security begun by Salisbury in the eighties.² Indeed, it has been convincingly argued that Britain's rapid expansion in tropical Africa at this time was not the expression of a flamboyant self-confidence but of an awareness of the growing insecurity of her route to India.³

Along with foreign competition in the imperial sphere many late-Victorians and Edwardians were alarmed by an even more dangerous threat to Britain's world hegemony; this took the form of an increasingly successful foreign challenge to her commercial and industrial supremacy. Her economic leadership had been the bedrock of Britain's power in the nineteenth century. First in the race, she had led where others followed. As early as 1867, however, fears were expressed that England was beginning to lag behind her competitors. The poor showing of British exhibits at the Paris Exhibition of 1867 was the cause of some grave misgivings in England. In contrast with the fine performance of 1851 at the Crystal Palace, British commercial and industrial entries in 1867 won first prize for excellence in only ten out of some ninety categories.⁴ Anxieties regarding the qualitative threat to British economic leadership were quickly translated into fears of a

quantitative decline.

This gradual slide from industrial pre-eminence has been attributed by some to the innate conservatism that permeated English industrial society at all levels and to the disadvantage of being first in the field and thus encumbered by a large but obsolete plant.⁵ Others have pointed to the decline in the rate of capital accumulation, increased competition in export markets, and the reliance on a few traditional industries as the main sources of the economic problems of the age.⁶ As will be seen later, a number of contemporaries traced these economic problems to faults in the British educational system and came to see educational reform as a means of promoting national and imperial regeneration.

Whatever the causes, the growing anxiety about Britain's ability to compete economically on the world stage was plainly evident. Foreign trade statistics were the traditional barometers of national economic health and it became a major source of concern to the late-Victorians that throughout the eighties and nineties the proportion of British output marketed abroad had gradually fluctuated and fallen.⁷ Stinging attacks on the inefficiency of the entrepreneurial classes, such as E. E. Williams' Made In Germany (1896), became commonplace.

Large-scale imperial and economic competition led many, such as the Cambridge historian Sir John Robert Seeley, to see the development of large political and economic units such as the United States and Russia as inevitable.⁸ In this atmosphere, it was argued, the preservation and consolidation of the British Empire would be a matter of urgent necessity. Far from being anachronisms, wrote Seeley in 1883, global empires were the wave of the future. Successful American and Canadian experiments with federation and the development of rapid communications led Seeley and others to the conclusion that massive centralized empires were "precisely the sort of union which the conditions of the times most naturally call into existence".⁹

In addition to the external pressures that helped to call the idea of imperial federation into existence and sustain it, a conviction persisted in imperial circles that the internal relations of the Empire were coming to a crossroads where a decision on the question of unity would be imperative. It was widely assumed that as colonies grew to maturity and demanded a larger share of autonomy only two alternatives would be possible, imperial federation or disintegration. In a speech at Leeds in December 1888 Lord Rosebery drew attention to this point. It was, he said, absolutely impossible for Britain to maintain her indefinite, loose relationship with her colonies and retain

those colonies as parts of the Empire.¹⁰ Summing up feelings on this point, W. E. Forster, president of the Imperial Federation League, said that imperial federation or disintegration were the only two alternatives which he could envisage for the Empire.¹¹

When it emerged in the eighties the general movement on behalf of closer union took many forms. Its first major expression was to be found in the establishment in 1884 of the Imperial Federation League (I.F.L.). The first president of the I.F.L. was W. E. Forster who had earlier made a name for himself as the author of the Education Act of 1870 about which more will be said later. Following his death in 1886, Forster was succeeded as president by Archibald Philip Primrose, Lord Rosebery. Among other notables attracted to the League were the Cambridge historian, Sir John Robert Seeley, and a number of prominent colonials including the Canadians, Charles Tupper and George Parkin.

While all were agreed on the ultimate object to be attained, the members of the I.F.L. were, nonetheless, seriously divided over the various means of achieving imperial unity. Some, like Rosebery and Forster, stood for a wholesale federation of the Empire in all its aspects, while others, notably Tupper, would countenance only minor constitutional adjustments.¹² Again, some were primarily

interested in the military aspects of unity, while others concentrated on the issue of preferential tariffs and the need for an imperial Zollverein.¹³ For the most part the colonials, led by Tupper, opposed any encroachment on the powers of colonial self-government. Indeed, Tupper was later to boast that he had helped to destroy the I.F.L. when it attempted to draft a comprehensive formula for political federation in the nineties.¹⁴

The League held together only as long as it avoided commitments to specific schemes. When Gladstone as prime minister demanded a concrete proposal from the I.F.L. in 1893, it could not produce a report based on a consensus and thereupon dissolved. Thereafter, the closer union movement tended to splinter into various factions, each pursuing the same general goal but applying different methods in a more or less unconcerted fashion.

This, however, is not to imply that men lost their faith in the project of federation. During the period immediately following the collapse of the I.F.L. attention tended to focus on the efforts of Joseph Chamberlain to secure a closer imperial union. The word most often employed to describe Chamberlain's approach to imperial affairs was "constructive". Chamberlain's background was that of a man of business reared in the industrial milieu of the late-Victorian Birmingham. When he was elevated to the office

of Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1895 he brought his business experience to bear on the problems of Empire as he saw them. Perhaps more than any of his colleagues in cabinet, Chamberlain was aware of the ultimate importance of the foreign threat to Britain's economic position.¹⁵ His solution to this and to the other problems confronting the Empire was "constructive imperialism" which entailed the systematic utilization of the resources of a united Empire in a businesslike way. In his own words he regarded the Empire as a collection of "undeveloped estates" requiring modernization and integration.¹⁶

Chamberlain was a systematizer. Under his régime financial and technical assistance was given to many of the more backward regions of the Empire such as East Africa and the West Indies.¹⁷ In return he confidently expected that these newly developed primary economies would soon be able to supply the growing demand of British industry for vital raw materials. The School of Tropical Medicine was founded in 1899 under Chamberlain's influence in order to remove those diseases which stood in the way of a successful economic exploitation of the tropics. Ever thorough in his approach, the Colonial Secretary proved to be an active promoter of applied science in education; this as part of his bid to make Great Britain more competitive on the world scene.

Chamberlain's most notable attempt to forge the Empire into a political and economic unit came after 1903 with his commitment to the project of Tariff Reform. On May 15, 1903 he spoke openly in favour of a full system of imperial preference and began an energetic campaign to convert the nation. This decision owed something to the pressure to which Chamberlain was being subjected by his industrial constituents in Birmingham who were beginning to feel the pinch of foreign competition.¹⁸ As early as 1885 the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce had called for a commercial union with the colonies to offset the advances of their foreign rivals.¹⁹ By the turn of the century Chamberlain had been won over to this position and felt that Britain could not survive as a major power unless she drastically revised her trade policy. This had been the stance adopted in 1893 by the United Empire League, a splinter from the body of the old I. F. L. In any event, Chamberlain resigned his office in 1903 to devote his full energies to the new Tariff Reform League whose slogan was "Tariff Reform Means Work For All".

Tariff reform, however, was not to be. There was still a large reserve of sympathy for the old ideas of laissez-faire. In addition opinion in imperial quarters was divided with Rosebery actively campaigning against Chamberlain and the Tariff Reform League. When it came to the test, the arguments of Rosebery and his free traders

carried the day as tariff reform went down to defeat in the electoral year of 1906. The working class for its part, was alarmed by the prospect of a rise in food prices that might result from the imposition of a tariff.²⁰ In a broader context it is quite likely that Tariff Reform was too closely identified with the Conservative Party which suffered a general eclipse in these elections. In any case, the tariff reform issue caused serious divisions to develop over the means by which the generally accepted goal of imperial union was to be attained. With Chamberlain's untimely death in 1914 the closer union movement lost one of its ablest and most dynamic leaders. Rudderless, the movement tended to drift.

However, hope was not entirely lost. Many people turned with confidence to the Colonial and Imperial Conferences of the era in their search for a vehicle to solidify the bonds of Empire. The first such conference, held in 1887, was a largely informal conclave with no clearly defined format or agenda. Even then it was realized that imperial federation was an extremely sensitive issue in the colonies and as a result all mention of that topic was scrupulously avoided. The chief subject of discussion was imperial defense but even here little was attempted or achieved beyond extending the chain of coaling stations in the Pacific and providing for a naval squadron in Australasia. In reality, the 1887 conference was a

tentative gathering for sounding out opinion rather than a serious meeting for advancing full-blown proposals for federation.

By 1897 defense was sharing the forum with the question of imperial preference. In the latter connection, the self-governing colonies agreed to lower tariffs on British goods, while Chamberlain consented to terminate treaties with Germany and Belgium which had the effect of preventing the colonies from bestowing a preference on British goods. The same issues were tackled at the 1902 Conference, but without much success. A general resolution was passed in favour of a system of imperial preference but in reality this could mean little so long as Britain clung to the policy of free trade and the dominions continued to impose their own tariffs. As noted, Chamberlain's effort to persuade the British electorate of the efficacy of a protectionist system proved abortive and effectively ruled out a workable system of imperial preference for the next thirty years.

Although some progress had been made on the economic front, agreement was harder to reach on the issue of sharing the costs of imperial defense. Canada, in the person of her Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, rejected the idea on the grounds that military and naval integration of the Empire would entail an important departure from the

principle of dominion autonomy.²¹ Laurier was not the complete anti-imperialist he was once pictured to be, but he did prove to be a major stumbling block to British aspirations for imperial unity at the conferences held before the First World War. While maintaining a deep and lasting respect for British political institutions and ideas, Laurier felt that it was the local autonomy of the individual colonies that had preserved the Empire from disruption.²² Having to walk a thin line between the two national groups in Canada, he was forced to adopt a compromising stance on the question of imperial unity.²³ His policy, therefore, was one based on the concept of an imperial alliance of co-equal states rather than on that of imperial federation. This position was clearly outlined on his return from the 1907 conference when he stated that "always we return to our country more convinced that imperial unity should be based on local autonomy".²⁴ In fact, the conferences of the period had an effect quite the reverse of that intended by Chamberlain and his colleagues in Whitehall. The arguments over the question of sharing imperial burdens tended to sharpen, rather than lessen, dominion self-consciousness.²⁵

The issue of political federation was squarely defeated at the Conference of 1911. Sir Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand, laid the idea of forming an imperial cabinet before the conference only to have Canada

and South Africa quash it at the outset. In short, the conferences were proving a poor vehicle for the promotion of federation. Indeed the dominions generally proved to be apathetic to large imperial issues and the conferences never attracted much attention there.²⁶ As an institution the conference lacked the authority of a legislature and remained a simple forum for the exchanging of views. It never developed into a truly dynamic force for imperial union. As has been noted, a study of the conferences from 1887 to 1911 reveals "the obvious uncertainty which prevailed at all levels of political life about the ultimate nature of the imperial relationship".²⁷

A serious effort to clear up this uncertainty was attempted by Lord Milner and his Round Table Movement. The roots of this organization, which worked for the political unification of the Empire, go back to Milner's days as "proconsul" in South Africa. In an effort to provide keen and efficient administration at the Cape, Milner gathered about himself carefully selected young men of exceptional organizational ability. This group, which came to be known as Milner's "Kindergarten", consisted primarily of a coterie of Oxford graduates who shared a common background, long standing acquaintance, and a common outlook on the Empire. Like their leader, Milner, the Kindergarten had a strong distaste for contemporary political practices in Britain. Milner was convinced that parliamentary

democracy was the worst possible system upon which to base the rule of a great empire since it was founded on the vagaries of party and the whims of ill-informed public opinion.²⁸ It was felt that these factors only served to disrupt the conduct of imperial affairs. On balance Milner and his disciples, who included Lionel Curtis, Philip Kerr, Basil Williams, and Geoffrey Dawson, preferred the alternative of small but influential groups working on the elite, the moulders of opinion, as a means of permeating society with their views.²⁹

The Kindergarten remained in South Africa after the Boer War and proceeded systematically to foster the federation of the various colonies there and their closer union with Britain. Closer union societies were founded by the group along with The State, a paper designed to encourage the leaders of Boer society to adopt the idea of local and imperial federation. When the Act of Union was passed in 1910 the Kindergarten congratulated itself in the belief that it had been a significant factor in bringing about this happy consummation.³⁰ With this experience in mind, the group returned to England one by one in 1909 and 1910 and set out to try and accomplish what the Imperial Conferences could not, the political unification of the Empire.

Lionel Curtis initiated a scheme to apply the group's South African techniques to the larger question of imperial federation. The so-called Round Table Movement was

launched privately in 1909 and came out into the public arena in 1910 with the publication of the Round Table Magazine. This journal was clearly intended to play the same role on the imperial stage as the State had in the unification of South Africa. The closer-union societies were to be duplicated in the form of branches of the Round Table which were intentionally limited to small memberships and designed to reach the wielders of power and moulders of public opinion.³¹

At the heart of the movement lay the "moot". This was an inner council of the leadership of the Round Table and met regularly to establish a clear understanding of its goals, strategy, and tactics.³² The membership of this inner council generally included Milner, Lord Selbourne, the Kindergarten, and a number of close associates such as L. S. Amery, F. S. Oliver, Reginald Coupland, and Alfred Zimmern. This membership was quite regular in attendance and homogeneous in its outlook.³³ As a result, the tactics of the organization and the editorial policy of the magazine displayed a high degree of consistency and planning. Generally speaking, the articles in the Round Table tended to dwell on three themes, namely, the administrative chaos which was threatening the Empire, the irrational nature of party politics, and the ineffectuality of the Imperial Conferences in the quest for the all-important goal of political union.³⁴

By definition the process of social permeation would be slow. It would require a clear-cut statement of the position of the Round Table on the current status of the Empire. Consequently, during the years immediately before the war the main activities of the movement were directed toward establishing branch organizations and gathering information. In the latter connection Curtis made a number of tours of the Empire collecting information for a projected statement of purpose that could serve as the rallying point of a crusade for imperial union. In 1913 he produced a draft of the "egg" that proved to be far more radical than most members of the moot or the dominions were willing to accept.³⁵ Curtis called for an Imperial Parliament not unlike that proposed by Ward in 1911. It was as though he wished completely to wash away the concessions to dominion autonomy made since the days of the Durham Report. In the end it was necessary for Curtis to compromise and publish the statement as an expression of personal opinion rather than as a group work. Even then the abbreviated "omelette" had to be watered down to satisfy colonial objections.³⁶

In any case, it is important to note that the Round Table was merely an offshoot of the larger movement on behalf of imperial federation begun in the eighties. To be sure, there were differences in tactics and strategy

between the I.F.L., Chamberlain, the Imperial Conferences, and the Round Table; nevertheless, the goal was the same in each case. The emphasis in the search for a viable form of permanent unity was consistently placed on the creation of tangible, formal ties. On the whole, it seems quite fair to see all of these efforts as parts of a larger closer-union movement.

Yet, if this political approach to the question of imperial unity tended to dominate imperial thinking, it did not go wholly unchallenged, even in the Victorian period. There were always those who raised doubts about the viability of a constitutional approach to achieving closer union and who suggested an alternative. After 1900 this alternative line of thought was crystallized in the attempts of the Royal Colonial Institute, the League of the Empire, and the Victoria League to bolster the unity of the Empire through an appeal to sentiment and heritage.

James Anthony Froude, one of the outstanding theorists of late Victorian imperialism, anticipated this approach. Froude had little faith in the viability of a constitutional and economic drive toward closer union. To him the Empire was not a matter of legalisms; it was a thing of the spirit. It was a vehicle whereby English society, then supposedly sunk in materialism and moral decay wrought by industrialism, might be rejuvenated.³⁷ Froude hoped that the example of

the simple, spartan life on the frontiers of Empire would teach domestic Englishmen by example. To him pre-industrial England had been a golden-age characterized by the ideals of an old-fashioned, patriarchal, Bible-reading society that lived off the land and was uncontaminated by the debilitating miseries of industrial urban life.³⁸ Predictably, therefore, the purpose of the Empire to Froude was a moral, not a materialistic one. The colonies, he wrote, "are interesting only as offering homes where English people can increase and multiply; English of the old type with simple habits, who do not need imported luxuries".³⁹

Accordingly, Froude came to the conclusion that the strongest bonds of Empire were those of the spirit.⁴⁰ Therefore, he felt that the plans for advancing political federation fell wide of the mark. Froude's skepticism about a formal approach to the problem of consolidation was reinforced by his conviction that political autonomy was already too deeply ingrained in colonial thinking to be dislodged. In fact he once predicted that anything resembling an Imperial Parliament would disintegrate in the first session.⁴¹ Froude, like Burke, but in contrast to the majority of his contemporaries, felt that it would be best to leave well enough alone and not to raise issues which would only serve to strain relations within the imperial family.⁴²

Froude felt that a basic sentiment in favour of spiritual unity already existed;⁴³ all that needed to be done was to cultivate the emotional bond. "The desire for union", he asserted, "while it lasts is its own realization".⁴⁴ The really doubtful element in the situation, Froude argued, was not the loyalty of the colonies but the lack of understanding and reciprocal affection in the heart of the Empire itself. He pointed out that England must altogether cease to turn its vision inward upon the petty concerns of day to day domestic politics and raise its viewpoint to a loftier plane so that it might remain the centre of a great Empire and a world power. "Till we can rise into some nobler sphere of thought and conduct", commented Froude, "we may lay aside the vision of a confederated empire".⁴⁵ Froude's entire career as an imperial publicist seems to have revolved around a desire to dispel philistine concepts and, in many cases, ignorance of the meaning of the Empire.

There was, of course, nothing new in Froude's insistence that the unity of the Empire depended on sentimental factors. As has been demonstrated this was an old theme in imperial thought. Where Froude differed from Goldwin Smith, Cobden, Bright, and Gladstone, however, was in his willingness to accept the continued existence of political ties with the colonies as long as they did not

become mutually inconvenient sources of friction. Froude thus accepted and promoted one of the cherished arguments of so-called mid-Victorian separatism without insisting on the unilateral sundering of the political bond. This line of thought, as modified by Froude, became one of the important sub-themes of late-Victorian and Edwardian imperial thinking. It grew in volume and importance as the period wore on and as more and more people came to question the viability of a constitutional approach to the achievement of imperial unity.

Froude was not alone in his tendency to question the concept of imperial federation. From his day to the outbreak of war in 1914 a growing number of people chose to take the same tack. In 1895 J. E. C. Welldon, then headmaster of Harrow and later Archbishop of Calcutta, read a paper to the members of the Royal Colonial Institute in which he questioned the feasibility of trying to found imperial unity on political formulas. "It is not in treaties and conventions", he said, "it is in the sympathies of race, of language and of religion that the strength of the Empire lies".⁴⁶

One of the most outspoken critics of the legalistic approach to the consolidation of the Empire was Richard Burdon Haldane. Haldane was one of the most powerful and influential politicians in the Liberal Party and enjoyed

a long and varied career as cabinet minister, army reformer, educational critic, lawyer, and amateur philosopher. Among other things, he was a staunch supporter of the Empire and along with H. H. Asquith and Edward Grey, a member of the small but influential group of Liberal-imperialists. As an imperialist Haldane was keenly interested in the problem of imperial consolidation, but, like Froude and Welldon, he placed little faith in constitutional solutions.

Haldane consistently maintained the "the bonds of empire are the bonds, not of any law, written or unwritten, but a common heritage of history, of interest, and of blood".⁴⁷ He disliked the use of the words "Imperial Federation". This term argued Haldane, could apply to the consolidation of a group of related constitutions into one, as in the case of the Canadian federation, but it did not and in his opinion could not be made to work for the Empire as a whole.⁴⁸ Like Froude, Haldane considered Imperial Federation a fine ideal but doubted the value of a political approach to achieving it.⁴⁹ Indeed, he contended that the less governmental machinery there was to complicate imperial relations, the better off the Empire would be.⁵⁰ The really important point, he emphasized, as had Froude, was never to lose sight of the essential links which bound the Empire together.

What were these essential links in Haldane's view? Simply put, they were intangible bonds of affection and

mutual understanding which only grew from "a larger conception of Imperialism than that which forms a party cry at elections".⁵¹ If emphasis were laid on the factors which bound the Empire together as a family, a more lasting form of union might be achieved.⁵² This notion reminds one of Burke's warning to the Commons in 1775. The message was the same -- tread softly and all would be well between England and the colonies; insist on political and constitutional centralization and the Empire would probably collapse.

As imperial federation fell on hard times in the decade before the Great War, even some of its most ardent promoters, including A. J. Balfour, began to doubt its viability. By 1911, in the face of the continuing failure of the Imperial Conferences to produce a formula for the political union of the Empire, Balfour had become positively skeptical of the whole project. In a letter to a friend he commented that closer union was something devoutly to be wished but that "whatever is done in this direction must be done very slowly and tentatively, and unity will be secured rather by sentiment, interest, and mutual consultation than by constitutional bonds".⁵³

Balfour, however, was not wholly dismayed by this state of affairs. Indeed he felt that those bonds of sentiment and tradition were a real force operating on behalf

of imperial unity. "I am", he wrote to Philip Kerr, "and always have been, a Pan-Anglican; -- that is I have always held that the English-speaking peoples have traditions, interests, and ideals which unite them in common sentiments".⁵⁴ The time might come when political federation would be more practical, he felt, but for the moment the unity of the Empire could be secured informally by relying on intangible bonds.⁵⁵

This kind of thinking reflected growing frustration on the part of many imperialists. They were frustrated by the failure of the closer union movement to produce results and yet were increasingly aware of the need to shore up the foundations of the Empire in the face of mounting international tensions and competition. A scant two months before the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, the former Indian "proconsul", Lord Curzon, spoke of the poor progress which had been made toward political union. He called instead for the laying of "a wall of human hearts built round an Empire; a wall which, when all other material defenses crumble and give way, will perhaps avail to keep it safe".⁵⁶

How, it might be asked, was this wall of hearts to be built? Froude, for one, had offered no clues as to the manner in which the task was to be performed. He simply assumed that a large reservoir of imperial sentiment existed

and would suffice to ensure the unity of the Empire. When others considered the question of how best to tap this resource, however, the vehicle most often suggested was education. For his part, Welldon suggested that "in English history there is a coincidence of dates which serves to bring out in strong relief the connection between educational advance and imperial power".⁵⁷ He pointed out that the two greatest reigns in English history, those of Elizabeth and Victoria, were characterized in his opinion both by imperial and educational advancement.⁵⁸ If the age of Elizabeth was notable for imperial expansion, Welldon argued, in the era of Victoria the foremost issue was the need to consolidate imperial holdings. Toward the close of his address he commented that the most reliable links with which to build an imperial union were those of sentiment and a common culture.⁵⁹ These bonds, continued Welldon, could best be nurtured in the classrooms of the Empire.⁶⁰

Although Welldon was vague concerning the details of the imperial education of which he spoke, his speech won praise from George Parkin, a Canadian champion of imperial unity, who happened to be in attendance.⁶¹ Parkin had already combined a deep interest in the question of imperial union with his life-long career as a professional educator. In responding to Welldon's suggestions he asserted that the ultimate fate of the Empire now lay in the hands

of the masses who composed an ever increasing proportion of the electorate at home and abroad.⁶² Therefore he reasoned that it would be essential to educate the public in its imperial responsibilities.⁶³

By profession an educator, Parkin had spent the early part of his life as a teacher in New Brunswick. While attending Oxford in 1874 on a year's sabbatical, he conceived a deep and lasting devotion to the imperial creed and later became one of the chief spokesmen of the Imperial Federation League. It was his firm conviction that democracy tended to cheapen political life by driving out the best men and substituting vulgar, crowd-pleasing orators in their place.⁶⁴ In this situation Parkin felt that it was the duty of the educator to supply leadership and "to work to create the public opinion which makes politicians act".⁶⁵ The greatest cause toward which teachers could bend their pupils' minds was, in his estimation, that of imperial unity. Parkin went so far as to proclaim that if the advantages of imperial union were clearly understood it might well become "the supreme object of public desire".⁶⁶

Indeed, he urged that the public be educated to appreciate their imperial heritage before it was too late. He noted that the evolution of nations was generally slow, but that there were brief periods of rapid change. "There are the strongest reasons for believing", wrote Parkin,

that the British nation has such a period immediately before it. The necessity for the creation of a body of sound public opinion upon the relations to each other of the various parts of the Empire is therefore urgent.⁶⁷

He predicted a fast approaching struggle against apathy and provincialism in which "the better cause, the strongest arguments, the deepest convictions, the most strenuous moulders of public opinion will win".⁶⁸

Parkin was acutely aware of the problems created by apathy and provincialism. In 1889 he had gone on a speaking tour of Australasia on behalf of the Imperial Federation League. Only thirty people attended his first meeting in New Zealand and to make matters worse they conceived imperial federation to be a Whitehall plot to undermine their autonomy.⁶⁹ His reception was equally cool in Australia and he left with a growing fear of the damage which indifference and ignorance could do to the Empire in the future.⁷⁰ Indeed he was later to proclaim that ignorance both at home and overseas would be the most probable dissolvent of the Empire.⁷¹

Parkin took as his personal mission the task of combatting indifference and ignorance and winning over the public to the cause of imperial unity. He became in his own words a "wandering Evangelist of Empire".⁷² When the Imperial Federation League collapsed, Parkin was chiefly responsible for organizing a group of touring lecturers who

continued to preach its message.⁷³ The Seeley Lectures as they were called, continued to be given for a few years but had to be discontinued for want of results.

Parkin's career as an imperial educator, however, was far from over. The generosity of Cecil Rhodes another imperialist who also saw the value of education, provided him with a further opportunity to exercise his talents. In 1902 Parkin received an offer from Lord Grey to serve as the first organizing secretary of the Rhodes Trust Scholarship Scheme. Parkin viewed this as a revolutionary experiment -- an opportunity to use education as a means of bolstering imperial unity.⁷⁴

Cecil John Rhodes had amassed an enormous fortune in the diamond and gold fields of South Africa. He was also a passionate imperialist with a strong urge to contribute personally to the cause of imperial unity. Education was the tool he chose to achieve this ambition. In 1901 Rhodes wrote to Lord Grey of his intention to establish a perpetual scholarship fund designed to attract young men of the highest physical, moral, and intellectual abilities from the colonies to Oxford. The paramount object of the scheme was to instil in these youths the will to preserve and consolidate the Empire.⁷⁵ Accordingly, Rhodes endowed a scholarship fund with this object in mind.⁷⁶

As Parkin later commented, Rhodes held that the

young men who would rule the Empire in the coming generation should become familiar with each other and through sharing in a common education grow into mutual understanding.⁷⁷ This, it was felt, would go far toward solving the future problems of imperial unity.⁷⁸ Thus Parkin considered his work for the Rhodes Trust to be in keeping with his own ideas concerning education and the Empire. In fact, he once remarked that he felt his entire life had been a preparation for this post.⁷⁹ In a very real sense the Rhodes Scholarship'scheme was the first attempt to develop systematically the intangible bonds of Empire which had been identified as early as the days of Burke.

II

However, Rhodes and Parkin were not the first to see an intimate connection between education and the fate of the British Empire. They merely helped to give practical expression to an idea that had long been developing in imperial circles. As noted, foreign competition, fears of industrial decline, the first stirrings of dominion nationalism, and the threat of domestic change had prompted growing interest in the political, economic, and military unification of the Empire. In turn, the failure to secure imperial federation by formal constitutional means had

moved some men, such as Parkin and Rhodes, to seek an alternative approach in an appeal to sentiment through education. Thus the campaign for imperial education which emerged in the Edwardian period could justly claim to be a lineal descendant of the imperial federation movement.

On the other hand, the tendency of Edwardians to link education with the cause of imperial unity also owed a great deal to the movements for educational reform and national efficiency which gained momentum during the late-Victorian era. Indeed education was becoming a major cause for concern for many Britons, imperialists not least of all. The same forces which prompted a growing interest in closer union also sparked anxiety about the condition of English education and in a broader sense the efficiency of the nation as a whole. In time contemporaries came to regard, as did one observer, "imperial federation and education [as] the two main instruments for our regeneration".⁸⁰ As he pointed out, virtually all of the most notable imperialists and educational reformers of the age had worked for both causes.⁸¹ Their exertions and particularly those of the people who campaigned on behalf of what was later termed "Imperial Studies" can only be seen in their proper context when the broader origins and implications of the link between education and the Empire are clearly understood. Thus it is necessary to delve not

only into the imperial federation movement but also into the ideas of the late-Victorian educational reformers. As the nineteenth century wore on these two forces in society drew closer and closer together until they were virtually united in the thoughts of men such as J. R. Seeley, R. B. Haldane and Joseph Chamberlain.

A tendency to relate education to the future of the Empire had been observable as early as 1870. Responding to the fears raised by the Paris Exhibition of 1867, W. E. Forster, Vice-President of the Privy Council on Education, told the Commons that the time had come for the State to cast off its hitherto easy-going approach to education. Something more efficient, more dynamic than a completely laissez-faire attitude would, he argued, be required to meet the challenge of foreign competition. While addressing the House in 1870 in connection with his famous education bill, he warned his colleagues that Britain's industrial prosperity depended on the development of a sound system of elementary education.⁸² This would become the dominant theme of late-Victorian and Edwardian educational reform. Forster cautioned his colleagues that "if we leave our work-folk any longer unskilled, they will become overmatched in the competition of the world".⁸³ In other words, it would be necessary to train the workers in order that they might perform up to Continental standards. Like so many after him Forster also

pointed to the growing contest of nations and called for educational reform as a means of preserving Britain's status as a world power. What England lacked in sheer numbers, he argued, she could make up for by increasing the intellectual force of each individual.⁸⁴

In addition to his fears of foreign competition, Forster was visibly concerned about Britain's ability to hold her own among the emerging communities of the Empire. He had once calculated that by 1950 the population of the Anglo-Saxon colonies would far outstrip that of the Mother-country.⁸⁵ This drove him to conclude that as these colonies grew to maturity the Empire would be faced with a choice between imperial federation and disruption.⁸⁶ Thus, Forster spoke of the urgent need to enrich British education so that England would be both prepared and worthy to continue as the focal point of a changing Empire. This was no passing reference on Forster's part. As noted, he was the first president of the Imperial Federation League and his devotion to the cause of imperial unity was a real and lasting one.

Forster summoned yet another argument to reinforce his plea for reform. To him, the enfranchisement of the majority of urban workingmen in 1867 meant that the safety of the constitutional equilibrium would depend upon the ability of the old order to assimilate the new electors through education.⁸⁷ It is probable that Forster's thoughts

on this matter, were influenced by his brother-in-law, Matthew Arnold. Arnold's whole career as an educational critic, poet, and social commentator was based on his desire to improve the moral and intellectual condition of the middle class so that they would be able to set an example for and guide the opinions of the new working class democracy.⁸⁸ In any case Forster, like many other mid-Victorians who were anxious about the possible impact of democracy on established institutions, urged his colleagues to educate their new masters.

Nor was Forster alone in championing educational reform for the sake of the nation and the Empire. In 1869 the periodical Nature was founded. Its first editor was Sir Norman Lockyer, a noted astronomer. Lockyer spoke for a small but articulate group of scientists who were alarmed by the rise of foreign competition and ascribed Britain's problems to a lack of applied scientific education.⁸⁹ For a generation after 1870 Lockyer drew attention to the need for educational reform. He pointed to the relative decline of Britain in contrast with the successes of Germany and the United States in the commercial and imperial fields. This he attributed to the failure of Britain to keep pace with her competitors on the educational front, particularly in the application of science to industry.⁹⁰ Lockyer, a staunch Social Darwinist,

conceived this to be a grave weakness which the Empire could ill-afford in the international struggle for survival.⁹¹

The school, the university, and the laboratory were, in Lockyer's opinion, the new international battlefields. Brain-power was the key to victory. He advised his contemporaries that if Britain allowed her rivals to surpass her in the application of science to industry the collapse of the Empire would be a mere matter of time.⁹² He, therefore, called upon the State to play a greater role in promoting education for the sake of national and imperial efficiency.⁹³

Lockyer also specifically called for the organization and co-ordination of scientific study, resources, and research throughout the Empire. His main object was to promote efficiency, but he also maintained that educational integration of this type would serve to consolidate the Empire as well.⁹⁴ Here, as in the case of Forster, a concern with educational efficiency was coupled with the notion that education should play a major role in preserving imperial unity. Indeed, Lockyer merely elaborated on Forster's theme; this time couching it in technological terms.

Although the relevance of technological education to national survival was direct and obvious, many Victorians also saw a similar connection between the modernization of

humane studies and the future of the Empire. One of the most prominent among these was the Cambridge historian, Sir John Robert Seeley. His thoughts on this matter were to be of great significance since the majority of those Edwardians who led the fight for imperial education were, like Seeley, historians and harked back to him for inspiration. They revered him as the foremost imperial theorist of the previous generation and adopted his notion of the public role of the historian.

Seeley rose to prominence in imperial circles in the eighties as a result of the publication of his most famous work, The Expansion of England. A detailed analysis of this treatise and its relationship to the broad sweep of imperial historiography has been reserved for a later chapter. For the moment only his ideas concerning the imperial significance of education need be considered. In this regard the truly novel aspects of his thought had to do with the relationship between history, politics, and the civic duty of the historian.

Seeley's purpose in writing the Expansion was not to foster a particular brand of imperialism but to elucidate his own pragmatic theory of history. He wished to demonstrate that "history and politics are only different aspects of the same study".⁹⁵ The connection between history and politics was direct and immediately

relevant. Seeley saw the historian's role as one of forecasting the future and of preparing public opinion to meet predictable challenges.⁹⁶ It was this conception which, he felt, separated him from conventional contemporary historians. He thought that they erred in seeking literary effect at the expense of scientific accuracy. In Seeley's opinion literary historians tended to lose themselves in mere narrative which emphasized the simple arrangement of facts but missed the real meaning of history and indeed lacked a clear principle of selection. He was convinced that if it led to no great truths which were scientifically verifiable then "history is but an amusement and will scarcely hold its own in the conflict of studies".⁹⁷ He was, therefore, the sworn enemy of antiquarianism in all its forms.

In fact Seeley was certain that history was a science if properly studied. His reverence for the scientific method undoubtedly owed a great deal to his study of the German historians.⁹⁸ He came to the conclusion that history could only be made useful, scientific, and intelligible, if facts were grouped around major themes of lasting significance whose evolution illustrated the inner workings of historical process.⁹⁹ In this fashion the historian would be able to divine the meaning or moral of history, account for current conditions, and predict

the future in broad outline.

One of the major elements of a scientific approach to history in Seeley's view was the recognition of the State as the focal point of all inquiry. The State, he felt, was an observable, tangible phenomenon with definite laws of growth which could be uncovered.¹⁰⁰ His critics have claimed that Seeley's emphasis on the state placed narrow restrictions upon the historian's range of study.¹⁰¹ In theory, however, his concept of the state was extremely broad, one might almost say nebulous. To Seeley the state was no mere administrative unit artificially imposed on society. It was the outward expression of all that was best and most unselfish in human nature, the ultimate outcome of man's social instincts.¹⁰² The modern state, he said, was not a purely territorial entity such as the classical Greek polis. Instead it rested on the immaterial concept of nationality.¹⁰³ This sense of nationality, in turn, was determined by common bonds of race, religion, and interest.¹⁰⁴ Thus, Seeley's concept of history included not only constitutional, legal, and political phenomena but broader considerations of culture as well.

The purpose of studying history was always that of uncovering the principles of political life and the growth of the state. Thus, Seeley's other best known work, Ecce Homo, published in 1865, was an historical evaluation

of Christ, not as a theologian nor as the Saviour, but as a practical statesman who combined morality and politics in his attempt to provide social leadership. This hard-headed approach to the Messiah as a politician angered many of Seeley's contemporaries.¹⁰⁵ Seeley, however, was not irreligious. His religious outlook had been shaped by F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley while he was a student at Cambridge. Under their Christian Socialist influence Seeley developed an ethical and social approach to religion.¹⁰⁶ As H. A. L. Fisher later explained, "by religion he understood not a belief in the supernatural, but an habitual and regulated admiration, either for a moral ideal, or for beauty, or else for the unity of nature".¹⁰⁷ The fundamental value of religion in Seeley's estimation was that it provided "the elementary principles of agreement for a society".¹⁰⁸ In other words, religion was seen by him as a tool in state-building and a kind of social cement.¹⁰⁹ It was, therefore, an object worthy of historical study.

Seeley's concept of history was not conceived in a vacuum. In fact the author of Ecce Homo and the Expansion saw an immediate and vital need for the historian to adopt his scientific and politically relevant approach to the discipline. Seeley was one of those Liberals who like James Fitzjames Stephen, Henry Maine, and Robert Lowe, had

grave misgivings about the effects of organized public opinion and democracy. As the centre of gravity in politics shifted slowly to the working classes Seeley grew uneasy about the future. In his opinion this development made the political education of working men an urgent priority.¹¹⁰ He was, however, far from optimistic about the effectiveness of any such policy and seriously questioned the ability of the workers to absorb the complex lessons in statecraft. In any event, he was convinced that an effort in this direction would have to be made.

Seeley was also alarmed by the growth of large, powerful, and united super-states like the United States and Russia. Successful experiments in federalism and the development of steam-powered ships and rapid communication indicated to him that vast territorial units would be the models of the future.¹¹¹ Given this unmistakable portent of things to come, Seeley feared that an insular England would be dwarfed by the super-powers of America, Russia, and Germany. Accordingly, in order to survive as a first-rate power Britain would have to shore up the foundations of her own Empire, not in any vague sentimental fashion but on the basis of formal imperial federation. Hence, we see his early interest in the founding of the Imperial Federation League at whose inaugural meeting he spoke of the need for a new spirit of "Pan-Anglicanism".¹¹²

These fears concerning democracy and foreign competition led Seeley to direct all of his major works after 1880 toward the political education of the people and toward the prescription of a national policy in the new era ahead.¹¹³ Thus he campaigned on behalf of working class education and the refurbishing of Britain's universities along Continental lines of efficiency. The first step, however, was to establish an "inductive science of politics" founded on history which was to be studied in the new spirit of scientific inquiry. This approach was described by Seeley in the Expansion in 1883 and in his Introduction to Political Science in 1896.¹¹⁴

In this regard Seeley saw historians as constituting something akin to a "state priesthood".¹¹⁵ They should, in his view, serve as preachers and moralisers for the nation in an age of change and intellectual uncertainty. One contemporary critic complained that if Seeley's dicta were followed "every professor would be regarded as an endowed electioneering agent".¹¹⁶ Seeley, however, was a better historian than that. He had no wish to create a regiment of historical political hacks. Indeed he insisted that the historian must elevate accuracy above questions of style or popular appeal. In this respect he envisaged a sort of scholarly hierarchy insulating the professional

researcher against the corrupting influence of direct contact with the public.¹¹⁷ At the top of the system would be the scholarly researcher working in isolation from the public. His findings would then be conveyed to the general reader by his research assistants who would specialize in converting their master's work into popular forms.

This was a rather idyllic vision to say the least. As one observer later commented:

how in the world is a lad of twenty to apply the methods of scientific inquiry to problems which as soon as he has begun to think about them at all have been enveloped in an atmosphere of passion and controversy, where at every turn his prejudices are being stimulated by machinery created for that special purpose?¹¹⁸

As yet another critic has noted, Seeley tended to be overly intellectual in his approach to problems.¹¹⁹ He completely disavowed appeals to emotion in history. This, he contended, only served to cloud one's judgement. As an example he pointed to what he called the "bombastic school" of imperial history in his own day.¹²⁰ This school he described as being "lost in wonder" at the dimensions, heroism, and romance of the Empire's history. He thoroughly disapproved of the tendency of J. A. Froude and others of his persuasion to laud the national genius or to appeal to racial factors as the ultimate determinants of history. In Seeley's view arguments such as these merely obscured the fact that the Empire was the product of specific historical

circumstances which were changing in his own day and could not be relied upon to hold it together indefinitely. This, of course, was a perfectly justifiable position to adopt, but his reluctance to sink to emotional considerations also blinded Seeley to the fact that these provided much of the real dynamic of late Victorian imperialism. In any case, it was with these thoughts in mind that Seeley called for educational reform for the sake of imperial survival. The question remains, however, as to how valid the criticisms of English education made by the likes of Forster, Lockyer, and Seeley really were. Was the growing attack on administrative disorder and curricular irrelevancy justified? In short, how well or ill equipped was Great Britain to meet the demands of those who called on the educational system to come to the rescue of the Empire?

III


In terms of the organization and curriculum of British education at the turn of the century it would be somewhat misleading to employ the term "system" at all. In truth chaos and fragmentation were prevalent across the entire educational spectrum. The Bryce Commission on secondary education noted in 1895 that there was a considerable degree of overlapping and disorganization both institutionally and administratively within the English

educational system.¹²¹ The Commissioners complained of the vast waste in time, money, and labour which resulted from this situation. For the most part this observation seems to ring true when the educational scene at the turn of the century is examined in detail.

In institutional terms there was in fact a great deal of duplication, overlapping, and confusion. At the primary level of education the Forster Act of 1870 had established state supported elementary schools for the working classes which provided a rudimentary education in the three R's and little else. Although it was a limited measure of reform it was significant in that it represented the first clear recognition on the part of the state that it had a role to play in the education of the nation. The Act of 1870, however, did nothing to curtail the proliferation or interfere with a wide variety of denominational elementary schools. In fact it established a dual system of primary education, in which the privately administered Church of England, Non-Conformist, and Catholic schools were left outside the purview of the state.

Secondary education was even more fragmented, institutionally speaking. The Bryce Commission found that there was no consensus regarding the nature and function of secondary education. Generally speaking, most people did not view secondary education as a logical sequel to primary schooling.¹²² Rather, it was seen as a special

preserve of the middle classes quite distinct from elementary education. Genuine secondary education was deemed to rest on a study of the humanities, particularly the classics, while technological education in all its forms was considered to be inferior and best left to the working classes in society.¹²³ This represented a distinctly class oriented, elitist concept of education.



At the summit of the secondary system stood the old public schools such as Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and Winchester. They catered to the wealthy who could afford the high fees entailed in a boarding school style of education. The curriculum of these bodies was dominated by literary and humanistic subjects which in practical terms meant Greek and Latin. Next in prestige came the lesser grammar schools, whose fees were lower but still exorbitant by working class standards. These institutions retained an emphasis on humane studies but frequently gave scope to more modern disciplines such as contemporary foreign languages and theoretical science. The lowest status was held by those secondary schools which stressed the provision of a technologically oriented education for the working classes. What were then called Organized Science Schools and Higher Grade Schools grew rapidly after 1875 in an effort to provide vocational training for the working classes. The Higher Grade Schools were in reality merely extensions of some elementary schools where there was a

significant demand for this kind of advanced training. They were not, strictly speaking, secondary schools at all.

Cleavages in the system were well recognized and guarded. In 1869 the public schools achieved a limited form of unity with the formation of the Headmasters' Conference. This body was really just a forum for the exchange of views among the leaders of the public schools. It was not designed to integrate those bodies administratively or curricularly for in both these respects the public school remained wholly independent. By 1900, however, the Conference was united in at least two basic aims.¹²⁴ One was to remain free of external control; the other was to dissociate itself completely from the grammar schools and the higher grade schools. Taken as a whole, all these bodies provided what might be loosely termed secondary education, but they saw themselves as parts of wholly different systems.¹²⁵

At the pinnacle of the educational structure stood the two ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge along with a growing number of locally based civic universities. The two older institutions enjoyed unrivalled prestige both by reason of their seniority and the fact that their graduates tended to monopolize most of the higher positions in the State, the Church, and indeed society as a whole. They were nationally based universities in the sense that they drew on every part of the nation for their students.

Both universities were run on the collegiate system with the separate colleges being largely autonomous. These colleges tended to monopolize the teaching functions of the university as a whole. Thus it was the tutorial system, rather than the lecture, that provided the basic forum of instruction, with each don or tutor enjoying a wide range of discretion in his approach to any given subject.

In curricular terms it should be noted that neither university believed in a vocationally oriented education.¹²⁶ The emphasis was on general culture. Thus, compulsory Greek remained on the subject list for entrance examinations at both universities well into the first decade of the twentieth century. To the chagrin of Lockyer and others like him, science was given a very low status at Oxford compared to that of classical studies. The status of science was somewhat better at Cambridge which had long had an interest in this area, but the classics still dominated and scientific studies tended to be purely theoretical rather than applied in nature.¹²⁷ Curricular conservatism was the order of the day. It has been observed that at Cambridge "whenever it was suspected that the impetus for curricular reform came from commercial or political sources, Cambridge dons arose to denounce the proposed changes as technical, illiberal, utilitarian, and soft options".¹²⁸ Indeed, outside interference on the part of the state in all its forms was vigorously resisted

by both universities.

In contrast with the older bodies, the new civic universities, found in the eighties and nineties for the most part, were in the main locally based colleges drawing students from their immediate environs. Generally speaking, the new universities were situated in the industrial centres of the midlands and the west. Universities, such as those at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield, were clearly designed to meet the needs of their local communities. Normally these universities were financially dependent on grants from local industrial magnates; in order to attract more support virtually all of the colleges from time to time made it clear that their intention was to serve industry.¹²⁹ Thus, while each of them in theory clung to the idea of a well rounded curriculum, in practice there was a tendency toward concentration on the practical aspects of applied science as it related to the specific interests of the community involved. Consequently, Leeds specialized in textile and leather research, Manchester in chemistry, and Birmingham and Sheffield became noted for their metallurgical programmes. This industrial function was clearly recognized as something desirable. When in 1912 H. A. L. Fisher became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield he noted the curricular imbalance in favour of practical subjects. Yet, in spite of his background as an Oxford-trained historian he did not try to redress it

because he felt that applied science was best suited to the needs of industrial Yorkshire.¹³⁰

The greatest of the civic universities was of course, that in London. It was established in 1836 as an examining body but was not incorporated as a teaching university until 1898. London University in reality was a huge conglomerate of previously autonomous institutions. By 1914 it embraced three colleges, thirty-one schools, and twenty-five other bodies. Like all of the universities of the period, London University was jealous of its autonomy and resented attempts at outside interference.

If the educational institutions of the period present a rather confusing picture, the educational jurisdictions were even more hazily defined. There was no point at which national responsibility for education could be said to have been concentrated. An act of 1899 created the Board of Education and the office of the President of the Board who held cabinet rank. This replaced the old Education Department established in 1870 which had exercised very little direct control over the 2,500 school boards under its jurisdiction. In truth, however, the new Board of Education did little to consolidate jurisdiction over the state elementary system which was its sole province of authority. The aim of the drafters of the 1899 Act was that the Board should exercise general supervision over the school boards, but not direct control.¹³¹ To a large degree

this policy was upheld when the school boards were abolished in 1902 in favour of local educational authorities based on the county councils.¹³² Indeed, although the post of President of the Board carried cabinet status with it, it was never viewed as a political plum or a dynamic office. It was an office which in the past had provided an honourable resting-place for those statesmen who were not considered suitable for more active or responsible duties.¹³³ Indeed when Fisher told Balfour of his appointment to the presidency of the board in 1916 the latter raised his brows and expressed grave misgivings that a man of genuine ability should be shunted into such a backwater.¹³⁴

In an age which valued efficiency it depressed men like Lockyer that a wide range of other governmental agencies also had educational functions. The Home Office supervised industrial schools and reformatories. The Poor Law Commission had its own schools. The Ministry of Agriculture was responsible for agriculturally oriented teaching bodies. The Privy Council had some vague jurisdiction over university affairs. The London County Council jealously guarded its jurisdiction over elementary and secondary education in the metropolis. At the highest administrative levels therefore, chaos and confusion were the hallmarks of the educational system.

In fact, the real power of effective decision-making generally fell to the local authorities rather than to the central administration in Whitehall. In this connection, the local administration of education was characterized by a penchant for stubborn resistance to outside authority and a plethora of well ensconced vested interests. Prior to 1902 the state elementary schools established in 1870 were directly administered by some 2,500 local school boards. There was a constant political struggle between the boards and the county councils in the nineties over the control of education since this involved, at least in the state supported schools, subsidization from local rates. By 1902 this struggle came to a head.

Nothing demonstrates the complex nature of the British educational system or the furor that could be raised over educational issues better than the controversy that swirled around the Education Act of 1902. The Bryce Commission of 1895 had called for a rationalization of the educational system based on a more centralized bureaucracy. The creation of the Board of Education in 1899 was the first step taken in this direction. In 1902 a further effort was made to build on this foundation. At that time the Conservative government of Arthur James Balfour sponsored an education bill which was designed to sweep away the local school boards and place the supervision of elementary

and secondary education in the hands of Local Education Authorities (L.E.As.) based on the county councils. Furthermore, it was proposed that the independent Church of England schools be subsidized out of local rates. This latter consideration reflected, in part at least, Balfour's conviction that the only worthwhile form of education was that based on religious principles.¹³⁵ It was argued that the move was in tune with the trends of the times in its emphasis on the county councils and its demolishing of ad hoc bodies such as the school boards.¹³⁶ At least part of the government's motivation was a desire to curtail the control of the electorate over education. Balfour and the chief civil servant at the Board of Education, Robert Morant, had little faith in the ability of the general public to make wise judgments on complex educational issues. Accordingly they preferred control by appointed experts in the L.E.A.'s to that of popularly elected boards.¹³⁷ The bill was eventually passed but not without arousing considerable opposition which was more often inspired by political and religious motives than by purely educational ones.

The Liberals felt that an attack on the school boards was a direct political assault on themselves. The boards in most urban areas were in the hands of their supporters while the county councils tended to be Conservative

bastions.¹³⁸ The Act of 1902 was portrayed by the opposition as an attack on democracy itself since the L.E.A.'s would not be directly responsible to the electorate. The Liberals also claimed to speak for the Non-Conformist interest which looked with horror on the government's proposal to subsidize the schools of the Established Church.¹³⁹ Indeed, as late as 1904 so fierce was the opposition that it was necessary to pass another act to force Non-Conformist L.E.A.'s to implement the provisions of 1902.¹⁴⁰ Organized labour was also outraged and denounced the act as anti-democratic.¹⁴¹

On the other hand, the Conservatives garnered support not only from the Anglicans but also from the Catholics who favoured state support of denominational education.¹⁴² Teachers associations and other professional educational bodies also gave their support to the government since they tended to favour a more simplified and efficient administrative system.¹⁴³ The government's argument that education was an affair for experts and required systematic administration also attracted the leading Fabians to the campaign against the school boards.¹⁴⁴ In addition, the powerful voice of the Liberal Haldane was heard on behalf of the bill since he felt that some measure of administrative reform was preferable to none at all and that it was impractical to cripple the Church of England schools since there were so many of them.¹⁴⁵

The passions aroused by the controversy of 1902 were not ephemeral. The vested interests which took sides in the debate were constant factors on the educational scene and served to make education one of the most sensitive and volatile topics of the whole late Victorian and Edwardian period. In effect educational reform of any sort was a subject which governments and other institutions broached only with extreme caution. As it turned out the 1902 Act remained the basis of British educational administration right up to the next major redefinition in 1944.

The patchwork quality of the institutions and organization of English education was a direct product of and corresponded closely to the dominant educational philosophy of the age. English educational thinking was deeply coloured by attitudes of laissez-faire and élitism. Resistance to uniformity in education was founded on the notion that the various segments of society must be left free to develop in their own fashion. It was felt that uniformity or undue centralization in education would disrupt this natural pattern of development.¹⁴⁶ Thus the rights of denominational schools and private bodies were carefully guarded. This outlook was part and parcel of the liberal laissez-faire attitudes which typified most of English social thought in the nineteenth century. It

was this atomistic approach to society that accounted for the proliferation of local authorities, fragmentation, and duplication which characterized English education. Administrative centralization was always viewed with skepticism and hostility. Even in the minds of those who called for a closely integrated national system of education for the sake of efficiency and imperial survival there was a good deal of ambivalence on this score. For instance, Michael Sadler, one of the outstanding figures in the educational world at the turn of the century, consistently denounced fragmentation but maintained that uniformity imposed from outside was worse. There had to be a mean, he wrote, "between overstarched organization and demoralizing disorder".¹⁴⁷ The Board of Education agreed with Sadler and went even further. In 1905 its Handbook stated that "the only uniformity of practice that the Board of Education desire to see . . . is that the teacher should think for himself".¹⁴⁸

This sort of thinking applied not only at the elementary but also the highest level of education. In 1912 Balfour wrote to R. B. Haldane and commented that university management was far too complex and delicate a topic for any governmental agency to deal with. Indeed, he felt that it would be safest and wisest if the government did not meddle in university affairs at all.¹⁴⁹ Similarly,

Haldane, who had once proclaimed that the university was the natural handmaiden of the State, often showed great reluctance to tamper with university autonomy in practice.¹⁵⁰

Apart from laissez-faire, English educational ideas were also heavily influenced by considerations of class. The middle class in particular viewed education as a means of maintaining class distinctions.¹⁵¹ They defined education for the workers as a necessary free service to be provided in minimal form.¹⁵² It should be cheap, based on charity, restricted to the "three R's" and entirely unconnected with the education of the ruling class.¹⁵³ "Systems of thought", said Balfour, "were for the few".¹⁵⁴ In order to ensure that secondary and university education remained the preserve of these few, the late Victorians and Edwardians adhered to what has been termed the "ladder theory" of educational mobility. It was widely held that the rungs in the ladder separating primary from secondary education should be climbed only by working class children of truly exceptional ability.¹⁵⁵ Such was the official policy of the Board of Education.¹⁵⁶ Even the working classes accepted the ladder theory and merely called for more opportunities to climb up the rungs.¹⁵⁷

Curricular conservatism was also quite typical of English thought on education. A brief flurry of enthusiasm for scientific studies in the nineties was short-lived and soon gave way to a powerful reaction in favour of

an older tradition. A hint of this reaction was to be found in the Bryce Commission's report which urged the concept of a balanced curriculum and a broad liberal education.¹⁵⁸ In 1904, even as the campaign for national efficiency was reaching its peak, this attitude found expression in the official policy of the Board of Education. Robert Morant, then the chief civil servant at the Board, held that all secondary schools should reflect the traditional humane curricula of the old public schools and universities.¹⁵⁹ Nor was he alone in his prejudice against vocational specialization and his admiration for a liberal education. Indeed Morant spoke for the bulk of the educated at the time. The leading civil servants and policy makers of the period were products of the kind of liberal education in humane subjects, principally the classics, offered by the public and grammar schools. The members of the L.E.A.'s and the corps of inspectors, who drafted regulations governing primary and secondary education, were products of the same environment and adhered to the same philosophy as Morant.¹⁶⁰ The majority of secondary school teachers were drawn from Oxbridge and espoused similar academic and curricular values.¹⁶¹

This emphasis on humane subjects was heavily reinforced by the examination and scholarship system of the period. Various independent bodies such as the universities,

professional organizations, and the civil service conducted their own entrance examinations. The effect of this was to restrict the range of subjects that could lead to a promising career. In addition the scholarships offered by Oxbridge demanded proven competence in Latin and Greek. Since these two universities were the accepted gateways to the professions it was natural that the majority of students concentrated on the classics. Consequently what Lockyer termed "practical" subjects tended to suffer. There was a strong desire to preserve the cultural values of the English educational system which even the promoters of efficiency accepted as valid. A major curricular reform such as that envisaged by Lockyer and Seeley would not have been a simple task in such an atmosphere.

Thus class consciousness, laissez-faire social assumptions, and a liberal concept of education were the major strands in British educational thought at the turn of the century. The administrative disorder and curricular conservatism which resulted was probably harmless as long as Britain faced no serious foreign competition, but to Forster, Seeley, and others the need for change was becoming all too obvious. Little in the way of concrete reform was actually accomplished by 1900. Nevertheless the pressure of international competition increased as the century drew to a close and served to deepen the growing sense of anxiety and to swell the volume of

criticism.

IV

A concern with "brain-power" and efficiency and the fear of foreign competition increased as the turn of the century approached. However, some great crisis, was required to bring these thoughts and fears to the surface in a dramatic fashion. The South African War provided that sort of catalyst. It became increasingly clear to many that Great Britain was going to have to fight to hold her position among the nations of the world. Accordingly, efficiency became the great political slogan of the early twentieth century and it summed up the hopes and fears of the hour.¹⁶² Fundamentally, the concept of national efficiency involved a conscious effort to overhaul all aspects of national life as a means of enabling Britain to meet the challenges of the new century. It was in effect a call for a clearer enunciation of the sense of national purpose.

Among other things, the men who led the movement for efficiency took a keen interest in education and Empire. Symbolic perhaps of the manner in which the idea of efficiency attracted people from all parts of the political spectrum was the formation of the Co-Efficients Club in 1902. It brought together, largely on a social

basis, the leading figures of the efficiency movement. Its membership included such notables as the Fabians George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and the Webbs, the ex-New Zealand cabinet member, W. Pember Reeves, the geographer, H. J. Mackinder, the educator, Michael Sadler, and a number of prominent political figures such as R. B. Haldane, and Edward Grey. Among the other leading public men of the day who espoused the cause of efficiency were Lord Rosebery, Joseph Chamberlain, and Alfred Milner. All of these people shared the opinion that Britain was facing an international, imperial and domestic crisis and would have to adopt a vigorous approach to solving its problems.

Educational reform was regarded by them as one of the keystones of imperial rejuvenation. It was these men who kept alive the Victorian critique of education. Rosebery, for instance, felt that the most pressing need of the Empire in the twentieth century would be a corps of highly trained administrative experts.¹⁶³ In his opinion it was the function of the educational system to provide these administrators. On this basis he called for a curricular reform embracing modern languages and technological studies, the average Briton's ignorance of which, he alleged, was a commonplace joke that was rapidly becoming a commercial disaster.

his theme was expanded upon by Haldane, who with justice has been described as the high priest of the Edwardian campaign for efficiency. Perhaps more than any other politician of the age Haldane drew attention to the role that education had to play in the life of a truly efficient nation. His great model was always that of Germany, which is understandable since he had been educated in German universities. Unlike England, he pointed out, in Germany all levels of education were controlled and coordinated by the State.¹⁶⁴ There was, in addition, a close integration of industry and education in Germany which, in his mind, accounted for Britain's being left behind in a wide number of trades.¹⁶⁵

What could be done to rectify this situation? For the most part, Haldane and his fellow advocates of efficiency focused their attention on strengthening the higher levels of the educational structure, principally the universities. In keeping with the dominant educational philosophy of the age, the efficiency group was concerned with the development of élites.¹⁶⁶ "The true leader", wrote Haldane, "must teach his countrymen the gospel of the wide outlook".¹⁶⁷ He must bid them to live a larger life of unselfishness, efficiency, and devotion to duty. The lesson of the German experience after Jena and for good measure the more recent Japanese example, said Haldane, was that the education of expert leaders was all important.¹⁶⁸ In

like fashion Chamberlain emphasized the point that national progress depended on certain key individuals rather than on the masses.¹⁶⁹ The Fabians were attracted by the idea of an inner élite intimately controlling society.

Accordingly the promoters of efficiency all supported the notion that democracy should be managed by a group of dedicated experts who could make their influence felt through the process of "permeation".¹⁷⁰ It was hoped that by placing highly trained individuals in strategic positions the spirit of efficiency would be infused into old institutions and would filter down to society as a whole. Hence much importance was attached to secondary and university education.

Understandably this approach took the form of promoting reform at the higher levels of the educational system. With this in mind Sadler acted as an adviser to a number of L.E.A.'s.¹⁷¹ In 1901 Chamberlain helped to raise money for the founding of the University of Birmingham which was intended to perform the same functions as the German universities.¹⁷² In London Sidney and Beatrice Webb were instrumental in establishing in 1895 the London School of Economics as a training centre for captains of industry, politicians, and bureaucrats.¹⁷³

Haldane was a tireless worker in the field of university reform. His chief interest in this regard was the transformation of London University into a teaching

body. Significantly, Haldane felt that this institution would not only serve to bolster Britain's technological capabilities but also act as a tangible symbol of imperial unity. Employing this argument, he was successful in drafting the powerful financial support of Rhodes and Otto Beit for the revamped university.¹⁷⁴ Along the same lines, Haldane persuaded the Privy Council to issue charters to the new civic universities at Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester. Perhaps the capstone of his career as a university reformer came with the central role he played in the establishment of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. This institution was designed as a "London Charlottenberg" after the famous German technological college. In concert with Rosebery and the Webbs, Haldane conceived the project in 1902 and was its principal fundraiser. The college itself finally materialized in 1909.

Meanwhile Rosebery was not idle. In general he served as a figurehead for the projects promoted by his friend, Haldane. His contacts with the City were invaluable in helping to raise capital for the University of London and the London School of Economics. He was eventually persuaded by Haldane to serve as chancellor of the University of London in order to attract even more funds.¹⁷⁵ In addition, Rosebery was an influential founding member of the Rhodes Trust. In this capacity he once entertained the notion of endowing an imperial college along the lines of those in

France and Germany but gave up on the idea because he felt that the University of London would one day assume this role.¹⁷⁶

From this brief survey it would seem fair to conclude that Rhodes' scheme for summoning education to the service of the Empire was no aberration at the turn of the century. On the contrary, it was becoming quite common for imperialists for a variety of reasons to take a keen interest in education. For the most part this interest in educational reform was inspired by concerns with industrial decay and commercial decline. To some extent however education was regarded as a tool for maintaining class segregation and bridling democracy. In any event, the emphasis was on efficiency.

As noted, however, Parkin's conception of education as a means of promoting not only efficiency but also imperial unity was not out of keeping with contemporary thought. Contemporaneous with the establishment of the Rhodes Trust in 1902 was Chamberlain's founding of the Visual Instruction Committee of the Colonial Office. The Committee's purpose was to inspire interest in imperial unity by educational means. To that end it developed a programme of lantern slide lectures on imperial themes.¹⁷⁷ The chairman of this body was the Earl of Meath, founder of the Empire Day Movement in England. In addition Sir

Philip Hutchins represented the India Office on the committee while Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, a close associate of Chamberlain, represented the Colonial Office, and H. J. Mackinder served as the spokesman of the London School of Economics. The idea of the whole project was conceived by Michael Sadler, then Director of the Office of Special Inquiries and Reports at the Board of Education. In time all these men would come to play central roles in the effort to enlist education in the cause of imperial unity.

Symptomatic of the growing interest in this field of endeavour was the Lord Mayor's Conference of 1907. In that year an open letter appeared in The Times, signed by virtually every prominent friend of the Empire, calling on the Lord Mayor of London, Sir W. P. Treloar, to organize a meeting for the airing of views on "imperial education".¹⁷⁸ The idea was to sponsor imperial education in order

to create interest and enthusiasm which will ultimately grow into a steady imperial patriotism, to which the decision of the particular issues of the day may be safely confided.¹⁷⁹

Supporting letters came from A. J. Balfour, R. B. Haldane, and Lord Elgin.¹⁸⁰ It would appear that the attractiveness of the idea cut clear across party lines.

The Lord Mayor convened the gathering before a large audience with all of the signatories of the open letter present on the rostrum. Parkin delivered the keynote

address in which he proclaimed that "an educated and instructed patriotism was an absolute necessity of our imperial life".¹⁸¹ Milner echoed Parkin's words in informing the meeting that it was the duty of the enlightened and progressive members of society to guide and indeed to create public opinion. In this regard, he went on, "the very essence of a sound national education" was instruction in the life and meaning of the Empire. It was ignorance, said Milner, that threatened to disrupt the Empire. Accordingly he raised the battle cry which served to rally the supporters of imperial education to the League of the Empire, the Victoria League, and the Royal Colonial Institute in the Edwardian age. "It is against that ignorance", proclaimed Milner, "that we are waging war."

Thus between approximately 1900 and 1907 the connection between education and imperial unity impressed itself clearly on the consciousness of imperialists. But the real battle to reach public opinion through education was not waged by the Haldanes, the Roseberys, and the Milners. Instead it was prosecuted by the three private societies already mentioned. Indeed the activities of these three bodies served to sharpen the Edwardians' consciousness of the need for an imperial education. Conversely the current tendency to couple education with the cause of national efficiency paved the way for the growth of these

societies and insured that there would be a body of sympathetic support for them. Throughout the next two decades the L. of E., the V.L., and the R.C.I. took up the ideas espoused by Forster, Seeley, and the other late-Victorian proponents of imperial education. In the process they attempted to demonstrate how the supposed age-old latent reserves of imperial sentiment could be systematically tapped, channelled, and translated into a potent force in the struggle for imperial unity.

FOOTNOTES

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- ⁷P. Deane and W. A. Cole, British Economic Growth: Trends and Structure 1688-1957 (Cambridge, 1967), p. 27.
- ⁸J. R. Seeley, The Expansion of England (1902 ed.; London, 1883), pp. 298-300.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Bodelsen, Studies, p. 131.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 208.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴Imperialism in Canada, ed. R. D. Page (Toronto, 1972), p. 5.

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²⁹Ibid.

³⁰The Kindergarten's estimate of its own importance in securing South African union has lately been challenged by W. Nimocks in his Milner's Young Men: The "Kindergarten" in Edwardian Imperial Affairs (Durham, N.C., 1968), pp. 120-22.

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³²Gollin, Proconsul, p. 167.

³³Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 205.

³⁴Ibid., p. 190.

³⁵Ibid., p. 211.

³⁶Ibid., p. 217.

³⁷J. A. Froude, The English in the West Indies (London, 1888), p. 245.

³⁸Bodelsen, Studies, p. 186.

³⁹Froude, West Indies, p. 245.

⁴⁰J. A. Froude, Oceana (London, 1886), pp. 306-307.

⁴¹Froude, West Indies, p. 324.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Bodelsen, Studies, p. 192.

⁴⁴Froude, West Indies, p. 1.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 328.

⁴⁶J. E. C. Welldon, "The Imperial Aspects of Education", Proceedings of the R.C.I., XXVI (1894-95), p. 334.

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54 A. J. Balfour to Philip Kerr, 18 March 1911, ibid., 49797, p. 13.

55 V.L.M.N. (June 1912), p. 52.

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⁶⁸Ibid., p. vi.

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⁷³Willison, Parkin, p. 86.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 155.

⁷⁵Rhodes to Lord Grey, 25 August 1901, Rosebery
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⁹²Ibid., p. 117.

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175 R. B. Haldane to Lord Rosebery, 3 December 1911, Haldane Papers, 10030, ff.152-54.

176 C. W. Boyd (Secretary to the Rhodes Trust) to Rosebery, 19 October 1903, Rosebery Papers, Box 109.

177 The Times, 23 April 1907, p. 11.

178 Ibid., 12 April 1907, p. 6. The signatories included seven ex-governors-general, Lord Strathcona, George Parkin, Sir George Goldie, Lord Brassey, Lord Roberts, Lord Milner, Sir Bartel Frere, and the chairman of Lloyds among many others.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid., 20 April 1907, p. 9.

181 Ibid., 24 April 1907, p. 4. All subsequent references to the meetings are drawn from this item in The Times.

CHAPTER TWO
THE LEAGUE OF THE EMPIRE:
THE EARLY YEARS 1901-1907

I

By 1900 the British Empire encompassed more than one quarter of the earth's land surface and population. It may, therefore, seem somewhat incongruous that the task of trying to unite this sprawling global community through education was left to three rather small imperial clubs in London. On the one hand, this situation may have simply reflected the emphasis which most Edwardians continued to place on alternative solutions to the problem of imperial federation. On the other, it must be remembered that Edwardian England still by and large adhered to an individualistic conception of social action and in general preferred private initiative to State interference. Thus it was still fairly common practice to look, not to the State, but to the private sector for leadership, even in matters of vital national importance.

In fact London was virtually honeycombed with small activist clubs, each promoting its own particular cause. There were the Fabian Society and the Co-Efficients Club, as well as the Compatriots Club, the Ethical Society, and the Rainbow Circle, all of which claimed to have comprehen-

sive cures for the ills of the nation. Putting forth somewhat less exalted programmes were, to name but a few, the League of Mercy, the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas, the League of Pity, the Duty and Discipline Movement, the Empire Day Movement, and, during the war, the League for the Marrying of Wounded Heroes. Earlier, of course, there had been the I.F.L., the United Empire League, the Tariff Reform League, and the ever present multitude of charitable organizations.

Some of these bodies, like the Round Table and the Fabians, were dynamic and highly influential. Others such as the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas, which sought to fund the construction of a dreadnaught out of public subscriptions, have, not unjustly, escaped the attention of historians. Great or small, however, these private clubs absorbed an enormous amount of the community's energy and taken as a whole represented a potent political and social force operating independently of Parliament. Seen in this light, the League of the Empire, the Victoria League, and the Royal Colonial Institute were perfectly typical of late Victorian and Edwardian institutional life.

In a broader context it has been suggested that an extra-Parliamentary approach to solving the nation's problems became increasingly more common during the decade before the Great War.¹ The real struggle for women's rights went on in the streets, not in the House of Commons.

Again, Parliament proved largely unable to cope with the growing volume of labour unrest and industrial warfare. To a great many people besides Milner the political system seemed incapable of meeting efficiently the requirements of the new century. In this atmosphere it is understandable that many sought for national and imperial salvation outside the framework of established political institutions.

Therefore, to the singular Edwardian mind there was nothing incongruous about the attempts of small élite groups to influence and shape public opinion. Thus during the first two decades of the twentieth century the League of the Empire and the Royal Colonial Institute, with some assistance from the Victoria League, confidently set themselves the task of tapping through education the supposed latent reserves of imperial sentiment to which Froude, Haldane, and others had alluded. At the outset the League of the Empire provided the leadership in this direction. Later the R.C.I. would assume the prime initiative. Throughout, the Victoria League was content to play a lesser role in support of the other two institutions. From time to time the methods of these bodies tended to differ. Indeed, there was often real conflict among them concerning the means by which they ought to achieve their goal. But the goal of promoting imperial unity by means of education was shared by all three.

In the early years of the century this goal was not precisely defined. When the League of the Empire and the Victoria League first emerged in 1901 they were merely two more clubs to be added to the already swollen catalogue of private societies which dotted London's checkered landscape. The purpose and functions of the V.L. were to remain rather imprecise throughout the period; but the L. of E. quickly developed from a sort of pen-pal club for children into an Empire-wide society bent on inculcating the gospel of imperial unity through education, primarily at a popular level. Indeed by 1907 the L. of E. came to enjoy the status of a clearing centre for information on imperial education and a semi-official liaison between Whitehall and the Empire's vast array of educational jurisdictions. In 1901, however, the future of this institution was only dimly perceived as the League began its long career as a body fostering imperial education.

II

In 1901 the birth of both the League of the Empire and the Victoria League went largely unnoticed. Press coverage of their inaugurals was superficial and even those few early journals of the leagues which have survived were extremely vague about the origins of the two bodies. Initially, however, it is clear that no grandiose ambition

was entertained to promote a revolution in public opinion. The stated goal of the L. of E. was simply "to inspire personal and active interest in the Empire . . . , and to promote educational and friendly intercommunication between its different parts" and this through the diffusion of knowledge of and sympathy for the Empire among the school-children of Britain and the colonies.² This was clearly reflected in its original name, the League of the Children of the Empire, which was only altered when the scope of the League's activities was expanded after 1903.³

For its part the Victoria League's declared aims were even less ambitious. The first council meeting of the V.L. stated that

this association holds itself ready as far as possible to support and assist any scheme leading to a more intimate understanding between ourselves and our fellow subjects in our great colonies and dependencies.⁴

The key words in this statement of purpose are "support and assist". Throughout its history the V.L. was content to play a supporting role in the promotion of imperial education. This limited approach may have been the result of sober reflection upon the meagre capital resources which the V. L. had at its disposal. But financial weakness does not afford a complete explanation of the League's policy. The L. of E. and the R.C.I. were equally wanting in this respect. Indeed throughout the first decades of the century

all three societies continually depended on donations and on grants from the Rhodes Trust.

An explanation of the limited role assumed by the V.L. might be found in the fact that it was largely a women's club operating in what was predominantly a man's world. Most of the key positions on the League's executive were held by the wives and daughters of prominent political and social figures. Thus the central committee included a Miss Balfour and the wives of two future colonial secretaries, Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton and the Countess of Crewe. The presidency was held throughout the period by Margaret Elizabeth Leigh, Lady Jersey, wife of the former governor of New South Wales.

Lady Jersey never defined her imperialism in precise terms, but her attitude to the role of women in the life of the nation was quite clear and had a strong impact on the outlook of the entire V.L. A forceful woman, she took a keen interest in raising the status of women and this may account for the central role which she played in the foundation and development of the V.L.⁵ But Lady Jersey had little or no sympathy with the radical suffragettes.⁶ What staunch member of the Conservative Party and the Primrose League could? Rather, she adopted a gradualist approach to improving the status of women. She was concerned primarily that they be allowed to take an active, if for the moment somewhat secondary part in politics and

society.

At any rate this was the stance that the V.L. adopted under her guidance. As she later explained, the League was in full sympathy with other bodies which sought to foster imperial unity through educational means, but she considered many of their projects, such as the calling of Empire-wide conferences and elaborate textbook schemes, to be "beyond our attainment".⁷ The V.L., she continued, was prepared to "support and assist" the R.C.I. and the L. of E. in their more elaborate schemes, but on its own was content to specialize in "little jobs", such as newspaper distribution, that brought individuals together.⁸ In fact the V.L. saw itself and functioned as something not unlike an imperial ladies auxiliary.

It would appear that the V.L. began life as a charitable organization. Assistance to widows of the South African War and the provision of grave markings for the fallen were its first undertakings.⁹ This charitable work was the major priority of the V.L. during its early years and only rarely did it speak on behalf of imperial education. Its other activities included serving as a centre to which colonial visitors could come for assistance and information. In fact Leopold Amery, then an associate of the Milner Kindergarten and a member of the V.L.'s central committee, later recalled that he viewed this as

the League's primary function.¹⁰

On the other hand, the League of the Empire tended to dominate the campaign for imperial education from 1901 to 1914 and in time its sole function became that of furthering imperial unity through education. Unlike those of the V.L., the leaders of the L. of E. were not content to sit back and wait for others to lead the way. Despite its equally slim financial reserves, the League was not averse to initiating large-scale projects to carry its ideas into effect.

In the absence of any direct evidence it is extremely difficult to document the origins of the L. of E. Its earliest journals and minute books were lost or destroyed in an air raid which carried away large sections of the R.C.I.'s library in the early 1940s. However, its first president, Donald Smith, Lord Strathcona, certainly played a part in the foundation of the League. Immensely wealthy and already past eighty in 1901, Strathcona was one of the grand old men of imperial circles. His long and colourful career on the frontiers of Empire had seen him rise to the office of director of that old imperial factor, the Hudson's Bay Company. Later he served as a member of Parliament in Ottawa and at the turn of the century capped an illustrious life by accepting the post of Canadian High Commissioner in London.

♦

Strathcona was noted for his public benefactions both in Canada and Great Britain. His name was always at or near the top of any list when fundraisers were canvassing for donations to imperial and educational causes.¹¹ During the South African War Strathcona raised and equipped a complete cavalry regiment out of his own purse. He also donated handsomely to Haldane's Imperial College of Science and Technology.¹² His interest in a body like the L. of E., which sponsored both of his major interests, education and Empire, was understandable. It is not unlikely that he provided some of the original capital needed to launch the League.

The chairman of the League from 1901 to 1923 was Sir Philip Hutchins, who, as noted, also served as a member of Chamberlain's Visual Instruction Committee. Within the structure of the L. of E. the president, though active, tended to be a figurehead; it was the chairman who made the day-to-day decisions along with his council. In this respect Hutchins was probably a good man for the office. He was a well-travelled imperialist and an experienced committee man. He had spent fifty years of service in India, first in the employ of the East India Company and then as a judge on the bench of the High Court of Madras. So successful was he in the latter capacity that in 1898 he was appointed to the Council of India. He retired in 1908, after the customary ten years of service, to devote his

full energies to the League of the Empire.¹³

As the journals indicate, however, the most dynamic individual at the League was its organizing secretary, Mrs. E. M. Ord Marshall. In later years when the Federal Conference on Education, an offspring of the League, wished to tender a vote of thanks to that institution, it was Mrs. Marshall who was singled out for praise.¹⁴ But who was Mrs. Ord Marshall? Extensive research into the journals of the League, newspapers of the period, and other standard biographical sources has failed to yield even the smallest fragment of information regarding the identity of this central figure. She seems to have been lost in the passage of time. In her rare public utterances Mrs. Marshall has told us little of herself. A knowledge of this woman's life and views would most certainly cast much light upon the rather obscure origins of the League. In the absence of such information one is, unfortunately, reduced to mere speculation.

Yet the question remains as to why a patriotic society like the League was founded in 1901. It might be suggested that the general atmosphere at the turn of the century was favourable to the development of a body that would come to stress the achievement of imperial unity through public education. But what supplied the immediate spark? In all likelihood the South African War probably played a key role in inspiring the League's foundation.

Altogether apart from its visible military, diplomatic, and imperial consequences, the war had a tremendous impact on the moral credibility of the imperial idea, especially in the heartland of the Empire itself. The conscience of many metropolitan Englishmen was outraged by the new methods of civilian control employed on the veldt. The chief cause of the humanitarian outcry raised by David Lloyd George, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Emily Hobhouse was the institution of concentration camps wherein hundreds of Boers were herded together in unsanitary conditions, a situation which produced a high mortality rate among them. British reprisals for guerrilla raids in the form of farm burnings added to the sense of shock. In addition, Britain had suffered heavy Continental criticism because this was a war waged not against Zulus or Afghans, who could, it was held, be expected to profit by the imposition of white rule, but against the European inhabitants of two small nation states. A war undertaken in the name of liberty had degenerated, it appeared, into a bid for the forcible annexation of the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State.

The moral crisis precipitated by events in South Africa opened the door to a barrage of criticism directed against imperialism. Its chief expression in the anti-imperial treatise par excellence of the period was J. A. Hobson's Imperialism A Study, published in 1902.

Hobson condemned imperialism as a "retrograde step fraught with grave perils to the cause of civilization".¹⁵ He argued that in national terms it was an unprofitable venture from which only a small number of armaments merchants, industrialists, and investors drew profit. "The really dynamic force behind imperial expansion, he continued, was the international conspiracy directed by a compact group of powerful Jewish financiers who had the politicians of Europe at their beck and call. In Hobson's mind it was all a question of conscious, calculating exploitation.

This is the largest, plainest instance history presents of the social parasitic process by which the moneyed interest within the State, usurping the reins of government, makes for imperial expansion in order to fasten economic suckers into foreign bodies so as to drain them of their wealth in order to support domestic luxury. The new Imperialism differs in no vital point from the old example.¹⁶

To Hobson, those who prated about the "White Man's Burden" and a civilizing mission were no more than the manipulated dupes of overfed capitalists. Far from being the most tangible expression of England's supposed Providential destiny, imperialism was a perversion of true nationalism which, in Hobson's opinion, tended towards pacific internationalism. Thus, "imperialism", he wrote,

is a depraved choice of national life . . .
[whose] adoption as a policy implies a deliberate renunciation of that cultivation of higher inner qualities which for a nation as for an individual constitutes the ascendancy of reason over brute impulse. It is the besetting sin of all successful

States, and its penalty is unalterable in the order of nature.¹⁷

That part of Hobson's thought which dealt with imperialism as a capitalist conspiracy and a form of moral degeneracy found a ready-made market among humanitarians and the labour movement.¹⁸ The humanitarians had already made many of these points. Labour, on the other hand, was developing a similar case before the publication of Hobson's book. To the vocal elements of the working classes imperialism often seemed to be a simple extension of domestic capitalist exploitation.

In any event, the legacy of this crisis of conscience was long-lived and those who later championed the cause of imperial education were fully aware of the need to deflate the Hobsonian critique. Indeed, it has with justice been said that as a result of the South African War the imperial idea suffered a moral contraction from which it never fully recovered.¹⁹ Thus when Parkin wrote and spoke of the coming battle for public opinion his words must have rung true in the ears of men like Hutchins, Strathcona, and the other leaders of the L. of E. This would account for the emphasis which the League placed on inculcating in the young a knowledge of and loyalty to the Empire.

Moreover, this urge to inspire loyalty was wedded to a desire to avoid the tensions aroused by political approaches to the question of imperial unity. Throughout

its history the League emphasized its unofficial nature and its non-controversial approach. In a plea for financial assistance issued in 1904 the League made this policy quite clear. "Surely those", read the advertisement,

who value the providing of a medium for Imperial unity on entirely uncontroversial lines built upon a sound educational basis . . . should come forward and help the League.²⁰

These ideas were again stressed in 1910 in a report likely written by Mrs. Marshall. The main purpose of the League since its foundation, the report said, was to reinforce the intangible, spiritual bonds of Empire.²¹ This in essence was the raison d'être of the L. of E. from 1901 to the mid-twenties.

III

The first project undertaken by the League was a pen-pal programme known as the Comrades Correspondence Scheme. In the beginning this was viewed simply as a means whereby children throughout the Empire could be put in touch with one another on an informal, personal basis. It was hoped that familiarity would breed understanding and mutual sympathy. No attempt was made at the outset to indoctrinate the youthful correspondents in the ideals of Empire. It was felt, however, that the scheme would naturally lead to a growing awareness of imperial affairs at a simple level

and would thereby serve to stimulate a basic loyalty in children.

The scheme progressed very slowly until 1903 when the timely assistance of Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, saved it from oblivion. Responding to the overtures of the League, most probably made through Hutchins who was a member of Chamberlain's Visual Instruction Committee, the Colonial Secretary despatched a circular letter to all of the colonies recommending the scheme and outlining the aims and objects of the League in the hope that this would lead to close relations between it and schools throughout the Empire.²² The League's work undoubtedly recommended itself to Chamberlain because it corresponded so closely with that of his own Visual Instruction Committee.

Chamberlain's influence seems to have turned the tide in favour of the correspondence programme. By 1903 it had attracted some 700 participants from all over the Empire.²³ It was, admittedly, a small beginning, but thereafter the project gained momentum and in 1906 it boasted over 3,000 registered correspondents.²⁴ The real boom, however, came between 1907 and 1913 by which time there were over 26,000 members enrolled.²⁵ The reason for this upsurge of interest may have been the attention which the approach of war drew to the Empire. Whatever the cause, the League's leaders took the scheme's success as

clear proof of the existence of a market for imperially-oriented programmes of public education. In the process the modest ambitions of the early years were greatly magnified. A simple pen-pal project was coming to be viewed as the beginning of a long march toward imperial unity. The intangible bonds had at last been tested and, in the League's opinion, proven to be viable. By 1910 the Annual Report of the League exuded confidence. "The imperial value of this work", it read, "is hardly to be estimated."²⁶

This optimistic assessment of the Correspondence Scheme reflected the growth and expansion of the League after 1903. Its organization and contacts with outside bodies broadened considerably, as did the scope and range of its activities. The success of the correspondence scheme and the essay contests, which were added to the League's repertoire in 1903, encouraged its leaders to diversify their schemes and broaden their ambitions.

The pen-pal project had served to bring the League into contact with official educational bodies throughout the Empire. In his 1903 despatch Chamberlain had encouraged colonial educational authorities to affiliate themselves with the League in order to strengthen the fabric of the Empire. This helped to pave the way after 1904 for the formal affiliation of the League with an expanding network

of colonial boards of education. In that year the League was designated by several such boards as their official representative in London. Among the boards accepting the agency of the League were those of the Cape Colony, the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony, Rhodesia, Manitoba, Burma, Ceylon, Jamaica, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Tasmania, Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.²⁷ The League's function in this connection was to serve as an honest broker among the various jurisdictions involved. Initially the League merely used these contacts to facilitate the exchange of information on educational and imperial affairs. As we shall see, however, these connections in later years served as the basis of the League's efforts to construct an imperial educational federation. In any case these early affiliations marked the beginning of the League's role as a recognized, semi-official educational body linking the colonies with the metropolis.

The pen-pal scheme also provided the impetus behind the rapid expansion of the League's branch organization. In this regard the efforts of the League proved highly successful. Indeed, chapters were established as far afield as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the Antilles and the reports from these offshoots were encouraging. In 1906 the Southlands, New Zealand branch reported that it had staged an essay contest which had attracted one hundred and

five papers. The two topics for discussion were "Why Should I be Loyal to the Empire?" and "Our Flag -- The Union Jack".²⁸ Word came from the other side of the globe in the same year that the New Brunswick chapter had staged its first Empire Day celebrations and had made enough profit out of collections to finance a local newsletter on imperial affairs.²⁹ An Argentinian branch, based on the large British commercial community there, was founded in 1906 and within a year boasted some 558 members.³⁰ Reports from the Cape, Barbados, Ontario, and a number of other branches were equally encouraging.

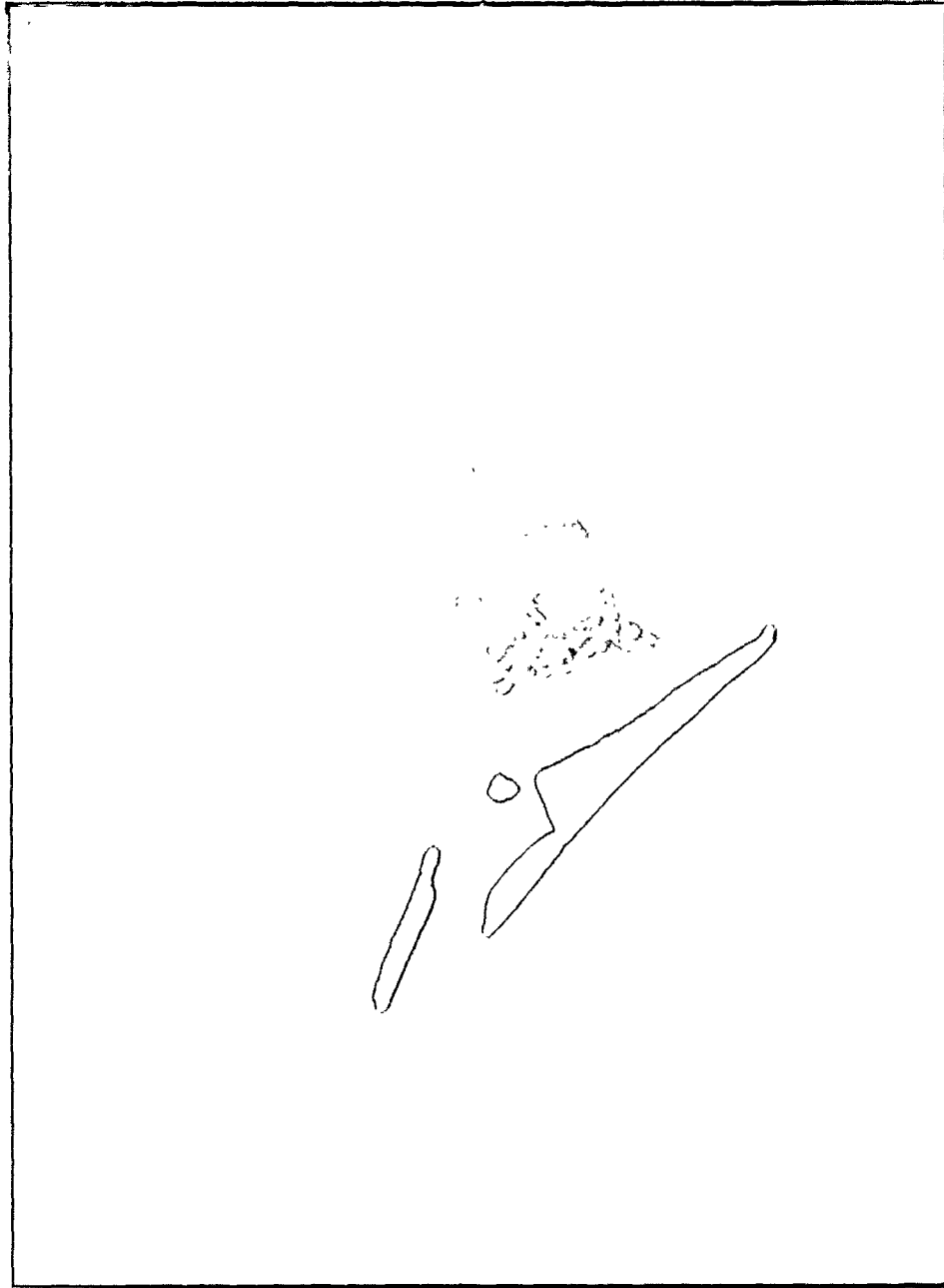
From a narrow metropolitan base the League thus expanded both its activities and its organizational structure. Now it was something more than a mere London club; it was a global organization. However, this Empire-wide society was very loosely knit since the overseas branches enjoyed a high degree of local autonomy and initiative. The central London body merely set the tone and pointed the way to new programmes. The branches were, nonetheless, extremely useful tools for the gathering of information and were frequently employed to sound out local opinion and to serve as liaisons with educational authorities overseas.

The League's scope of activity was soon considerably broadened. To an ever increasing extent, its leaders

were coming to feel that the future of the Empire would depend on the support of public goodwill and moral conviction. In 1904 Lord Meath, the British leader of the Empire Day Movement, about which more will be said later, told his colleagues at the League that "it is the moral character of the people of a nation which determines its position in the world".³¹ This Gladstonian statement may appear somewhat out of place in an age of international Realpolitik, indeed when George Bernard Shaw could proclaim that God was on the side of the big battalions. Nevertheless it sums up the type of thinking which was coming to the fore, not only at the League, but elsewhere in Edwardian society.

For his part, Haldane felt that "it is not brute force, but moral power, that commands predominance in the world".³² What he was recommending was not ivory tower idealism but the combination of strength of character and intellectual power which, in his opinion, had been the keys to the recovery of Germany after Jena and the rise of modern Japan.³³ These were themes that lingered in the minds of Edwardian imperialists and drew men like George Parkin into the Duty and Discipline Movement during the period.³⁴

It was widely held that substantive national and imperial power could only be founded on a morally united and emotionally stimulated populace. An anonymous lecturer



SIR CHARLES PRESTWOOD LUCAS

told the League in 1905 of an example that might be followed with profit. With Japan about to conclude a successful war against Russia, the speaker's admiration for the new oriental power knew no bounds. He pointed out that Japanese patriotism was almost a religion and was systematically inculcated in schoolchildren of even the tenderest years.³⁵ Here obviously was a model to be followed; it was the schoolmaster who was winning the war for Japan. Why, the lecturer asked, could he not also fight the battles of the British Empire? It is entirely possible, although there is no evidence to indicate this, that the leaders of the League were familiar with the ideas of France's Georges Sorel and Henri Bergson who insisted that national survival in the international contest of power would depend on the development of an élan vital in the people.³⁶

With these thoughts in mind, the League approached the Headmaster's Conference in 1904 with a proposal to institute an imperial lectures programme in secondary schools.³⁷ It was at this point that the tactics and strategy of the League shifted from a simple desire to expand personal contacts throughout the Empire to an urge to propagate the imperial gospel directly. The Headmaster's Conference approved the lecture scheme and a staff of speakers was assembled comprising for the most part experienced teachers from Oxford and Cambridge. Unfor-

tunately, none of their names have been recorded. One suspects, however, that the list included a number of those academics who later served in a similar capacity with the R.C.I.

Nor was the general public ignored. A series of open Sunday afternoon lectures was launched in 1905 in order to augment those aimed at the schools. These Sunday gatherings at Caxton Hall, the headquarters of the League, became a regular feature of the League's round of activities before the Great War. They were usually reported in the press, but only one of the texts has survived, the speech on Japanese patriotism already cited. In any case, it was recognized at the outset that some spice would have to be added to the recipe in order to make it more appetizing to the general public. Accordingly, the addresses were prefaced by musical overtures and the meetings concluded with audience participation in popular songs.

Public and secondary school lectures were supplemented by the cultivation of the emotive symbols of Empire. The League had a keen appreciation of the value of appeals to raw emotion. An insight into their thought on this matter is available in an address by E. B. Sargant to the R.C.I. in 1906 which described the aims and objects of the League. Significantly, it was entitled "Federal Tendencies

in Education".³⁸ E. B. Sargant was well placed to expound upon this theme. He had been the director of education in the Orange River Colony during Milner's régime and seems to have shared the latter's view that education should be used to instil imperial sympathies in the otherwise recalcitrant Boers.³⁹ He had been among those who had sought to submerge Boer culture in an educational system heavily weighted in favour of British and imperial values. Upon his return to England Sargant became one of the spokesmen for imperial education and a member of the L. of E., the V.L., and the R.C.I. He gravitated to these bodies rather than to the Round Table because he too believed that political solutions to the question of imperial unity would have to await the laying of a secure emotional and educational basis for federation.

In his address to the R.C.I. Sargant maintained that the English were particularly negligent when it came to cultivating the emotions of schoolchildren. Sargant contended that English imperialists and educators alike had not fully realised the importance of symbolism in their attempts to arouse enthusiasm for imperial consolidation. He advocated making flag-raising ceremonies a compulsory part of the daily routine of all schools in Britain, and he also urged that Empire Day be made a pivotal point in the extracurricular life of England's educational institutions. Sargant took

great pains to point out that this simple emotional appeal would provide a non-partisan means of achieving the closer union of the Empire and at the same time avoid the danger of aggravating colonial sensibilities. He called on his audience to support the League which at the moment was the only body capable of acting as a co-ordinating centre for imperial education at home and abroad.

Sargant's opinions seem to have been a fairly faithful reflection of the current of thought at Caxton Hall. The Federal Magazine, the journal of the League, came to be crammed with advertisements promoting the symbols of Empire. Song sheets featuring "God Save the King", "Song of Australia", and "The Maple Leaf Forever" were offered to the juvenile reader. Empire Day and Union Jack postcards were also prominent items promoted by the League along with various patriotic badges and shoulder flashes. A whole series of imperially oriented historical plays, written for school drama clubs and amateur theatre groups, were designed to bring home the romance and significance of Britain's imperial heritage in an entertaining and dramatic fashion. Historical calendars featuring imperial heroes were also put on sale. All of these novelties were designed to keep the symbols of imperial unity before schoolchildren and thereby instil loyalty. Of course, they were also seen, undoubtedly, as dependable sources of revenue of which the League was in constant need.

Similarly, the League was instrumental in helping to popularize one of the most successful appeals to imperial sentiment ever devised, the keeping of Empire Day. In 1904 Lord Meath assumed the international leadership of the Empire Day Movement, an idea born in Hamilton, Ontario in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It was Meath, however, who was responsible for spreading the celebration of this day to all corners of the Empire. This movement came to be closely linked, first with the League and then with the R.C.I. and may be considered an essential part of their overall campaign on behalf of imperial unity.

The growing network of colonial branches of the League became the primary vehicles by which the holiday was spread to, among other parts of the Empire, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia. Within a year of taking up this cause the League's exertions began to bear fruit. As early as 1905 its efforts were recognized by the English Board of Education. In that year the Board instructed all of its schools currently affiliated with the League to hold ceremonies commemorating Empire Day and to proclaim a half-day holiday.⁴⁰ In later years the League's activities in this field became more and more elaborate, involving mass parades and demonstrations.

The formation of the History Section in 1904 marked a further stage in the League's development. In time the attitude of this committee came to dominate the League's

approach to curricular reform and determined that the focal point of its attention in this area would be the promotion of imperial history as an academic discipline. This concern with imperial history would become one of the great themes of those at the League and the R.C.I. who took up the cause of imperial education. This, of course, is perfectly understandable when one considers that many of the leading figures of these two societies were either professional or amateur historians.

The two principal members of the History Section were Albert Frederick Pollard and Hugh Edward Egerton. Their colleagues included the historians John Bury, Herbert Fisher, and Ernest Gardner, and the noted publisher, John Murray. From 1904 to the post-war era the History Section in their hands developed a consistent policy toward the fostering of imperial history in schools and among the general public as well. A consideration of some of their motives will reveal a great deal about the goals and aspirations of the League at this juncture.

A. F. Pollard was a professional historian who identified himself early in his career with a movement promoting the professionalization and expansion of history as a formal discipline. His work at the League must be viewed as an extension of this overriding preoccupation. He is remembered as the foremost Tudor historian of his age, as the founder of the Historical Association and the

Institute of Historical Research, and as one who took a keen interest in academic politics. His historical interests were general rather than exclusively Tudor in orientation and encompassed imperial history as well. Pollard's main income, however, came from his tenure of the lectureship in Constitutional History at the University of London, a post which he occupied from 1903 to 1931.

The first major indication of Pollard's concern with the status of history as a discipline came shortly after he joined the L. of E. when in 1906 he acted as the prime founder of the Historical Association.⁴¹ According to the charter members of that body the state of historical studies in Britain was woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the time. As T. F. Tout, the Association's first president, put it, "historians are still rather feeble folk; they still have to clamour for recognition".⁴² The Historical Association was designed to draw all the members of the profession together in order to make that "clamouring" more effective. Pollard, Tout, and their associates became convinced that something would have to be done to improve the status of their discipline. Too often, they felt, history was handed over to teachers who lacked the proper qualifications or even the interest to teach it well.⁴³ In most schools the classics and mathematics absorbed well over half and sometimes three quarters of the classroom

work. The remaining time was divided up among Divinity, French, and "English subjects", of which History was only one.⁴⁴

This was the atmosphere in which Pollard found himself. Like most of his colleagues at the League and the Association, he felt that this deplorable condition was of vital national significance not only because it weakened Britain's academic community, but also because it meant that the new generation of working class children was not being properly trained to understand its national and imperial responsibilities. Pollard saw the rise of an untutored mass electorate as a distinct threat to the survival of Britain and the Empire. His colleague at the University of London, F. J. C. Hearnshaw, was not very sanguine about the future of the Empire under a democracy so long as that democracy allowed itself, because of its ignorance of history, to be swayed by passion and prejudice.⁴⁵

Pollard echoed Hearnshaw's concern and upheld the belief, as did the other members of the League and the Association who, like Seeley, believed that the role of the historian was to train citizens. History was seen as the great school of politics without a knowledge of which a man or a nation tended to drift toward unforeseen disasters. "The cry for democratic control", Pollard argued, "is illogical without a precedent demand for democratic education."⁴⁶ In this regard his thought was in complete

accord with the efficiency group and their forerunners such as W. E. Forster and Matthew Arnold. Pollard felt that the absence of an historical education had led to an impatience with established institutions and an inadequate sense of perspective. "The dangerous revolutionist", he contended, "is commonly a person with little knowledge of history or practical experience in politics".⁴⁷

With respect to imperial affairs, Pollard was convinced that "the only sound and permanent basis for an Empire lies in an instructed people".⁴⁸ Enlarging on this line of thought, E. A. Gardner, professor of history at the University of London and later deputy chairman of the League, stated that "the people of a great Empire must be instructed in its history and filled with a love of it, but both patriotism and efficiency must be inspired by spiritual aims".⁴⁹ In other words, Gardner was interested in educating the public to accept imperial ideals but completely rejected the tainting influence of jingoism. In fact, this was the outlook to which the League as a whole tended to subscribe.

Pollard for his part, found an intellectual home in the climate generated at Caxton Hall, particularly where the question of imperial consolidation was concerned. Although he prized imperial unity, he had no faith whatever in the project of political federation. To Pollard

constitutions and political institutions were the products of evolutionary growth, rather than of conscious design or legislative enactments.⁵⁰ Consequently, he argued, there was no point in trying to force the premature development of a new imperial constitution. Indeed, he had no patience with the "constitution-mongers", as he termed them, and instead called on imperialists to emphasize the spirit which bound the Empire together.⁵¹

There was, perhaps, an element of historical fatalism in all this. Yet Pollard was optimistic about the future. "If", he wrote, "I am tainted with historical fatalism in Imperial politics, it is a fatalism of faith and not of fear."⁵² While the growth of an imperial constitution could not be artificially stimulated, Pollard was convinced that the spirit essential to unity could be nurtured by means of education. Hence he found the ideas of the L. of E. attractive. His motives, however, were mixed and included a desire to further the growth of his own profession as well as a genuine interest in imperial affairs. He undoubtedly felt at home in the company of Gardner, Hutchins, and the other members of the League. Certainly he shared a good deal in common with Hugh Edward Egerton, who also played a vital role in developing the History Section of the L. of E.

Egerton had already independently reached the

conclusion before he joined the L. of E. in 1904 that the future unity of the Empire was linked to education and particularly to the study of history. His interest in the historical development of the Empire was fired by the publication of Seeley's Expansion which made a deep and lasting impression on him as did Sir Charles Lucas.⁵³ As a result Egerton became a convinced imperialist for the rest of his days. In 1886 Egerton was appointed to the Emigrants' Information Office, thanks to the timely recommendation of his cousin, Edward Stanhopè, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lucas was the chairman of this committee and was an ardent imperialist keenly interested in the history of the Empire. He put Egerton to work compiling a handbook on the colonies. In the process of gathering information for this project Egerton was struck by the absence of an authoritative account of imperial history. Much as he admired Seeley's pioneering efforts, he became acutely aware of the Expansion's serious limitations as a comprehensive historical survey. In his opinion, it was a brilliant outline but lacked detail and depth.

Thus Egerton set to work elaborating upon Seeley's suggestive model of imperial history. Throughout the next ten years he spent virtually all his leisure hours amassing material for a comprehensive survey of imperial history. In his research he drew on official reports, letters, and

speeches that had never before been tapped by historians. The end product was the publication in 1897 of A Short History of British Colonial Policy. In the opinion of Reginald Coupland, Egerton's successor at Oxford, the work was the outcome of a vast amount of pioneering research and genuine scholarship.⁵⁴ The book was well received and widely read in the dominions as well as in Great Britain. It ran to six editions before 1920 and made Egerton's reputation almost overnight.

In 1900 Egerton produced a short biography of Sir Stamford Raffles, followed by the publication of Sir William Molesworth's collected speeches in 1903.⁵⁵ As a result of these efforts he was offered the opportunity of pursuing his historical interests on a full-time basis. In 1905 Otto Beit established a chair in colonial history at Oxford, the only chair of its kind in Great Britain, and it must have been especially gratifying to Egerton to have been selected as its first occupant. In his inaugural address he made a clear statement of his views on the imperial function of history. "The time has come", he said, "when the history of England should be identified with the history of the English Empire."⁵⁶ To Egerton it was a humiliating reflection that imperial history was so little studied in British universities.

Ignorance of the subject, he contended, was not only academically unpardonable, it was imperially harmful. Egerton noted that "the cause which more than any other wrecked our first Colonial Empire was the lack of imagination shown by Englishmen at home". In his view the whole purpose of the Beit foundation was to ensure that this did not happen again. He went on to say that the study of imperial history could be of inestimable value in the struggle to achieve imperial unity. It could, in other words, be employed to elucidate the chief principles of imperial life and thereby draw attention to those intangible bonds of sentiment which were the true sources of solidarity. Oxford, he argued, was the ideal place for the development of this approach to imperial education since Rhodes's scholarship scheme had made it "the intellectual meeting place of the Teutonic race".

Yet, although imperial unity was the great goal, Egerton, like Pollard, had little faith in formal approaches to imperial unity. He was frustrated and disillusioned by the myriad schemes being projected for the political consolidation of the Empire. As early as 1897 he had concluded that so great was the barrier raised by colonial nationalism that imperial federation had no hope for success in the foreseeable future. He complained that "so many forms of Federation have been proposed, and there is room for such wide difference of opinion between the advocates

of different plans, that it is impossible to discuss the subject in detail".⁵⁷ Moreover, given the strength of colonial objections, he assumed that any thrust toward federation would in the future have to come from the dominions if it were to be considered viable.⁵⁸ Even then it was more than likely, in his opinion, that federation would have to take a form other than that proposed in the past.⁵⁹

Egerton, however, was not given to despair concerning the unification of the Empire. True, there was a good deal of historical fatalism in his outlook just as there was in Pollard's. Yet he was firmly convinced that the Empire was developing according to some mysterious and only partially revealed divine plan. "Behind the mistakes and failures of individuals and generations", he wrote, "there grows upon us . . . the sense of an unseen superintending Providence controlling the development of the Anglo-Saxon race."⁶⁰ Indeed, Egerton was certain that "no ceaseless law of change [was] operating to make dissolution and decay inevitable".⁶¹ Imperial federation may not have been the answer to the problems posed by the issue of imperial consolidation, but other avenues to unity were open if men cared to explore them. In fact Egerton assumed that it was the duty of the historian to uncover the principles behind the Providential plan directing the Empire's evolution and to serve them up

as guides to the future.⁶²

Like Pollard and Seeley before him, Egerton was anxious to help train the future masters of society to appreciate and understand the Empire. Accordingly he stressed the need for "thematic selectivity" in the writing and teaching of imperial history so that the principles of Empire might be clearly portrayed to students and public alike. The themes chosen, he once said, should admit of general applicability and should be of real use in the practical task of shaping imperial citizens.⁶³ As will be seen later, a similar conclusion was drawn by C. P. Lucas and A. P. Newton who were subsequently associates of Egerton at the R.C.I.

Thus Egerton's work with the L. of E. and later the R.C.I. may be regarded as an attempt to put his historical assumptions to work. He may have been animated by a simple desire to foster his chosen discipline and thereby his own career. But, on balance, it would appear that Egerton was a sincere imperialist as well as an historian "clamouring for recognition". As he later wrote, "one may note occasional flaws, and yet, upon the whole, bow down with reverence before the majestic fabric of British [imperial] development".⁶⁴

It was the moral fervour and professional drive of Egerton and Pollard that gave impetus to the History Section

of the League. Its first major undertaking was what it termed the Imperial Textbook Scheme. In reality this project was a response to complaints from imperialists who, finally realizing the significance of education, were shocked to find a dearth of adequate material on the Empire's history.

For example, in February 1907 an open letter appeared in The Times from an A. H. P. Stoneham decrying the lack of historical works on the Empire.⁶⁵ Stoneham had been an unsuccessful Unionist candidate in the general election of 1906 in the Bosworth division of Leicestershire, and he had confined his addresses to colonial and imperial topics during the campaign. At a meeting of miners he had been asked to verify his statements about the Empire and, accordingly, he promised to send maps and books to all schools in the riding after the election in order to demonstrate the truth of his statements.

Upon returning to London he set about the task of gathering the materials but was disappointed to find that no government agency published an up-to-date map of the Empire and that, after much searching, Egerton's emigrants' pamphlet was the only work suited to the needs of school-children. Although the pamphlet was largely out of date Stoneham sent a copy to all the schools in the riding along with a map obligingly prepared by George Parkin. The

response to this gesture, he claimed, was "extraordinary" and he reported that the materials were received with "delight and enthusiasm". For some months thereafter Stoneham said that he had been deluged with requests from schools and clubs all over the British Isles for similar materials. No doubt he was still smarting from his defeat in the election and he may have exaggerated the seeming success of his latest venture. In any case, he complained that he was swamped with appeals and could not handle the work load alone. Consequently he called on imperialists everywhere to share his burden and to help finance adequate publications for the study of the Empire.

Whatever his motivations, Stoneham's letter produced an immediate response. It set off a train of events that led to the convening of the aforementioned Lord Mayor's conference on imperial education. However, it also prompted a somewhat disgruntled reaction from the L. of E. Replying to Stoneham in The Times, the League complained of his failure to point out its own contributions to imperial education.⁶⁶ The V.L. was equally upset since Stoneham was a member of that society and should have been aware of its efforts on behalf of education.⁶⁷ Indeed The Times became an open forum for the airing of views on this matter.

The pros and cons of this brief debate are of little consequence. The episode is of importance simply because it demonstrated a growing concern with the need to supply the reading public and the schools with books on imperial history. On this score the L. of E., in spite of what Stoneham said, appears to have been the first to tackle the issue systematically and this as early as 1905. In that year it had initiated a scheme to publish a graded series of textbooks on the Empire, one for adult readers, teachers, and the general public, another for secondary school students, and a third for primary and junior secondary schools.⁶⁸

Work on the advanced reference book began under Pollard's direction. Articles were solicited from knowledgeable men of affairs in the colonies rather than from professional scholars. In this way, it was hoped, the book would recommend itself as the result of first hand practical observation. The various drafts were supervised by a network of local groups at home and abroad. In all there were fifty such bodies formed in 1905 and they operated throughout the Empire in co-operation with the History Section of the League.⁶⁹ In turn, each article relating to the colonies was submitted for revision to the appropriate educational authority overseas;⁷⁰ the League

was very careful not to offend colonial sensibilities. As a result, the publication of this work was delayed until 1909 when it was finally published with the help of John Murray, who sat on the committee directing its compilation. The finished product, The British Empire: Its Past, Present and Future, was obviously the endeavour of many hands. It was a bulky and rambling tome in which the various articles, capsulizing the history of different colonies, bore little relation to one another. For this reason, it came under severe criticism from Egerton because it violated his dictum of thematic selectivity.⁷¹

In spite of Egerton's negative response, the advanced text of the League was on the whole treated to good reviews. This may have reflected the reviewer's genuine approval or their unwillingness to provoke some of the distinguished colonial figures who had contributed to the book. In any event there was praise all round. Lord Curzon wrote that "the book seems to be ably and impartially written, and it should conduce to patriotism as well as knowledge".⁷² The Contemporary Review and the Colonial Office Journal both gave the book high marks as an attempt to inspire imperial patriotism and in 1912 it was adopted by Oxford for use in its local examinations. Altogether the League was encouraged by this result and in 1910 and 1911 it proceeded to publish the next two volumes in the series.

On the surface, it would seem that the textbook scheme was highly successful. In reality, however, one is driven to question the effectiveness of the programme in the light of continuing complaints from various sources during and after the Great War about the lack of books for use in schools. There are no hints as to how well the League's texts actually sold. They were, however, never adopted as official Board of Education texts. As a result, as early as 1912, The Times renewed its call for the provision of books relating to imperial history.⁷³ As will be seen, similar pleas were a regular feature of the Imperial Education Conferences from 1911 to 1923. In fairness, it might be concluded that the League played an important role in directing attention to this issue but did not provide a very effective solution of its own.

On the positive side, the links forged between the League and colonial boards of education were further strengthened by the growth of local committees assisting the textbook scheme. Co-operation between the boards and the League in this matter was the first practical use to which the affiliations of 1904 and 1905 were put. The League was successful in promoting further attempts at joint action based on its local branches, affiliations, and the local history committees. In 1905 it secured the co-operation of most parts of the Empire in an Anglo-Indian

Exhibition of education and trade held at the Crystal Palace. In the view of the League all of this seemed to bode well for the expansion of the principle of co-ordination in imperial education.

In the meantime the non-political approach of the L. of E. to the question of imperial unity had been brought into clearer focus by Pollard and Egerton. This attitude was further strengthened by the addition of Hallam, Lord Tennyson who assumed the presidency in 1906. As the first Governor General of Australia, Tennyson had seen the growth of dominion nationalism at close hand and became convinced of the necessity of trying to achieve imperial consolidation by means other than purely political ones. Commenting in 1907 on the possibility of establishing an imperial parliament, Tennyson said that he considered the matter "neither practical nor desirable".⁷⁴ With Tennyson at the helm the League's non-political stance was reinforced.

Looking back on its formative period, the League by 1906 had come a long way from its early days as the promoter of a simple pen-pal scheme. Its organizational base had been considerably enlarged. It had developed a clear and well defined attitude to the question of achieving imperial consolidation by means of education. In terms of membership it boasted over 23,000 fee-paying fellows throughout the Empire.⁷⁵ Quasi-official recognition had

been received at home and abroad. The scope of its activities had expanded to encompass a grass-roots propaganda campaign, formal lectures in schools, and the promotion of imperial history as the main tool of curricular reform. Surveying this early period in its history, the Federal Magazine interpreted it as the starting point of a drive toward the educational federation of the Empire. In the optimistic words of this journal, "an extensive organization was thus actually established, touch with the whole Empire was obtained, [and] federation in education became a possibility".⁷⁶ Consequently, buoyed up by this evidence of success, the League decided on a bold step toward achieving an educational federation. It laid plans for the calling of authorities throughout the Empire to a Federal Conference on Education to be held in 1907.

FOOTNOTES

¹This theme has been most fully developed in G. Dangerfield's, The Strange Death of Liberal England (New York, 1961).

²L. of E. Monthly Record, V (October 1904), p. 38.

³Fed. Mag. (September 1908), p. 110.

⁴The Times (25 May 1901), p. 8.

⁵Ibid. (23 May 1945), p. 7.

⁶Ibid.

⁷V.L.M.N. (July 1918), p. 50.

⁸Ibid., p. 51.

⁹The Times (19 June 1902), p. 8.

¹⁰L. S. Amery, My Political Life, I, England Before the Storm (London, 1953), pp. 336-37.

¹¹The Times (22 January 1914), p. 5.

¹²R. B. Haldane to Lord Rosebery, 24 September 1902, Haldane Papers, 5905.

¹³For details on Hutchins' Indian career consult The Times (22 May 1928), p. 21 and P. P. Hutchins, An Indian Career 1858-1908 (Preston, 1927).

¹⁴Fed. Mag., VI (June-July 1907), p. 79.

¹⁵J. A. Hobson, Imperialism a Study (Ann Arbor, 1965), p. 13.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 367.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 368.

¹⁸This theme is fully developed in B. Porter's, Critics of Empire (London, 1968).

¹⁹A. P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and its Enemies (London, 1966), p. 109.

²⁰L. of E. Monthly Record, V (October 1904), p. 32.

²¹Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1910-1911), p. 5.

²²Ibid. (1909), p. 39.

²³The Times (4 March 1903), p. 4.

²⁴F. Pollock, "The League of the Empire", U.E., VI (1915), 736.

²⁵Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1912-1913), p. 9.

²⁶Ibid. (1910-1911), p. 20.

²⁷Ibid. (1906-1907), p. 9.

²⁸Ibid., p. 67.

²⁹Ibid., p. 68.

³⁰Ibid., p. 71.

³¹The Times (17 June 1904), p. 11.

³²Haldane, Universities and National Life, p. 68.

³³Ibid., p. 71.

³⁴In fact Parkin sat on the central committee of this body which, predicatably, had been founded by Lord Meath. See E. Hall to G. R. Parkin, 8 June 1915, Parkin Papers, XLI, p. 11392.

³⁵The Times (21 February 1905), p. 14.

³⁶This theme has been dealt with by H. S. Hughes in his Consciousness and Society (New York, 1958).

³⁷L. of E. Monthly Record, V (October 1904), p. 31.

³⁸For this and all subsequent references to Sargant's opinions on imperial symbolism see E. B. Sargant, "Federal Tendencies in Education", Proceedings of the R.C.I., XXXVIII (1906-1907), pp. 93-118.

³⁹Milner's educational policies in South Africa have been described by W. K. Hancock in his Smuts, p. 239. Milner's personal views of the social and imperial functions of education in South Africa were recorded in a memorandum based on his diary drawn up in 1925 by Lady Milner. See: "Memorandum by Lady Milner on Lord Milner's Plans for Helping British Education in South Africa", Milner Papers, 28 May 1925, Box 72.

⁴⁰Fed. Mag., XII (May-June 1905), p. 89.

⁴¹"A. F. Pollard", History, XXXIII (1948), 252.

⁴²History, I-II (1912-1913), p. 29.

⁴³C. V. Wilkes, "The Teaching of History in Schools", ibid., II (N.S.), (1917-1918), 152.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 145.

⁴⁵F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "The Place of History in Education", ibid., 34-38.

⁴⁶A. F. Pollard, "History and Science: A Rejoinder", ibid., I (1916-1917), 38.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁴⁸A. F. Pollard, "Scheme for the Study of Imperial History", Fed. Mag., XCVI (February 1915), 768.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰A. F. Pollard, "The Growth of an Imperial Parliament", History, I (1916), 133.

⁵¹Ibid., II (1917-1918), p. 11.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³The Times (23 May 1927), p. 19; History, XII (1927-28), p. 135.

⁵⁴R. Coupland, "H. E. Egerton", History, XII (1927-28), 135.

⁵⁵Raffles made a name for himself as an adventurer in Malaya who eventually forced Whitehall to take an official interest in this region of the world. Molesworth, of course, is remembered as one of the leading "Colonial Reformers" of the 1830's and fourties and an ally of Durham and Wakefield in Parliament.

⁵⁶H. E. Egerton, The Claims of the Study of Colonial History upon the Attention of the University of Oxford (Oxford, 1906), p. 21.

⁵⁷H. E. Egerton, A Short History of British Colonial Policy (London, 1897), p. 455.

⁵⁸H. E. Egerton, The Origin and Growth of Greater Britain: An Introduction to Sir C. P. Lucas Historical Geography (Oxford, 1903), p. 182.

⁵⁹Egerton, Short History, p. 510.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 525.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 527.

⁶²Egerton, Claims of Colonial History, p. 31; "On Some Aspects of the Teaching of Colonial History", U.E., II (1911), 349.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Egerton, "Message", W.B.E.S., III (1924), 17. 1

⁶⁵This and all subsequent references to Stoneham's letter can be found in The Times (7 February 1907), p. 5.

⁶⁶Ibid. (9 February 1907), p. 8.

⁶⁷Ibid. (8 February 1907), p. 5.

⁶⁸Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1906-1907), p. 15.

⁶⁹The Times (9 February 1907), p. 8; Fed. Mag. (January 1907), p. 12.

⁷⁰Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1906-1907), p. 6.

⁷¹Egerton, "Teaching of Colonial History", 349.

⁷²Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1909), p. 45.

⁷³The Times (24 May 1912), p. 17.

⁷⁴Ibid. (14 February 1907), p. 4.

⁷⁵Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1906-1907), p. 8.

⁷⁶Fed. Mag. (January 1907), p. 12.

CHAPTER THREE
AUTONOMY VERSUS UNITY 1907-1914

I

The Federal Conference on Education of 1907 was an ambitious undertaking for an organization like the L. of E. The monumental nature of the task can only be appreciated when one considers the tremendous variety of forms and circumstances which abounded in the educational systems of the British Empire. At home there was a tangled welter of competing institutions and jurisdictions that remained largely unco-ordinated. As noted, even the English Board of Education could not claim to speak for all the nation's educational interests. Furthermore, it had no jurisdiction over the independent Scottish system.

Similar although not such extreme conditions prevailed in Canada and Australia. There education was primarily a provincial or state concern rather than a national one. In Canada the bitter memories of the so-called Manitoba schools question served to complicate the picture. In the nineties the French-speaking, Catholic minority in Manitoba had pleaded with Ottawa to override the provincial government's decision to disallow the use of public taxation, which all were compelled to pay, to support sectarian education. Privileges such as these were supposedly guaranteed in the

British North America Act. On the other hand, the provincial government hurriedly pointed out that the act also clearly denied the right of Ottawa to legislate in this area. Meanwhile, the whole affair became inextricably tangled up with familiar cultural antagonisms as Catholic Quebec rallied to the cause of the French minority in Manitoba and Orange Ontario came out strongly and predictably for the other side. For his part, the new prime minister, Laurier, adopted a compromise solution which satisfied nobody and made education an extremely sensitive and volatile matter better left alone. In this atmosphere it was highly unlikely that any federal ministry in Canada would look with favour on projects designed to inject imperialism, another delicate topic, into the curriculum of the nation's schools.

Similarly, education was an explosive issue in South Africa. By 1905 Milner's whole approach to the cultural and ideological assimilation of the Boers through the Anglicization of education was under attack at the Cape. Jan Christian Smuts wrote that this issue had stirred up more bad feeling than almost any other question of the day.¹ At the same time as the Federal Conference met to discuss imperial educational integration, a heated controversy was raging at the Cape over Smuts' proposal to grant equality to both languages, English and Dutch, in South African schools.²

Thus when the League laid its plans for the Federal

Conference before the education departments of the Empire in 1905, it was opening up a potentially divisive issue. At the Colonial Office, however, Lord Elgin, the new Colonial Secretary, offered his full support to the League and agreed to send the invitations through official channels as a sign of approval.³ Contrary to what one might have expected, favourable replies poured in. The Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia said that he was accepting in the hope that the conference might stimulate a keener interest in imperial unity in his province by holding out the prospect of imperial co-operation in education.⁴ For his part, Robert Harcourt, Minister of Education for Ontario, said that as a result of the conference he hoped that the League would come to serve as a permanent imperial education bureau.⁵ The Governor-General of Canada, Lord Grey, who later became president of the R.C.I., gave full and enthusiastic support to the project and was active in lobbying on its behalf.⁶ In order to sound out opinion even further, the League held a preliminary meeting of the English Board and some colonial authorities in July 1906. The atmosphere there proved favourable and it was decided to go ahead with the conference in May 1907.⁷

It is quite clear that the organizers of the conference and metropolitan imperialists in general saw it as a first step toward the founding of a federal education union in the Empire. The Times came out strongly in support

of the aims and objectives of the conference. It opened its columns to the topic of imperial education in 1907 as never before. The spate of articles following Stoneham's open letter served to draw the reader's attention to the work of the League and the whole question of imperial education. In March The Times published a lengthy article stating its views on the purpose and significance of the forthcoming conference. It was pointed out that various factors had in the past made for imperial unity. "But this year", the article continued "a new influence is being brought to bear -- an influence of Organized Education."⁸

The principal object of the League and the conference was "the federation of the Empire first in, and ultimately through, education".⁹ The Federal Conference was seen as a momentous and deliberate step in this direction and as a vehicle for testing the viability of this approach.¹⁰

With this in mind, the first item on the draft agenda proposed by the League was a scheme for the federation of the Empire through education.¹¹ The second proposal dealt with the need to establish a permanent central bureau for federal education.¹² To insure local co-operation the League submitted the draft to all of the educational departments of the Empire and called for further suggestions. Much to its dismay the League found that when the local authorities replied they had vetoed the scheme of forging

a federal union and had relegated the question of a permanent bureau to a lower position on the agenda than was originally intended. This was the first hint of the problems which the League would face when the Conference was finally convened.

In a move to head off a direct confrontation with local authorities the League decided not to press its case in a direct fashion. Instead it determined to approach the question of educational co-ordination on a piece-meal basis. As a symbolic gesture it was decided to hold the first session of the Conference on May 24, Empire Day. In its attempt to persuade the overseas delegates to support its vision of federation the League spared no efforts in driving its message home. The lengthy period of consultation begun in 1905 was part of a "softening-up" process whereby the League hoped to convince metropolitan and colonial authorities of the wisdom of its views. This cajoling was intensified as the opening day of the Conference drew near. All of the London societies which took an interest in the cause of imperial education threw their doors open to the delegates who flocked to the capital.¹³ While the meetings progressed, the various representatives from Britain and abroad were treated to a lavish round of dinners and receptions at which the League extolled the virtues of educational union.¹⁴ These exercises were designed to appeal to the delegates' sense of self-importance and to prepare them for the League's

forceful presentation of its case at the regular sessions of the Conference.

The keynote addresses to the Conference elaborated on the ideas which were maturing at Caxton Hall. Particular attention was paid to disarming colonial fears that the Conference was intended to undermine local autonomy. First Lord Tennyson, then Lord Crewe, the Colonial Secretary, dwelt upon this theme.¹⁵ They described educational federation as the first step toward achieving imperial unity and indeed even portrayed it as a vehicle for advancing the sacred cause of civilization itself. Crewe went so far as to suggest that future conferences should be held in all the capitals of the Empire.¹⁶ This idea was probably intended to appeal to the pride of the overseas delegates and to convince them that the new movement would not be a narrow one under strict metropolitan control. As if to clinch the point Lord Meath reminded the delegates that the only way in which all of this could be accomplished was by the promotion of a permanent bureau to carry on the work of the Conference.¹⁷ After this verbal barrage the overseas visitors could have had no doubts concerning the goals of the League when the Conference opened at Caxton Hall.

The League had been forced to withdraw the question of federation as a formal topic from the agenda, but it succeeded in bringing the issue to the surface through the

discussion of related subjects. In this connection the most important deliberations involved the proposal to exchange teachers and pupils, the amount of freedom to be given individual schools, the uniformity of statistics, and the creation of a central bureau. At stake was the larger question of how much centralization was possible or tolerable within the framework of imperial educational co-operation.

The mutual recognition of teaching certificates and the exchange of teachers and inspectors was to prove one of the focal points of debate at all such conferences. Meath had introduced the topic in his keynote address and his plea for a viable exchange system was taken up by J. L. Hughes, Chief Inspector of Schools for Toronto. Caught up in the imperial spirit engendered by the League, Hughes proclaimed that teacher exchanges would lead to further co-operation and thereby lay the basis for "the training of an imperial race".¹⁸

But Hughes' outlook was not typical of that of the majority of overseas and British delegates to the Conference, most of whom expressed grave misgivings about the project. In the first place, it was widely held that the endless variety of systems throughout the Empire would create far too many complications for an efficient programme of exchange.¹⁹ For instance, it was pointed out, there were differing salaries, pensions, standards, and nomenclature to be considered. In the face of these obstacles the New

Zealand delegation maintained that "it would be a loss of time to interchange".²⁰ Elaborating on this theme, British local authorities soon joined in the chorus of disapproval. P. A. Barnett, Chief Inspector of Training Schools, added a potent objection to the project when he complained of the seemingly insuperable financial barriers in its path.²¹ The upshot of all this was that the Conference made no positive effort to establish a workable exchange programme. The door was left open admittedly to informal exchanges but the final resolution of the Conference on this vital issue was decidedly lukewarm.²²

The League was to find even less consolation in the Conference's attitude to the question of providing for the closer uniformity of curricula, nomenclature, and official statistics. Once again both British and colonial delegates maintained that the regional differences which were reflected in their different systems were not removable by administrative fiat.²³ In short, neither the British nor the dominion boards proved willing to submerge their autonomy in a centralized imperial system. This time, however, the League did not even have a lukewarm response to build upon. The Conference bluntly resolved that curricular uniformity was "neither desirable nor necessary".²⁴

Having seen two of its most cherished proposals go down to defeat the League brought forth yet another suggestion. But the same resistance to centralization coloured the

delegates reaction to the issue of how much freedom the individual school should enjoy within the framework of any future imperial system. This topic was of crucial significance since the League was trying to encourage a uniform approach to inspiring imperial sentiment throughout the schools of the Empire. It was in their interest, therefore, that curricular uniformity and some sort of administrative centralization be promoted. At this point, however, the aspirations of the League collided directly with the interests and convictions of the majority of the educators of the day. Indeed, in turning this issue aside it was the British, not the overseas delegates, who led the way.

C. W. Bailey, the delegate from Liverpool, voiced the opinion that "nothing could be more fatal to the real development of education than the appointment of dull and painstaking officials to organise and control it".²⁵ H. R. Beasley of the Private Schools Association predictably maintained that "no good work could be done unless the teacher was absolutely free".²⁶ Speaking for the Irish National Board, W. J. M. Starkie warned the delegates that Irish teachers objected to nothing so much as to the imposition of outside controls which they insisted on interpreting as political traps set by the central board.²⁷ The forces of localism and vested interests in English education were rising to the surface much to the discomfort of the League.

The League's final thrust was reserved for the question of establishing a permanent bureau. Its case was

eloquently stated by two of the most eminent speakers which the League had at its disposal, Michael Sadler and George Parkin. They called for the organization of a bureau which would continue the work of the Conference while it was not in session, particularly with a view to facilitating teacher exchanges.²⁸ Perhaps unexpectedly, in light of previous objections to centralization, there was a great deal of general agreement about the proposal in principle. But when it came to a vote no basis of agreement could be found on the practical issues of jurisdiction and power. Instead, it was decided to leave things as they were. A vote of confidence was given to the League as a quasi-official yet still informal clearing-house for information.²⁹ This was the maximum which the L. of E. was able to extract from the delegates. In the final analysis the Conference merely resolved that it was "unanimously agreed as to the importance of a permanent central bureau of educational information" but nothing tangible ever resulted from this "unanimous" gesture.³⁰ Indeed, the only effective action on which the Conference unanimously agreed was its decision to re-convene every four years. In view of the rather limited results of the current discussions one might well ask "to what end?".

The central problem of the Federal Conference was that of trying to reconcile local autonomy both overseas and at home with some acceptable form of Empire-wide co-operation

in education. This, at any rate, was the way in which the situation presented itself to Pollard. After the conference he commented that the colonial delegates for example had entertained a distinct reluctance to having their educational authority, in however slight a degree, placed in the hands of officials at Whitehall.³¹ Part of the problem, Pollard contended, lay in their latent distrust of formal official ties. The lesson to be drawn from all this, in his opinion, was that voluntarism was essential to the smooth conduct of imperial affairs. It was for this reason that he took heart and saw a continuing role for a semi-official body such as the League, one that was disposed to pursue an informal approach to the question of unity.³² Far from disheartening him, therefore, the results of the conference merely re-affirmed his faith in the future of the League and its purpose.

Pollard's assessment of the Federal Conference closely resembled that of The Times.³³ Given the delicate nature of the questions affecting such a diversity of educational jurisdictions, it was felt that "a voluntary element is eminently desirable". Considerable criticism, however, was reserved for the British delegates whose utterances, said The Times, "strongly [suggested] that they were sent round the table in order to keep a check on any inconvenient demands that might be made by colonial members, and that fear was a motive at least as prominent as goodwill".

The reviewer condemned the British habit of confusing education with politics as had been the case in 1902. This, in his opinion, had made education so volatile a topic that men literally feared to discuss it.

The Prime Minister of Victoria reacted in much the same way. He criticized the "touchy" attitude of Englishmen toward education and had the impression that the British delegates to the Conference were forever on the verge of saying something which they dared not utter and always appeared to be "walking on eggs".³⁴ Similarly the Pall Mall Gazette decried the tendency of the Conference to skirt delicate issues and considered most of the proceedings unworthy of an "Imperial" Conference on Education.³⁵ In general, the press and other observers were of the opinion that the problem of imperial co-operation in education had been broached at the Conference, but not solved.

As Pollard's assessment of the Conference would seem to suggest, however, the leadership of the League was not entirely dissatisfied with the proceedings. The lesson that Pollard, himself an experienced committee man, learned was that the League would have to proceed cautiously and gradually toward its goal of fostering imperial education. Tennyson's assertion at the outset of the conference that it should be regarded as the mere beginning of a continuing effort seems to have been the position adopted by the League as a whole. As The Times noted, the colonial delegates had

seemed quite content to accept the League as a go-between among the various educational bodies of the Empire principally because it was an unofficial, private body that posed no threat to their autonomy.³⁶

As if to confirm this opinion a number of concrete gains accrued to the League in spite of the seemingly ineffectual nature of the Federal Conference. For one thing, the conference was placed on a regular quadrennial basis under the general direction of the Imperial Government and the League. The Federal Conference also led directly to an increase in the number of colonial educational authorities who accepted the League as their official agent in London, all of which served to increase the prestige of the League itself. As a direct result of the conference Caxton Hall took upon itself the task of promoting the teacher exchanges of which the conference had approved but had done nothing about.

At the outset of the exchange programme little could be done beyond arranging for the informal migration to England of colonial teachers on long leaves of absence.³⁷ These were provided with employment or were simply encouraged to investigate the British educational system while on holiday. In the final analysis, however, this type of excursion was open only to teachers with above-average private means, rarities in any age, and by 1901 only some fifty

teachers from the colonies had availed themselves of the services of the League.³⁸ Numbers such as this, however, are only rough approximations since, as the League admitted, the ebb and flow of teachers in the years before 1914 was very difficult to quantify because of the failure to keep accurate records.³⁹ Some overseas boards were willing to facilitate such exchanges by granting a month's leave on full pay to teachers travelling in England provided that they produce a certificate and a report of their activities signed by the League.⁴⁰

Therefore, while the Federal Conference had solved no immediate problems, it had convinced the League that it had a continuing function to perform as a private body. The L. of E. was rising to the zenith of its fortunes, but there were still problems to be solved. Perhaps the most outstanding of these was the growing tension in the L. of E.'s relationship with its sister society, the Victoria League. In the years immediately following the Conference the V.L. and the L. of E. attempted to amalgamate. The bitterness aroused by their failure to accomplish this feat undoubtedly cost both societies dearly in the long run.

II

In spite of its policy merely to "support and assist" other institutions, the Victoria League had developed a

number of educational programmes closely resembling those of the L. of E. It too had essay contests and a lecture scheme. Admittedly, these were not undertaken on the same scale as those of the L. of E. but the format, purpose, and audience were the same. There was, therefore, some competition between the two leagues and the Rhodes Trust, which was propping both of them up financially, was understandably anxious to put an end to such duplication and wastage. Consequently in 1907 the Trust brought pressure to bear on them to amalgamate.

The first evidence of this pressure came at the Lord Mayor's Conference on Imperial Education. Milner, the leading member of the Trust, expressed his full support for the concept of imperial education but voiced some doubts about the manner in which it was currently being pursued. He questioned the need for many organizations all doing the same thing and squelched the idea of founding yet another such body. It was not more machinery that was required, said Milner, but more motive power and unity of purpose.⁴¹ He therefore called for the complete amalgamation of the V.L. and the L. of E. whose pointless competition, he went on to say, was seriously retarding this vital imperial cause. Indeed, this continued to be his policy throughout the entire period.

The Trust may have refused further grants to the leagues in an effort to force them to amalgamate. While

there is no direct evidence to indicate this, it was to become the Trustees' standard approach in later years.⁴²

In any case, negotiations between the two leagues opened at once. A whole series of meetings were held in 1908 to overcome the problems of overlapping but no mutually acceptable formula for union could be found and the mood changed from one of conciliation to one of bitterness. The net result was an unseemly battle in the press.

At the outset the V.L. had suggested a complete merger of the two societies, a motion which was unanimously rejected by the council of the L. of E.⁴³ Apparently Caxton Hall felt that the idea of total amalgamation was thoroughly incompatible with the special work which the L. of E. had undertaken with colonial education departments.⁴⁴ Hutchins, Marshall, and Tennyson seem to have felt for some unstated reason that the position of the L. of E. in relation to these bodies would suffer as a result of amalgamation. In response the L. of E. suggested the establishment of an informal consultative committee of the two leagues. This proposal, however, was rejected by the V.L. which insisted on total amalgamation. Hence one round of negotiations issued in deadlock in the summer of 1908.

Discussion of the issue was reopened in the fall. The L. of E. insisted on carrying on its activities with educational authorities on an independent basis and proposed

the creation of a new league divided into separate departments.⁴⁵ The Victoria League replied that this was not true amalgamation but a scheme that would preserve serious overlapping.⁴⁶ Mrs. Ord Marshall presented the L. of E.'s case in the columns of the Standard. She stated that the V.L. had taken an inflexible line and was needlessly complicating the whole issue.⁴⁷ Not to be outdone, the V.L. replied in a letter to Marshall that the L. of E. was responsible for the present state of confusion and had offered nothing but an old suggestion which had already failed.⁴⁸ Apparently the V.L. was anxious to achieve full integration of the two bodies because it was deeply concerned about the weak condition of its finances.⁴⁹

The L. of E., however, suspected that the V.L. wanted to dominate the proposed new league. This concern with its own identity seems to have been at the heart of the L. of E.'s reluctance to join with its sister society. Hutchins alleged that under the V.L.'s scheme for amalgamation the L. of E. would have little or no influence on the financial and organizational committees.⁵⁰ He further argued that it was illogical for his society to surrender to the claims of the V.L. since the L. of E. had far more experience in and had committed more of its resources to imperial education.

As feelings mounted on both sides in 1908, George

Parkin, on behalf of the Rhodes Trust, attempted to intervene between the feuding parties. Parkin complained of the obvious when he remarked that what was woefully lacking in this situation was "a larger sense of statesmanship".⁵¹ However, it was already too late. In March Hutchins took over the correspondence with the V.L. and proceeded to deal directly with Lady Jersey. If he had expected to brow-beat her ladyship he must have been quickly taken aback by her stinging response. The tone of the argument grew progressively more abrasive and the hostility more vocal. In July 1909 Lady Jersey curtly and decisively terminated the debate, informing Hutchins that "my Committee feel that no good purpose would be served by continuing this correspondence".⁵²

Parting shots were fired in The Times. The V.L. contended that the L. of E. was willing to sacrifice the future of a great imperial project for the sake of its own supposedly petty ambitions.⁵³ Rising to the challenge, Hutchins accused the V.L. of making unreasonable demands and attempting to dabble in the specialized work of the League in which the V.L. enjoyed no competence at all.⁵⁴ It was evident, he concluded, that whatever their similarities might be, the two leagues were working toward the same object along entirely different lines. The Report of Negotiations, published by the League in 1909, amounted to little more than

a pièce justificatif on the part of a body that felt unjustly accused of pernicious behavior. It may also have been intended to prove to the Rhodes Trust and others that amalgamation had been explored and found wholly impracticable.

The fact is that it is almost impossible with the sources available to untangle the true facts of the case. Whatever the pros and cons of the debate might have been, it is clear that neither side was willing to submerge its individual identity for the sake of the cause at hand. In reality it would appear that an individualistic pride of society dominated considerations on both sides and that a general consensus concerning the goals to be achieved was obscured by a debate over means. This failure to pool their efforts and resources undoubtedly weakened both societies and seems to have caused the Rhodes Trust, from whom substantial monetary support could have been expected, to limit henceforth the size of its grants to them.

It is not particularly difficult to account for the L. of E.'s reluctance to amalgamate at this time, particularly when it seemed to imply domination by its sister society. The League was understandably proud of the role it had played in summoning the Federal Conference the results of which seemed to bode well for the League's future as a quasi-official body. In addition, the L. of E. was

currently engaged in preparing for the forthcoming Imperial Education Conference of 1911. In fact Caxton Hall was coming to feel that it had a distinct and very special role to play in backing imperial education. After 1914 it came to focus increasingly on the project of educational federation and its interest in simple propaganda correspondingly waned. In any case the breach with the V.L. was never truly healed. On balance it would seem fair to conclude that the V.L. was not wholly incorrect in its assertion that the League's pride of society was at least as impelling a motive behind its action as was its devotion to the cause of imperial education.

III

From 1909 to 1914 the League went its own separate way under the guidance of a new president, Sir Frederick Pollock, Tennyson having stepped down because of his advancing years. Pollock was a recent convert to the concept of an informal approach to imperial unity. Like all converts, he grasped his new faith with intense zeal and was therefore ideally suited to take over the helm of the League.

Pollock was one of the most scholarly lawyers of his day and had long taken a keen interest in the workings of the imperial constitution. From 1903 to 1907 he chaired

a group that came to be known as the Pollock Committee whose purpose it was to examine ways of improving the machinery of imperial co-operation.⁵⁵ The committee had its origins in discussions held by the Imperial Federation (Defense) Committee, a spin-off of the old I.F.L. and included among its membership Haldane, Parkin, Balfour, and Milner. One of the most outspoken members of this group was W. Pember Reeves, then the Agent General for New Zealand in London and later the Director of the London School of Economics.

The committee was not dedicated to formal imperial federation and displayed a willingness to adjust to new circumstances in its approach to imperial unity. At the outset, however, Pollock as its leader leaned toward a constitutional and political solution to the problem. He began by calling for the creation of an imperial cabinet, a council of Empire overseeing the direction and co-ordination of imperial affairs. Reeves, for one, balked at the idea, probably because as a New Zealander and a former dominion cabinet minister he was more aware than his colleagues of the depth of colonial nationalism. Pollock, however, required persuading on this point.

His opinions were changed, however, as a result of a tour of Canada which he undertook in 1905 to sound out attitudes toward the formation of a central imperial council. He went, in his own words, as a "missionary" for this idea

despite the warnings he received from Lord Grey, the Governor-General, that Canadians would be hostile to such proposals. Wherever he travelled throughout the Dominion, Pollock did in fact meet with stern resistance to his ideas. In the end he totally failed in his efforts to persuade Laurier of the viability of the scheme and he returned to Great Britain firmly convinced that the colonies would never accept any form of administrative centralization. Indeed when the Imperial Conference of 1907 met, the issue of establishing a permanent imperial secretariat was swiftly quashed by Laurier. As a result Pollock turned to informal co-operation as the only principle upon which future unity could be secured.

In an article reviewing the 1907 conference, he stated this conviction forcefully. He took note of Tennyson's argument that it was neither practical nor desirable to seek to establish an imperial council or anything like it and then he expanded on the idea.⁵⁶ The best thing to do, he argued, was to set up an informal body to maintain the contacts established at the Imperial Conferences. A group or groups such as this could serve as "the peaceful scouts of Empire", maintaining imperial unity without disturbing political sensibilities in the dominions.⁵⁷ "Above all", Pollock continued, it was vitally important "to keep red tape out of it."⁵⁸ Success in this

venture depended, in his opinion, on ensuring that the public of the Empire was made aware of the importance of upholding imperial unity.⁵⁹

In view of his thoughts on the matter of informally shoring up imperial ties, it seems plausible that he came to view his work at the League in this very light. The League could indeed have been viewed by Pollock as a "peaceful scout of Empire"; in fact this was precisely the way in which it had always pictured its role. This speculation on Pollock's motivations seems to be confirmed in a statement of purpose that he drafted for the League in 1915. "Our aim", he said, "is to be an unofficial though recognised Intelligence Department for educational authorities throughout the King's Dominions."⁶⁰ Thus the change in executive leadership from Tennyson to Pollock signalled no break in the continuity of the policy or the development of the League.

Its varied activities, however, imposed severe financial strains on the L. of E.'s slender resources. Consequently appeals for funds became more and more frequent after 1907. The cost of its numerous conferences weighed heavily on its treasury. Token assistance came from the government of Ontario in the form of a £50 grant, but this small gesture could have done little to change the situation.⁶¹ The really important factor was the attitude of the Rhodes

Trust, which, as noted, was unwilling to increase its annual grant of five hundred pounds because of the collapse of the amalgamation scheme. Consequently the League was thrown back on a reliance on the revenue garnered from membership fees, the records of which are not available, and on special funding drives. In 1910 the League began its regular practice of holding three subscription dances a year in order to help ease its mounting financial burden.⁶²

Yet the League was not in the business of promoting imperial education as a profit-making venture and its financial problems did not dampen the ardour of the membership. Nothing illustrates the sense of accomplishment and optimism of the League at the zenith of its fortunes more than the enthusiasm with which it prepared for the Empire Day celebrations held under its auspices shortly before the war. In 1909 the League arranged for the first public celebration of Empire Day in London; five thousand children marched in the parade which, it was claimed, was viewed by nearly a million spectators who lined the route.⁶³ Each successive year witnessed the development of more and more elaborate spectacles. The celebration of 1911 was a superb model of a patriotic jamboree. The festivities were planned on an unprecedented scale because this was a coronation year. It was a day to remember. Ten thousand children paraded in columns a thousand strong and performed a series of flag

movements symbolizing imperial unity. An excerpt from the League's report catches the flavour of the proceedings:

[One] flag movement symbolized Britannia and her children in the face of danger. On the "Alarm" being sounded the Dominion flag bearers formed a hollow square round the Union Jack, their flags raised like so many bayonets surrounding and protecting it.⁶⁴

Were these echoes of the South African campaign and the Diamond Jubilee, or were they symbolic preparations for the approaching storm? They were probably a little of each.

The skeptic might question the effectiveness of such demonstrations. After all, as Kipling noted, the same exuberant crowds that had revelled over Mafeking and Ladysmith had ultimately preferred the Liberal's large loaf to Chamberlain's pleas for self-sacrifice on behalf of the Empire. It seems as though it was difficult to translate ephemeral enthusiasms into a day-to-day acceptance of imperial burdens and obligations. Head-counting at jubilees turned out to be a poor gauge of public support for the Empire.

IV

The massive Empire Day celebration engineered by the League in 1911 was in keeping with the mood of the hour in imperial circles. Indeed it was to be a banner year for all those interested in the promotion of imperial unity. The coronation of George V called together representatives from

all corners of the Empire for the last of the great imperial pageants before the Great War burst upon the scene. In the same year another Imperial Conference was held and the sensitive issue of federation was aired once more. Sir Joseph Ward, Premier of New Zealand, egged on by Lionel Curtis and the Round Table, submitted a proposal for the creation of an imperial parliament with full power to conduct the foreign affairs of the Empire, even to the point of making binding declarations of war. Ward's parliament was to consist of a small upper chamber with representatives from Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Newfoundland, and Great Britain, and a lower chamber of three hundred elected representatives from throughout the Empire. None of the proposed member states, however, including Great Britain, were willing to accept any plan that would involve the erosion of its own autonomy. Instead, the conference resolved that co-operation should be secured through imperial unity based on local autonomy; consequently Ward's suggestion went for naught.

Apart from the Empire Day festivities, the splendor of the coronation and the calling of the premiers to the councils of Empire, 1911 also witnessed the first gathering of the Imperial Education Conference. In 1907 the League of the Empire had succeeded in gaining the unanimous assent of the delegates to its Federal Conference to a proposal for the convening of future meetings on a quadrennial

basis. At the time it decided that these conferences should be convened under the joint aegis of the League and the imperial government in order that they might take on a more official character which, it was hoped, would allow for decisive and comprehensive actions to be taken.

Accordingly the government delegated its responsibility in this undertaking to the Office of Special Inquiries and Reports of the Board of Education.⁶⁵ This office had been established in 1895 with Michael Sadler as its first director and its function was to investigate Britain's educational system and improve it. In order to accomplish this object, the office was given carte blanche to see how secondary education was conducted in foreign lands. Under Sadler's direction, which continued until 1902, particular attention was paid to German methods, but the office soon became a repository of expert knowledge regarding educational systems throughout the world. Consequently, it was admirably suited to taking on the task of managing the Imperial Education Conferences. Its efforts in this regard were facilitated by the close co-operation that it enjoyed with the League, a body which already had substantial contacts with colonial educational authorities.

Throughout 1908 and 1909 the League placed the Office of Special Inquiries in contact with boards of education throughout the Empire and extensive preparations for the 1911 meeting were launched. In December 1908 the

Office circulated a questionnaire among colonial authorities with a view to obtaining the information necessary for the publication of a survey of imperial educational systems.⁶⁶ The local authorities proved co-operative and the results of the survey were published in a long series of articles in the Federal Magazine from 1909 to 1911. Each colony's and each dominion's educational system was described in detail and a fund of knowledge was built up on which, it was hoped, an efficient approach to the conference could be based. Conversely, the Inquiries Office collected and circulated all available English and Scottish educational publications to the colonies and dominions in an effort to keep them informed of British procedures and problems.⁶⁷

It was felt that these extensive technical preparations would overcome one of the major problems experienced during the Federal Conference of 1907. As The Times commented in 1911, the earlier assembly had been a praiseworthy effort on the part of a private society to provide leadership in an area in which both politicians and governments had proven unwilling to take the initiative.⁶⁸ As a pioneering effort, however, the Federal Conference had been characterized by a lack of dynamic action which, in the opinion of The Times, could be credited to the lack of mutual familiarity on all sides of the conference table. It was not, said The Times, an easy body to organize since the delegates had had a rather imprecise notion of the work to be done.⁶⁹

This time long years of careful preparation were designed to ensure that all parties would be fully apprized of the condition of education throughout the Empire. In order to strengthen the grounds for mutual understanding the Inquiries Office had co-operated with the League since 1907 in securing informal teacher exchanges. The English and Scottish Boards of Education decided to grant temporary recognition of certification to qualified overseas teachers applying for exchange.⁷⁰ In co-operation with the League of the Empire, the Inquiries Office arranged for the placement of ninety-five British teachers abroad on temporary leaves of absence.⁷¹

The introduction of an official element into the educational conference was undoubtedly of considerable organizational value. The expertise of the Inquiries Office as an intelligence gathering body was used to good effect in the collection and dissemination of technical data. On balance, however, the wisdom of setting the conference up as an official governmental body seems to be open to question. While such a step did open the door to the possibility of constructing a concrete format for imperial co-operation in education, the colonies and dominions were growing increasingly wary of any and all official thrusts from Whitehall for fear they might pose a threat to their independence. For his part, Egerton felt that little in the

way of tangible results could be expected from the conclave once it was established on an official basis.⁷²

Fears were also expressed that the governmental element would tend to rob the conference of any dynamism it might otherwise possess. It was felt that Whitehall would again shy away from delicate but vital issues, such as educational federation, in an effort to avoid bruising sensibilities at home and abroad. The Pall Mall Gazette hoped that the government would not "formalize and flatten" these valuable imperial discussions and called upon it to practice some "salutory neglect" so that important matters might be freely aired and finally settled.⁷³

It would seem that, to some extent at least, these warnings were taken to heart. For instance, George Malan, Minister of Education for South Africa, was scheduled to represent the Union at the conference, but London persuaded him to withdraw because he was the only man of cabinet rank slated to appear.⁷⁴ The reason for this seemingly inhospitable move was that Malan's participation as a cabinet minister would, according to protocol, require that the Conference be presided over by the Lord President of the Privy Council rather than by a representative of the English Board of Education who presumably was better equipped to chair such a meeting.⁷⁵ This seemed to be evidence that Whitehall was taking the assembly seriously. If Malan

harboured any resentment over this affair it has not been recorded.

As in 1907 it was felt that a greater measure of co-operation and meaningful discussion would occur if the agenda of the conference were settled in advance. Once again the League insisted on the importance of discussing teacher exchanges and the permanent bureau.⁷⁶ But Caxton Hall must have been rocked to its foundations when South Africa's draft agenda arrived. The Union, it turned out, attached far more significance to the question of bilingual education than it did to any vague dreams of federation.⁷⁷ Bilingualism, of course, was a burning issue in South African education at that moment. The Education Act of 1907 had placed English and Dutch on an equal footing as instructional languages but not without arousing considerable tension between Afrikaner and English residents. Speaking in 1911, General James B. M. Hertzog, leader of the opposition Nationalist Party, maintained that only through bilingual education could the racial tension between the Dutch and British elements in South African society be eradicated.⁷⁸ Understandably, therefore, this question was given a high priority on the Cape's agenda.

Beyond this, the Union's draft emphasized questions affecting aboriginal education and the problems of organizing educational facilities in large but sparsely populated

districts. These issues, like the bilingualism question, reflected immediate local concerns. Perhaps the South Africans were hoping to draw upon the Canadian and Australian experience in these matters. In any case, the South African agenda could have done little to warm the atmosphere at Caxton Hall. It was only at the tag end of its suggestions, almost as an afterthought, that the Cape mentioned the possibility of discussing the two issues so close to the heart of the League. For its part The Cape Times was moved to comment that the all-important discussion on a permanent bureau would probably never be reached if South Africa had her way.⁷⁹ The Times of London lamented the poor response from the remaining parts of the Empire.⁸⁰ Indeed it seemed that the Conference as a whole might be stillborn in an atmosphere of indifference and parochialism.

In order to combat this purely technical and largely peripheral approach to the proceedings, the League decided to stage a preliminary meeting of the delegates at Caxton Hall the day before the conference was officially convened. The intention was clearly to channel the thought of the delegates along imperial lines. The meeting, presided over by E. A. Gardner of the League's History Section, made an effort to convince the overseas representatives that imperial educational co-ordination and some degree of centralization was not a sinister scheme to rob the dominions

of their autonomy. Speaking for the League, Sir Gilbert Parker told his audience that the proposed federation would allow for a wide range of local initiative.⁸¹ It would seem that the League had in 1907 learned some valuable lessons in tact.

During the course of this meeting the League tried to force to the surface the issues of teacher exchanges and a permanent bureau but the delegates again proved lukewarm. Then the need to upgrade the status of imperial history in schools throughout the Empire was brought to the fore, predictably by Pollard and Gardner. The idea met with some criticism, however, particularly from the Irish delegates who felt that their teachers would steadfastly resist any outside attempts to dictate curricula.⁸²

As in 1907 the League spared no expense to devise an elaborate series of social functions designed to drive home its concept of the purpose of the Conference. At a dinner held at the Russell Hotel, Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Education, said that educators must cultivate the imperial spirit in students for it was upon this that the future of the Empire depended.⁸³ Prime Minister H. H. Asquith developed the same theme in a speech to the delegates at a dinner held in the Commons' dining room.⁸⁴ In fact the message was the same whether it was delivered by Lord Meath at the Westminster Palace Hotel or by Rosebery in his drawing room on Berkeley Square.

In this manner the League made quite clear its position regarding the purpose of the Conference. It is doubtful, however, that all of this speech-making, bonhomie, and wineing and dining had much effect on the delegates. Throughout the Conference there were continual complaints in the press about the reluctance of the overseas representatives to participate in the discussions.⁸⁵ The fact that none of the colonial or dominion delegates even spoke at the first meeting was a matter of grave disappointment to the Manchester Guardian.⁸⁶ To make matters worse none of the papers contributed to the conference were given by the overseas delegates.

Much of this indifference was ascribed to the watered-down nature of the agenda.⁸⁷ The closed morning sessions were for the most part preoccupied with detailed matters of administration. The delegates considered and discussed various memoranda prepared by the Inquiries Office in connection with its survey of imperial educational systems. The collection and dissemination of information regarding the cost of instruction in advanced technical colleges was discussed. The problems revolving around exchange programmes and the formation of a permanent bureau were raised but, as in 1907, not brought to a conclusion. The open conference considered a host of highly technical topics related to educational methods in most of its sessions.⁸⁸ Papers were delivered on experimental work in

arithmetic, practical education in elementary schools, secondary education in Scotland, and a number of other narrowly educational topics.

In response to this state of affairs The Times commented that "the observer will probably feel that an Imperial Conference should strike a higher note".⁸⁹ It complained of the "threatening aspect of dryness" about a programme that emphasized topics like "Young Children and Arithmetic".⁹⁰ As the conference was drawing to a close many pro-imperial observers came to regret that the meetings had been held under official auspices. The blandness of the proceedings seemed to confirm earlier fears that the government would tend to "flatten and formalize" the discussions. The Pall Mall Gazette contended that the net result of government involvement was a rather half-hearted effort by Whitehall and a "succession of Ministerial speeches constituting a thin trickle of approbation".⁹²

It was also felt that the Conference was far too English in orientation to spark the interest of the overseas visitors. Not only were all of the papers delivered by Britons, but Whitehall had specifically vetoed South Africa's request that bilingual education be considered by the full Conference in open session. Anxious to avoid anything that smacked of controversy, the government had argued that the South African issue was much too delicate a one at the moment

to serve as a topic of debate.⁹³ The Times correspondent at the Cape complained that this decision might deflate South African and Canadian interest in the Conference and cause some colonial delegates to feel that their interests were being ignored or subordinated to those of the metropolitan representatives.⁹⁴

For the most part the extensive press criticism of this conference seems to have been quite justified, at least from the point of view of those who had seen it as a potential step toward imperial unity. Of all the papers delivered to the various meetings only two recalled the highly imperialistic overtones of the 1907 Conference. The first was a paper read by Halford J. Mackinder on "The Teaching of Geography From the Imperial Point of View". Mackinder was already a well recognized expert in his chosen field and a long-time supporter both of efficiency and Empire. His interest in the national and imperial significance of education had been kindled by Sadler in the nineties. Along with the latter, Mackinder had served as a lecturer in adult education at Oxford, stressing the need for efficiency and imperial consolidation.⁹⁵ He had been among those who had pointed to the need to revamp English secondary education in the face of stern foreign competition. In 1892 he became the first principal of Reading University College, one of the new civic universities, and later he accepted the

post of director of the Webb's London School of Economics and Political Science, a body intended to train expert administrators for political, economic, and imperial life.⁹⁶ He resigned the London post in 1908 to help Milner lead a new but short-lived Tariff Reform campaign. From 1902 through to its absorption by the Royal Colonial Institute in 1919, Mackinder served as corresponding secretary of the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee. In short, he was fully acquainted with the arguments on behalf of imperial education and deeply committed to the project. It was not likely, therefore, that he would shy away from the topic even in the temporizing atmosphere of the 1911 conference.

In his speech to the delegates Mackinder said that the Empire was entering a phase in which consolidation was far more important than expansion.⁹⁷ In that work of consolidation, he continued, the role of the teacher was at least as important as that of the statesman. New circumstances, he argued, necessitated new approaches to achieving imperial unity. The most notable of these new circumstances, in Mackinder's opinion, was the rise of mass democracies at home and abroad. This meant that future imperial unity would have to be based on the consent of the governed. Consent, he argued, could only flow from mutual understanding. The chief barriers to such under-

standing were, in his view, ignorance and local prejudice -- "the devils which it is the part of the teacher to exorcise". Accordingly, he called for an imperial approach to education which would teach students to think of themselves as citizens of a great Empire first and as Canadians, Australians, or Britons only after this.

Speaking for the History Section of the League, Egerton echoed Mackinder's words but this time put the accent on historical rather than geographical studies.⁹⁸ His address began on a sombre note. "We are living", he said, "at a time when institutions which we have taken as a matter of course are being subjected to the ordeal of fierce and hostile criticism". No doubt he was thinking of the House of Lords crisis of 1911 as well as the problems of the Empire. The time had come, continued Egerton, when Britain and her colonies must rethink the entire basis of their imperial relationship and for this task there could be no more useful tool than the study of the Empire's history.

In this regard, Egerton pointed out that Britain and her offspring could share their accumulated experiences and, hopefully, apply solutions devised in one part of the Empire to the problems of the others. Moreover, imperial history could be transformed into a vehicle for stimulating widespread sympathy for the Empire which in turn might some day be translated into a form of federal union. Egerton

reiterated his thoughts concerning the need for "thematic selectivity" in the study of imperial history and called upon the Conference to see that it was made a compulsory subject in the curricula of schools throughout the King's dominions.

The pleas of Mackinder and Egerton were received with mixed reactions by the delegates; on the whole, they tended to be rather cool. Most seemed to feel that imperial history should remain an offshoot of domestic British and Dominion history.⁹⁹ For his part Henry Holman of the Child Study Association poured cold water over the whole debate. He maintained that it would be a "deadly error" to mix up imperialism with geography or history.¹⁰⁰ Indeed he contended that there was no imperial history or geography any more than there was an imperial astronomy or chemistry. In addition the ideas put forward by Mackinder and Egerton seemed wholly inapplicable since, while they could be absorbed by cultured and accomplished adults, they would be completely meaningless to schoolchildren. Holman deplored the lack of a basic understanding of child psychology displayed by the speakers and asserted that children were not even conscious of having a role in a larger society until they were thirteen or fourteen years of age.

Egerton responded that he was only thinking of universities when he made his speech.¹⁰¹ Mackinder, on the other hand, took up Holman's challenge and retorted that the

facts of contemporary education required that an effort be made at the earliest stages of the child's development to teach the lesson of Empire.¹⁰² He noted that for every student who progressed to university in Great Britain, more than a hundred never passed beyond the first stages of a secondary education. Yet, he argued, these hundreds would form the majority of the electorate upon whom the future of the Empire would depend. He concluded that whatever the shortcomings of imperial education at this lower level it was better than leaving these potential electors to form their own understanding of the Empire. He finished by stating that the Empire would be preserved in proportion as their teachers influenced the youth of Greater Britain.

In the final analysis, however, neither Mackinder's nor Egerton's arguments succeeded in producing the sort of dynamic response for which they had hoped. On the question of actively and systematically promoting imperial history and geography, the Conference merely resolved

that it is desirable that British Imperial history should have its due place in the curricula of schools and universities.¹⁰³

Apart from this rather empty statement of purpose, no concrete proposals were envisaged by the delegates. In fact, the general resolutions of the Conference all had a decidedly non-committal ring to them. The problem of establishing a central bureau had not been solved. As in

1907 the most that could be attained was a half-hearted resolution of confidence in the Inquiries Office and the League.¹⁰⁴ This was a great deal less than the League had hoped for in the spring of 1911.

On the matter of arranging for the systematic and formal exchange of teachers, the results of the Conference were equally disappointing. The same old problems raised by the variety of systems and standards throughout the Empire stood in the way of effective action on this issue. The League had hoped that some firm commitment on this point could be hammered out. Instead no new machinery or standard formula was devised and only meaningless hopes were expressed.¹⁰⁵

Thus the two issues, which from the League's point of view were crucial to the future of imperial educational federation, went unresolved. The Conference of 1911 had proven to be more of an educational and less of an imperial assembly than had been anticipated. Much of the credit for this must go to the influence of the Board of Education whose temporizing approach was not at all dissimilar to the attitude of Whitehall to the general question of imperial consolidation. At the Imperial Conference of Premiers of 1911 the British representatives had taken as strong a stand against Ward's proposed parliament of Empire as had many of the overseas delegates. Indeed the parallel between

the political and educational conferences of the period is quite striking. By 1911 indecision in the metropolis and apathy in the dominions were turning both institutions into polite but ineffectual talking-shops. Informal co-operation was rapidly becoming the only meaningful vehicle for continued intra-imperial action.

The League, of course, was quite prepared to play a leading role in the field of educational co-operation however formal or informal it might be. Between 1911 and 1914 it maintained its normal round of activities and to some extent expanded them. The annual essay contests now attracted candidates from every corner of the Empire.¹⁰⁶ The Correspondence Scheme by 1913 included over 26,000 members.¹⁰⁷ Special scholarships for women were promoted after the pattern of the Rhodes Trust.¹⁰⁸

In like manner the informal teacher exchange programme was kept up. In fact the project picked up some momentum in 1910 when most of the teachers' associations of the Empire affiliated with the League.¹⁰⁹ However, the failure of the 1911 Conference to take positive action in this field prompted the League to step up its informal efforts. An Imperial Conference of Teachers' Associations was held in London in 1912 under the auspices of the League and a great deal of its attention was given to the question of facilitating teacher exchanges. Speaking to the

assembled delegates, R. A. Pyne, Ontario's Minister of Education, stated that it was the duty of teachers to instil imperial patriotism and a sense of responsibility in students.¹¹⁰

Once again, however, a conference failed to solve the practical problems involved in the interchange scheme. Nevertheless, something concrete did develop from this meeting -- the Imperial Union of Teachers' Associations, whose avowed aim was to encourage the exchange of teachers and educational information. Unfortunately for the League this modest progress was brought to a jarring halt by the violent events of August 1914. The Imperial Union of Teachers' Associations seems to have died a quiet death during the war years and was not heard from again.

What had the League accomplished by 1914? As a society it had grown steadily since its foundation in 1901. It had developed a series of branch organizations throughout the Empire and had been recognized as a semi-official agency both at home and abroad. The majority of its early programmes had enjoyed considerable success and its position had not been compromised by political entanglements. Although it was not clearly perceived at the time, the League may have jeopardized its future, particularly in financial terms, by its failure to amalgamate with the Victoria League.

in 1909. The educational conferences had not produced any direct results but indirectly they had perhaps added to the prestige and credibility of the League. On balance, therefore, the League of the Empire could be viewed as a healthy and flourishing society on the eve of the war. Even so, its leadership in the field of promoting unity through education was soon to be challenged by the rise of the Royal Colonial Institute, a similar body which was undergoing a period of internal regeneration.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Hancock, Smuts, p. 239.
- ²Ibid., pp. 239-240.
- ³Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1906-1907),
p. 16.
- ⁴Fed. Mag. (January 1907), p. 13.
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶Ibid. (March 1907), p. 10.
- ⁷Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1906-1907),
p. 16.
- ⁸The Times (29 March 1907), p. 6.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1906-1907),
p. 24.
- ¹⁴The Times (25 May 1907), p. 10.
- ¹⁵Official Report of the Federal Conference on
Education (London, 1908), p. 19.
- ¹⁶The Times (25 May 1907), p. 10.

- ¹⁷ Report of Federal Conference, pp. 30-31.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 49-50.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 52-54.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ For the complete, unedited version of these addressed see the Manchester Guardian (27 May 1907), p. 12.
- ²² Report of Federal Conference, p. 54.
- ²³ Ibid., p. 41.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 41.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 69.
- ²⁶ Ibid., pp. 73-74.
- ²⁷ Ibid., pp. 74-75.
- ²⁸ The Times (27 May 1907), p. 4.
- ²⁹ Ibid. (5 June 1907), p. 4.
- ³⁰ Report of Federal Conference, p. 42.
- ³¹ A. F. Pollard, The British Empire (London, 1908), p. 787.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ For this and all subsequent references to The Times review consult The Times (5 June 1907), p. 4.
- ³⁴ Manchester Guardian (25 May 1907), p. 5.

- ³⁵ Pall Mall Gazette (31 May 1907), p. 2.
- ³⁶ The Times (5 June 1907), p. 4.
- ³⁷ Report of the Interchange of Teachers Scheme 1907-1923 (London, 1923), p. 6.
- ³⁸ Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1910-1911), p. 23.
- ³⁹ Interchange Report, p. 6.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ The Times (24 April 1907), p. 4.
- ⁴² For example see the "Minutes of a Meeting of the Rhodes Trust", 10 September 1917, Milner Papers, Box 95, 2456.
- ⁴³ Fed. Mag. (September 1908), p. 110; Report of Negotiations For Amalgamation Between the League of the Empire and the Victoria League (London, 1909), p. 1.
- ⁴⁴ Report of Negotiations, p. 1.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 2.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 3.
- ⁴⁷ Fed. Mag. (September 1908), p. 111.
- ⁴⁸ Report of Negotiations, p. 4.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Letter enclosed in ibid.
- ⁵¹ Fed. Mag. (December 1908), pp. 150-51.
- ⁵² Report of Negotiations, p. 10.

⁵³The Times (16 July 1909), p. 10.

⁵⁴Ibid. (20 July 1909), p. 11.

⁵⁵For reference to the work and ideas of the Pollock Committee see Kendle's chapter "The Pollock Committee" in his Conferences.

⁵⁶The Times (14 February 1907), p. 4.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰F. Pollock, "The League of the Empire", U.E., VI (1915), 741.

⁶¹Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1912-1913), p. 11.

⁶²The Times (24 August 1910), p. 9.

⁶³Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1910-1911), p. 17.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁵For a good general account of the early years of this office see Grier, Achievement, pp. 49-104.

⁶⁶Report of the Imperial Education Conference of 1911, Parliamentary Papers, XVIII (1911), p. 27.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸The Times (24 April 1911), p. 4.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Report of I.E.C. 1911, p. 28.

- ⁷¹Ibid.
- ⁷²H. E. Egerton, "The Imperial Education Conference", U.E., II (1911), 500.
- ⁷³Pall Mall Gazette (25 April 1911), p. 7.
- ⁷⁴The Times (21 January 1911), p. 7.
- ⁷⁵Ibid. (27 February 1911), p. 5.
- ⁷⁶Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1910-1911), p. 14.
- ⁷⁷For this and all subsequent references to the South African agenda see The Times (23 January 1911), p. 5.
- ⁷⁸Ibid. (21 January 1911), p. 7.
- ⁷⁹Ibid. (23 January 1911), p. 5.
- ⁸⁰Ibid. (27 February 1911), p. 5.
- ⁸¹Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1910-1911), pp. 12-13.
- ⁸²The Times (25 April 1911), p. 4.
- ⁸³Ibid. (26 April 1911), p. 12.
- ⁸⁴Report of I.E.C. 1911, p. 267.
- ⁸⁵For example see The Times (24 April 1911), p. 4; (26 April 1911), p. 9.
- ⁸⁶Manchester Guardian (27 April 1911), p. 4.
- ⁸⁷The complete agenda can be found in the Report of I.E.C. 1911, pp. 8-9.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 79-237.

⁸⁹The Times (24 April 1911), p. 4.

⁹⁰Ibid. (27 April 1911), p. 6.

⁹¹Manchester Guardian (27 April 1911), p. 4.

⁹²Pall Mall Gazette (29 April 1911), p. 4.

⁹³The Times (27 February 1911), p. 5.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Grier, Achievement, p. 11.

⁹⁶Searle, Efficiency, p. 168.

⁹⁷The details of Mackinder's address are to be found in the Report of I.E.C. 1911, pp. 47-57. and in The Times (26 April 1911), p. 9, and the Manchester Guardian (26 April 1911), p. 9.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Report of I.E.C. 1911, pp. 66-74.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰⁶Annual General Report of the L. of E. (1912-1913),
p. 10.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. (1910-1911), p. 80.

¹⁰⁹Ibid. (1912-1913), p. 4.

¹¹⁰Fed. Mag. (September-October 1913), p. 671.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN QUEST OF REGENERATION: THE ROYAL COLONIAL INSTITUTE 1909-1914

I

At the turn of the century the Royal Colonial Institute was one of the chief exponents of formal imperial federation. By 1914 however its leaders had joined the ranks of those who, like the executive of the League of the Empire, were harbouring serious doubts about the viability of that scheme and projecting an alternative approach to achieving imperial unity, principally through the spread of education and the cultivation of sentiment. This volte face was the result in part of considerable disillusionment with the lack of progress shown by the closer union movement. In all likelihood it was also encouraged by the example set by the League of the Empire and the Victoria League. Moreover, new members with new ideas helped to draw the R.C.I. out of its accustomed mould. Beyond all this, however, the Institute's change of course between 1909 and 1914 also reflected the effort of a once proud and influential body to save itself from slow decay and possible extinction. In order to understand the decisions made during this period of transition the early history of the R.C.I. must be briefly

traced.¹

The Royal Colonial Institute was founded in 1868 in order to protest against the lack of imperial sentiment displayed during the mid-Victorian period. It began life as a pressure group urging imperial expansion in Africa and the South Pacific and in 1874 was particularly influential in helping to promote the annexation of Fiji. However, with the rise of imperial challenges in the seventies the Institute came to focus more and more of its attention on imperial consolidation rather than on expansion. Indeed it became the focal point of the agitation which led to the founding of the Imperial Federation League itself whose first meetings were held in the Institute's rooms. Following the League's break up in the early nineties the R.C.I. continued to call for political federation. Its commitment to this line of approach ran deep and was not easily cast off. Even after the ill-fated Imperial Conference of 1902 the Institute persisted in its search for some kind of political formula capable of uniting the Empire.

By nature the Institute was a conservative institution and slow to adjust to changing circumstances. Its leaders tended to be conservative both politically and in a more general sense.² Conservative peers and knights tended to dominate the council of the R.C.I. while the rank-and-file membership was drawn from the armed services, the

professional classes, the landed gentry, and the Established clergy. For the most part the membership was inclined to be passive and accepted the council's leadership on all matters.³ The council itself was dominated by older men since there was no limit on the length of time during which a man might hold office.⁴ This in turn strengthened the natural inclination of the Institute to avoid rapid change.

The R.C.I. had enjoyed a fair degree of influence as a non-partisan pressure group in the late-Victorian period when it had been a young and dynamic society. By the mid-nineties, however, it was beginning to lose its momentum. Throughout the first decade of the new century its function as a leader in the closer union movement was usurped by other groups and individuals, such as the Pollock Committee, the Imperial Federation Defense Committee, and, finally, the Round Table. The council of the Institute grew increasingly reluctant to take the initiative and shied away from new projects primarily out of a fear of becoming involved in party politics. Thus the Institute entered upon what has been termed a period of somnolence during which it displayed more concern with respectability than with action.⁵

The results of this slide into inactivity were reflected in its inability to attract new members. In 1892 the total membership of the Institute was 3,775 and the annual revenue approximated £6,500. During the eighties the average annual increase in membership had been about

230. In the nineties, however, this average dropped substantially and during the twenty years between 1890 and 1909 fewer than 800 new members were added to the roll and the annual revenue increased to only £7,434.

By 1909 the normally quiescent general membership began to display a keen sense of dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Institute. The Council had become rather staid and many ordinary members felt that it required overhauling if the Institute were to survive and membership increase.⁶ In order to accomplish this it was felt that the council would have to be injected with new blood. A committee was formed to consider the whole question and it tabled a report in May 1909. In June of that year the council adopted its recommendations which emphasized the need "to brighten and popularize the Institute", enlarge its membership, found branches, and make an effort to attract the young.⁷

A new chairman was elected in the person of Lieutenant-General Sir James Bevan Edwards. Edwards was a retired military man whose imperial experience had included an inspection on behalf of the Imperial Government of the defenses of Australia in 1889 and 1890. He was noted for having urged the federation of the Australian colonies as a means of shoring up their defences and promoting unity and is credited with having helped to spark the final drive towards such a union.⁸ Edwards brought his abilities as a

military organizer to bear on the problems of the R.C.I. and proved to be a dynamic leader during the period of rejuvenation which followed his election. In this task he was ably supported by the deputy chairman, Sir Godfrey Lagden. The latter's imperial experience had been in Africa where he had served first as assistant colonial secretary in Sierra Leone and Basutoland and later as British Commissioner in Swaziland. He later acted as commissioner in the Transvaal, retiring from that post in 1907. Lagden's great financial abilities subsequently caused him to be named director of several commercial companies in South Africa and were put to use in bolstering the sagging accounts of the R.C.I.

Among the other figures on the council who helped to spark the regeneration of the Institute were George Parkin and Richard Jebb. Parkin was already a well-known personality in imperial circles while Jebb at the time was rapidly rising to prominence as an imperial theorist. Jebb ranged himself on the side of those who felt imperial federation to be unworkable.⁹ Convinced of the strength of dominion nationalism, he argued that a thoroughgoing political amalgamation of the dependencies was wholly out of the question.¹⁰ Understandably, therefore, he became disgruntled with the methods and objects of the Round Table.¹¹ Jebb called for a "Britannic Alliance" of independent states within the Empire and saw informal

co-operation as the only way of promoting unity. Thus he rejected "constitution-mongering" and preferred to rely upon the call of "the spiritual heritage . . . associated with English blood" to bind the Empire together.¹² Consequently, Jebb proved to be very popular with dominion leaders, particularly Laurier.¹³

As a member of the R.C.I. Jebb joined Edwards, Lagden, Parkin, and the other councillors of the period in their attempt to inject a new spirit into that old but flagging institution. They began a search for a new raison d'être for the R.C.I. which ultimately ended in an attachment to the cause of imperial education. There was, however, no sudden conversion to imperial education. A shift from a commitment to imperial federation to the espousal of an informal, educational approach to achieving imperial unity was only made gradually between 1909 and 1914.

II

The R.C.I. had always seen itself as having an educative function. From its earliest days the Institute had served as a forum for the presentation of papers on colonial subjects. Beyond this, however, the council in the eighties became concerned with improving the younger

generation's knowledge of the Empire. Accordingly in February 1883 it offered cash prizes to schoolchildren and university students for the best essays submitted on a chosen imperial theme. The results, however, were disappointing. Only thirty-six papers were received and in the eyes of the judges they were of very poor quality. The effort was renewed in 1884 but without success and the project was dropped.

The abortive essay contests were part of a general effort to promote Empire study in the schools. In February 1883 the council sent a letter to the more notable public schools urging them to include colonial history and geography in their curricula. This overture evoked only a lukewarm response from the headmasters and nothing came of it. Although sympathetic with the idea the headmasters had complained of their inability to procure adequate textbooks and maps for such instruction. Accordingly, in the nineties, the Institute set about encouraging the production of such teaching aids. A number of books relating to the subject were published by fellows of the R.C.I. but the project was dropped in 1893 because of the financial strain which it placed on the limited resources of the Institute during its period of stagnation.

Between 1868 and 1909 the focal point of the Institute's educational efforts was the development of its

library, one that rapidly became the best in the Empire on colonial affairs. By 1907 it was estimated to hold approximately 70,000 volumes, a collection made up primarily of works of references and official publications from the colonies. In addition a large stock of British and colonial newspapers was kept up to date. The library was open to students and foreign visitors interested in colonial affairs and as a consequence the first librarian, J. S. O'Halloran, likened it in 1888 to "a not unimportant Intelligence Department".¹⁴

Thus almost from its inception the R.C.I. had taken an interest in using educational media for imperial purposes. Prior to the period of internal rejuvenation, however, this interest was sporadic and casual. Education was regarded as a lesser priority of the Institute during the days when its primary energies were directed toward the project of imperial federation. There was an ad hoc quality about its educational efforts which, while revealing a basic interest in the field, were devoid of systematization.

Between 1909 and 1914, however, all of this changed in the wake of disenchantment with imperial federation. One of the recommendations of the reform committee referred to the advisability of extending the Institute's educational work.¹⁵ Nothing specific was proposed beyond publicizing

the society's journal and renewing the essay contests; yet it is clear that the committee saw imperial education as a device with some potential as a force for attracting young members and rekindling the spirit of the Institute. A spark, however, was needed to turn this vague attitude into concrete action.

Such a spark came in March 1910 in the form of a letter from Thomas Hill, a member of the R.C.I., offering a donation of £100 to the Institute if it would arrange a series of imperial lectures in his home county of Dorset.¹⁶ Hill's identity and his motivations are not revealed by the sources available. In any event, his letter seems to have come at a time when the council's interest in education was soaring and it touched off a lengthy discussion on the feasibility of providing a series of imperial lectures, not merely for Dorset, but for the whole of the United Kingdom. The advice of Sir Charles Lucas, chairman of the Visual Instruction Committee of the Colonial Office, was sought and his encouragement was assured.¹⁷ When asked to head up the project, however, he pleaded lack of time.¹⁸

A special committee was established to investigate Hill's proposal. This body was simply an extension of the reform committee of 1909 and included, Bevan Edwards, Ralph Bond, and Richard Jebb.¹⁹ The Visual Instruction Committee of the R.C.I., as it was called, reported to the

council within two weeks that "the time is ripe for the Royal Colonial Institute to take some steps towards instruction generally in the advantages of the future development and consolidation of the Empire".²⁰ Why the committee felt that the time was ripe was not clearly indicated in its official report. Perhaps it had taken a cue from the League of the Empire. It is also possible that it saw educational propaganda as an answer to the Institute's current lack of purposeful direction. In any case, Hill's offer was accepted on the understanding that a nation-wide effort would be made. It was proposed that a series of lantern slide lectures be developed for popular audiences and schoolchildren.

In order to carry out Hill's expanded proposal, the Institute obtained the services of a free-lance professional lecturer, W. Herbert Garrison. Garrison emerges as a rather shadowy, though important, figure in this story. It seems that at one time he had been something of an evangelist who later expanded his repertoire to include paid lectures to popular audiences on just about any theme.²¹ This was no dry-as-dust academician whom the Institute engaged. On the contrary, Garrison was a fiery orator with a definite flair for dealing with popular audiences.

Although few of his addresses have survived, the text of one delivered to a group of young people at the R.C.I. in 1913 is available. In a straightforward appeal

to youthful idealism Garrison, in an address entitled "Our World-Wide Empire" urged a group of Boy Scouts to adopt "the strenuous life".²² The youth of the Empire, he told his audience, should take as their model the late Lord Strathcona who exemplified in his abstemious and self-sacrificing life style all that was best in the imperial race. Children, he argued, should give less time to frivolities such as football, the cinema, and the music hall, which only lured them from the path of duty, and more to promoting the interests of the Empire in which they all took such pride and which had been built at such tremendous cost in blood and treasure. It was only through devotion and patriotism, he claimed, that it could be preserved.

There was something Kiplingesque in Garrison's approach with its heavy emphasis on duty and self-sacrifice. Throughout, he seems to have dwelt upon the grandeur, romance, and moral benefits of the Empire. There was no confusing talk about imperial theories, just a simple and direct appeal to patriotic emotion. During the war Garrison became a popular figure at music halls and public meetings throughout the nation as the market for this sort of oratory grew. His performances were admirably suited to popular audiences and had all the colour and appeal of patriotic jamborees. For instance, in November 1914 he was

the star attraction at a patriotic rally staged at the Chelsea Town Hall. Like many of Garrison's speeches this one was given as a free-lance undertaking, though he was not averse to using his title as the Institute's official lecturer for promotional purposes.²³ The lecture was a theatrical tour de force. Musical fanfares prefaced his speech which in turn was followed by a patriotic concert featuring "In the North Sea 1914", a piece especially composed for the occasion.

Garrison lectured far and wide on patriotic themes during the war. At one point he succeeded in filling Albert Hall only to repeat the same address to a large gathering at the Opera House a few weeks later.²⁴ While still in the employ of the R.C.I. Garrison continued to lecture for anybody who would pay his fee and he frequently gave auditions to prospective clients. Among his other patrons were the Ladies Scholarship Trustees of the Imperial Service College and a host of wealthy figures interested in promoting particular causes.²⁵

In order to supervise Garrison's activities and the broader educational policy of the Institute in general the Visual Instruction Committee was placed on a permanent basis and renamed the Empire Lectures Committee. In its first report this committee laid down plans for the development of a general policy on lectures.²⁶ Garrison was hired

as the official lecturer of the Institute. It was decided that the lectures programme would be administered directly by the R.C.I. but it was hoped that local committees would spring up to help with the scheme. It was felt that the costs of the project could be met out of Hill's donation and the admission charges. In order to allay possible suspicions concerning the nature of the programme the committee advised that particular stress be laid on its non-political character, especially when dealing with local authorities who generally resented interference from London.

In accepting the report of the Lectures Committee the council made it clear that beyond the question of popularizing the Empire, one of the primary objects of the lecture scheme should be that of giving publicity to the R.C.I. and attracting members.²⁷ This theme was reiterated a few months later when in October 1910 the councillors specified that "a considerable increase in the membership [should] result from such Special Meetings".²⁸ In this sense, the lectures programme was viewed as part of an overall effort to found branches of the Institute and increase the number of fee-paying fellows.

The council approved the idea of holding provincial conferences of its "non-resident fellows" outside London.²⁹ It was felt that

such gatherings will not only be valuable as a means of further popularizing the Institute but will have the effect of gaining the adhesion as Fellows of many of the leading . . . residents of the more important towns of the United Kingdom.³⁰

Unlike the League of the Empire, the R.C.I. did not have a network of branches either in Great Britain or the colonies in 1910. Its contacts with areas outside London were maintained informally by honorary corresponding secretaries and not by formal organizational bonds. The reform movement of 1909 made the creation of branches one of its first priorities and it is clear that by 1910 it had come to see the lecture scheme as a device for sparking local interest in the founding of regional chapters. The first such branch was founded in Bristol in 1912 where the lecture program had been well received. It was not, however, until 1914 when the program was in full swing that other provincial cities created their own chapters.

It was made perfectly clear to Garrison that recruitment was a key aspect of his work for the Institute. In choosing him it would seem that the R.C.I. made an appropriate tactical selection. Between 1910 and 1914 he personally recruited 205 resident fellows, 395 non-residents, and 207 associates or a total of 868 new members for the Institute.³¹ In terms of fees alone this represented annually £2,159 for the society's coffers.³² Considering that the total costs of recruitment and lectures between

1910 and 1914 was £1,866, the scheme was not only paying its own way but was providing a handsome profit.³³ Indeed, so valuable was Garrison as a financial asset that as a result he maintained his position long after he came under attack by conservative elements within the R.C.I. who protested his music-hall approach.

In the fall of 1910 Garrison delivered twenty lectures for the R.C.I. in a number of provincial towns. The following year he gave twenty-three more. Apparently a number of other prominent figures were engaged from time to time to deliver speeches under the scheme, but none of their names or the texts of their addresses have survived. The goals of the entire lecture programme were to diffuse information about the Empire and to promote the R.C.I. itself. All in all it was a convenient mixture of imperial patriotism and self-interest. In form the lecture scheme was not dissimilar to that of the League of the Empire and may indeed have been modelled upon it. The lectures were popular in their approach and heavily laced with emotional appeals to imperial patriotism, if one can judge from the few texts that have come down to us. It was not yet, however, the fully developed scheme which would later revolve around an altered and expanded lecture series and the promotion of the academic discipline of imperial history. Nevertheless it was a beginning and,

perhaps more importantly, it was paying its own way.

Of great significance for the future of the R.C.I. and Garrison's career was the decision of Sir Charles Lucas to join the council following his retirement from the Colonial Office in 1911. An intensely conservative man, Lucas was to exert a strong influence on the tone and direction of the Institute during and after the war. Moreover, he joined the council immediately prior to a series of events which would profoundly alter its attitude to Garrison and the popular orientation of its educational policy.

Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas espoused a highly romantic vision of Empire to which he attached a lofty moral, almost quasi-religious significance. To this he added a decidedly individualistic and conservative set of values and a distaste for formal imperial federation. He was not truly at home in the rapidly changing world of Edwardian England and was determined to preserve the best of the old order by transmitting its assumptions to the new. Lucas was, in short, a gentleman of the old Victorian school who, much as he wished to help shape the thoughts of the rising working classes, found it extremely distasteful to descend to the popular arena. Such was the nature of this man who would shortly become the guiding spirit of the R.C.I. during its hey-day as the leading factor in the campaign for encouraging imperial unity through education.

Lucas had enjoyed a long and distinguished career at the Colonial Office before joining the council of the R.C.I. It is perhaps significant that he never ran for public office but spent most of his life as a professional civil servant. This seems to have bred in him a profound dislike, even distrust, of popular political processes. This carried over to his career with the R.C.I. and led him to treat with disdain the music-hall antics of Garrison and everything they stood for. From 1877 until 1911 Lucas served in a wide variety of capacities at the Colonial Office and attained a far-ranging knowledge of imperial affairs. In the eighties he had been private secretary to Sir Robert Herbert, then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies; at the same time he was chairman of the Emigrants Information Office. It is most likely that in this latter capacity he first made the acquaintance of Hugh Egerton who would become his life-long friend.

It is not clear at what point Lucas fell under the spell of the imperial mystique. He might well have been influenced by Parkin while at Oxford.³⁴ Whatever the source of his imperialism, however, Lucas' feelings concerning the Empire were marked by a quasi-religious enthusiasm. The imperial idea was a matter of deep personal conviction to him and seems to have appealed to an unsatisfied religious craving in his nature. Little or

nothing, however, is known of Lucas' thoughts about organized religion in general. Although he was a member of the Established Church he took no interest in dogmatic controversies or theological differences of opinion.³⁵ Formal religion, it would appear, was not one of the major preoccupations of his life, a trait that was fairly typical of late-Victorian and Edwardian imperialists as a whole.³⁶ Instead, it was for the Empire that Lucas reserved his deepest emotional commitment. He called on his fellow imperialists "to preach the Gospel of Empire aright" and like Egerton fully subscribed to the notion that Britain had a providential destiny to fulfil.³⁷

At the Colonial Office Lucas had always had great respect for those of his chiefs who were imbued with lofty imperial ideals.³⁸ Of particular satisfaction to him, therefore, was the appointment of Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary in 1895. The two devotees of Empire saw eye-to-eye on the need for a constructive approach to strengthening the foundations of Greater Britain. Thus Lucas' star rose dramatically under Chamberlain as he threw himself into his chief's plans for Tariff Reform and the constructive utilization of "undeveloped estates". Indeed, his close friend at the R.C.I., Sir Harry Wilson, who served as Chamberlain's private secretary from 1895 to 1897, later claimed that Lucas had played a key role in

prompting Chamberlain to formulate his schemes.³⁹ In any event Lucas in 1897 was appointed by Chamberlain assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. For the next ten years he was primarily concerned with the administration of the West Indian Crown Colonies. In 1907, however, he was elevated to the post of first head of the newly established Dominions Department, in which capacity he toured the Australasian Empire on a goodwill mission.

In 1910 Lucas submitted a memorandum to the Colonial Secretary calling for a complete overhaul of the entire Colonial Office. He contended that the time had passed when the dominions could be regarded as subordinates within the imperial structure and he urged that they be formally recognized as equal partners in a grand imperial alliance.⁴⁰ As a symbolic gesture Lucas called for the separation of the Dominions Department from the Colonial Office and for the appointment of a different minister for each. He was, in short, becoming increasingly aware of the necessity of mollifying dominion and colonial nationalism. The following year Lucas advised his superiors to form the High Commissioners of the dominions into a standing body acting as an adjunct to the Imperial Conferences.⁴¹

None of this sat too well with his employers in Whitehall and Lucas "retired" shortly after this episode. True to the code of the civil service Lucas never made the reasons for his retirement a matter of public record.

At a luncheon given in his honour failing eyesight was cited as the cause of his resignation.⁴² Yet for the next twenty years he continued to indulge his life-long hobby of writing imperial history and he published an impressive series of books and articles, hardly evidence of an advanced case of failing vision. In fact there can be little doubt that despite all of his protestations of civil service neutrality, Lucas' later career had suffered because of his close association with Chamberlain and the Tories. Indeed by 1911 he was a deeply disappointed man, having been passed over twice by Liberal administrations, in 1906 and again in 1911, in his bid to become Permanent Under-Secretary. This he set down to the machinations of Liberal ministers who preferred to place men of their own persuasions in key positions.⁴³

On another plane, however, Lucas was also disillusioned by the failure of government to lead the way in finding new approaches to the problem of imperial consolidation. His patience with the constitution-makers was wearing thin. He had never been particularly enamoured of the concept of formal imperial federation. In his own words, his experience in dealing with the dominion governments as a member of the Colonial Office had bred in him "essentially a half-way House mind".⁴⁴ By this Lucas meant that he favoured moderation and pragmatism in the approach to the issue of unity. He reasoned that the Empire was

far too diverse in nature for uncompromising theoretical schemes for federation to work.

Lucas voiced this opinion in his Greater Rome and Greater Britain, published the same year he joined the R.C.I.'s council. This work provides us with a window into his mind at a crucial juncture in his own and the Institute's development. To Lucas, the key to the future of the Empire lay in following the principles which he felt had been laid down by his hero, Lord Durham, whose famous report he was then preparing for publication as well. Durham, said Lucas, had pointed out the necessity of dealing with each colony individually on a pragmatic ad hoc basis. "In considering the future of the Empire", Lucas wrote, _

It appears feeble and inconclusive not to sketch out a definite programme and to prescribe new machinery. Consequently we have a plethora of plans and schemes. But it is in the very attractiveness of schemes and programmes that the danger for the future of the Empire consists. The British present has grown up on no definite plan.⁴⁵

Indeed, like Pollard, Lucas was convinced that Empires and constitutions had to evolve slowly and could not be deliberately planned. Thus Britain's imperial hegemony, he argued, had been the product of a special characteristic of the English race that fostered flexibility and opportunism rather than long-term planning.⁴⁶ It was this "racial instinct", he said, that must be Britain's guide to the future and any attempts to force imperial union

by "hothouse methods" were bound to fail.⁴⁷

Altogether apart from the supposed unsuitability of formal plans, Lucas felt that they were misdirected because they focused attention on governmental agencies rather than on public opinion. Like it or not, he observed, democracy was the normal pattern of political life in Britain and the dominions. It followed then that any attempt to unify the Empire must spring from the will of the electors who constituted the ultimate power in these communities.⁴⁸ In view of this situation Lucas was driven to ask, "if the democracy of the United Kingdom is not given sound, sober, thoughtful teaching about the Empire, how can it be expected to form sound, sober, thoughtful views on Imperial questions?"⁴⁹ He concluded that it would be of the utmost importance that the electors be persuaded of the value of the Empire. "What", he asked in 1915, "do nine out of ten workingmen know or care about the Empire?"⁵⁰ Very little, he answered. The reason, of course, was that "they have never been systematically taught to know or care".⁵¹ This situation was all the more deplorable because it was positively dangerous.

In Lucas' opinion class ideology had been coupled with a general ignorance of Empire to render the workers particularly vulnerable to the kind of anti-imperial slogans popularized by J. A. Hobson during the Boer War.⁵²

All Lucas' writings and addresses were coloured by a desire to rid the Empire of the stigma of jingoism and to counteract the arguments of class. He deplored the "unfounded animus" which labour seemed to harbour against the Empire.⁵³ Instead Lucas continually emphasized the point that the Empire was the product of peaceful evolution and was something absolutely vital to the welfare of every Briton regardless of class.⁵⁴ Like many before him Lucas was determined to educate the new masters of society to understand that "the British Empire is not the colossal expansion of original sin [as] some seem to think".⁵⁵

But Lucas was no democrat. In spite of his willingness to seek an accommodation with the rising democratic element in society, he remained fundamentally a paternalist favouring the concept of a managed democracy. It was in this spirit that he approached his duties as Principal of the Working Men's College of London, a post he was offered probably in consolation for his "retirement". The College was an offshoot of the old Mechanics Institutes which had grown up in the nineteenth century to provide for working class education. But Lucas had no real qualifications for the post. There is no evidence that he took any great interest in the affairs of workingmen before his appointment or that he had any prolonged contact with them prior to that time. In any case, his inaugural address

revealed the depth of his paternalism. The purpose of the College, he said, ought not to be to enable the workers to climb the social ladder, but merely to make poor men happier with their lot in life. To this end he suggested that they seek compensation and diversion in hobbies, just as he did after his retirement.⁵⁶

Lucas was no less conservative in his attitude to women's rights. In a speech to a group of fellow imperialists in 1914 he proposed, one suspects half-jokingly, a radical solution to the suffragette problem. Why not, he asked, ship them abroad to Australia where the predominantly male population was anxious to receive a ready supply of "warlike and resourceful women"?⁵⁷ Since Australian women already had the vote Lucas assured his listeners that he expected no sudden rash of bush fires in the Outback.

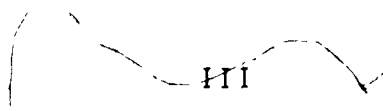
Lucas' conservatism was matched only by his individualism. He never tired of reiterating the theme that the Empire was the outcome of individual rather than class or State action.⁵⁸ In his opinion, the Empire was the work of the few and those few had represented the entire race rather than one class in British society.⁵⁹ Devotion to duty and a Kiplingesque sense of responsibility was the message behind all this. Indeed, to Lucas, the Empire was "the most wholesome and effective antidote to

the weakness of democracy", with its penchant for what he called unconstructive prattle and paralytic inertia.⁶⁰ Whatever the Empire's faults may have been, it had, in Lucas' estimation, one great redeeming feature -- it was the result of action rather than words. "No crowd", he asserted, "however well-intentioned could ever have taught the world the lesson of freedom".⁶¹

But if democracy's tendency to talk rather than act offended Lucas' individualistic preference for action, he found the materialism of the growing collectivist spirit positively galling. "What are we going to get?" This, in Lucas' opinion, was the only question that modern democracy was ever taught to ask.⁶² To him the priorities seemed all wrong when people were being trained to fix their eyes on rights rather than on duties and to make their only criterion of action the question "Will it pay?". One can sense Lucas' dejection in his assertion that "patriotism cannot be translated into pounds, shillings, and pence".⁶³

He became convinced that the task of imperialists should be to win the hearts and the minds of the public for the Empire. Lucas had served as the chairman of Chamberlain's Visual Instruction Committee from 1902 to 1911 and as a result he was fully aware of the general case for using education as a tool for promoting imperial consolidation. By 1912, however, he had still not clearly decided on the best tactics and strategy to pursue. In a sense Lucas

was undergoing a personal transition not at all unlike that being experienced by the R.C.I. as a whole. But for the moment, following his retirement, he appears to have lost something of his sense of purpose and direction. However, events at the R.C.I. and the timely words of Sidney Low were soon to resolve this problem both for Lucas and the Institute.



In 1912 a series of developments helped to undermine the Institute's confidence in Garrison and his popular approach to encouraging imperial sentiment. In an attempt to expand its lecture scheme the council made an effort to enlist the sympathy of the headmasters of a number of notable public schools. This decision seems to have been made rather casually. Indeed no comment was made on this point beyond its mere announcement in the minute book. It would appear that no radical shift in policy away from Garrison's popular approach was actually envisaged; rather the council was simply looking to expand its programme. An overture to the public schools was a natural step for, as already noted, the Edwardians tended to emphasize secondary and university education as the focal points of educational rejuvenation. It may well have been that the

council was trying to augment their popular programme with a more traditional, permeating, élitist approach to education. All this, however, is a matter of speculation since the councillors did not elaborate on their motives.

The results of the correspondence with the headmasters must have been very disheartening to the councillors. Of the letters sent to some one hundred and twenty-three schools a mere twenty-five replies were received and of these only five accepted the offer of a lecture on the Empire. Although some schools rejected the overture pleading lack of funds or time, it would appear that the majority of the headmasters entertained a strong objection not so much to the lectures as to Garrison.⁶⁴ The principal of Cheltenham College, R. Waterfield, for example, was quite outspoken in this regard. "I have", he wrote,

received Mr. Garrison's advertisements for many years and I could have engaged him myself many a time if I had wanted him; but I have studiously avoided him because I have been advised that . . . he is not suited to a public school audience.⁶⁵

Accordingly Waterfield withdrew his tentative acceptance of the Institute's offer. The main objection seems to have been that Garrison was a bombastic, popular orator and, what was even worse, no gentleman. S. R. James of Malvern College summed up the feelings of his colleagues:

I have heard Mr. Garrison in years gone by and I want someone else. I do not at all care about his style. I would sooner have a less "professional" lecturer, one who counts for something in himself.⁶⁶

The Institute, however, did not have a permanent staff of well-known, "respectable" lecturers at the time and there is no suggestion that Lucas, Egerton, Jebb, or the others volunteered their services on this particular occasion. They were undoubtedly too surprised and too upset to consider this course of action.

Respectability and the prestige of the R.C.I. had always been highly prized by the council. It prided itself that among its many members the cases of expulsion for misconduct had been extremely rare.⁶⁷ A desire to guard the image of the Institute as a substantial, conservative, and responsible society had been so pronounced that it had become one of the factors contributing to the stagnation of the R.C.I. in the nineties. Even when the council accepted the reform committee's recommendations "to brighten and popularize" the Institute in 1909, it had been very careful to state that this policy should not be allowed to transform it into a "second-rate club".⁶⁸ As if to reinforce this attitude, Lucas, who was rapidly gaining influence within the inner councils of the R.C.I., was widely known as a stickler for form and gentlemanly conduct.⁶⁹

The rebuff from the headmasters, however, had implied that there was something distinctly second-rate about the Institute's offer of a speaker who was supposedly

neither a gentleman nor a respectable scholar. The intense pride of the councillors was undoubtedly wounded. It seemed to them that a grave tactical error had been committed in offering the services of what amounted to a tasteless street orator to the august public schools.

This set-back seems to have had a great influence upon the thinking of the councillors and was the starting point of a complete reappraisal of the educational policy of the Institute. The suitability of Garrison as a spokesman for the R.C.I. was at once called into question. After 1912 the popular emphasis of the Institute's early lecture scheme was toned down and gradually gave way to a more academically oriented approach geared to the public school and university audience. Tactics changed but, it should be stressed, the goals of the R.C.I. did not. As the Institute slowly shifted from a popular to a permeating or filtration line of attack, it still conceived its twin purposes to be the bolstering of the R.C.I. itself and the promotion of imperial unity by means of education.

All of this came later, however. In 1912 the R.C.I. was still merely experimenting in its search for a new sense of purpose and an alternative to imperial federation. In the meantime two new members were added to the council; along with Lucas they were to be the dominant figures at the R.C.I. before and during the Great War. The triumvirate

of Lucas, Lord Grey, and Sir Harry Francis Wilson was to provide the R.C.I. with the most purposeful and dynamic leadership it had had in decades.

Throughout most of its history the presidency of the R.C.I. had been a preserve of the royal family. In 1912 the then president was H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught. For the most part the Duke, like his predecessors, had treated the office as an honorific post and had been content to serve as a mere figurehead, lending his name to the Institute so as to enhance its prestige.⁷⁰ In 1912, however, Albert, the Fourth Earl Grey, retired from the post of Governor-General of Canada and was replaced by the Duke of Connaught. As if to reciprocate, Grey was then invited by the council of the R.C.I. to assume the presidency of that society. Grey had been a member of the Institute for many years and since 1902 had been urging measures to increase the membership. Thus when he assumed the office of president he boldly stated that it was his wish to raise the enrolment by 8,000 during his first year of tenure.⁷¹

This optimistic outburst was typical of Grey and he succeeded in communicating his enthusiasm to his colleagues. He was idealistic by nature as was revealed in an autobiographical note dictated to a friend from his death-bed as a last word to the nation in 1917.⁷² In the preface to this testament his son commented upon Grey's passion for

fighting the good fight even in the service of lost causes. Grey was a self-proclaimed "rainbow-chaser" all his life. He always retained a boyish enthusiasm which endeared him to his friends and led him to be impatient with people who dwelt only on the difficulties to be overcome rather than on the glorious objects to be achieved. Upon hearing of Grey's demise, Leander Starr Jameson, leader of the notorious Jameson Riad and one-time Premier of the Cape, was moved to comment that "we loved the man so much that we often supported some of his more decorative ideas in which we had no faith at all, rather than damp his ardour or hurt his feelings". In short, as far as personality was concerned, Grey was the ideal man to lead the R.C.I. out of its time of uncertainty.

Grey's most fervent enthusiasms were reserved for the Empire. This one-time Governor-General of Canada had considerable first hand experience of the Empire and was moved by "a spiritual and almost religious enthusiasm" for it. By the time of his death in 1917 he was convinced that imperial unity lay just around the corner. H. Begbie, who transcribed his last message, later wrote that Grey loved the Empire as "the most beautiful thing under heaven". "It was a loveliness that made his nerves quiver at the mere thought of it."

In spite of his intensely romantic view of Empire,

Grey was not blinded to the force of dominion nationalism. He yearned for a permanent form of union but recognized the immensity of the barriers in its path. In 1905 he had taken great pains to dissuade Pollock from pressing Canadians too hard on the issue of political consolidation.⁷³ In his opinion federation or centralization of any sort was a topic to be handled with extreme care in any dealings with the dominions. For the most part, therefore, he was content to promote measures of informal co-operation which he hoped would eventually lead to a larger sense of imperial unity. Accordingly he was very active while Governor-General in fostering the work of the League of the Empire in Canada, particularly in connection with the Federal Conference.

However, Grey never despaired of creating some tangible form of union, but he seems to have felt that it would ultimately depend on public goodwill.⁷⁴ Yet this sympathy, he felt, would have to be systematically created and could only be encouraged by emphasizing the bonds of sentiment that drew the Empire together. Understandably he never gravitated toward the Round Table. Instead, he devoted his energies to the educational approach later adopted by the R.C.I. It must have been reassuring to Lucas to have a man of Grey's persuasions at the helm of the Institute.

Their chief ally at the Institute was Sir Harry Francis Wilson. He was a man of boundless energy and considerable organizational capacity and he doubtless served as a perfect foil to the more reflective Lucas. A barrister by profession, Wilson joined the Colonial Office in the eighties and later served as Chamberlain's private secretary.⁷⁵ It was in the latter post that he first encountered Lucas and he developed a high regard for him. In 1897 Wilson was appointed Colonial Secretary to the Orange River Colony and served under Milner. Retiring in 1907, he then became chairman of a number of companies based in South Africa. Politically conservative, Wilson also found time to act as head of the finance committee of the Hereford Unionist Association.⁷⁶

The new leadership sought by the reform committee of 1909 had finally been procured. On the whole, the Institute, under the influence of Grey, Lucas, Wilson, Parkin and Jebb, was moving away from a commitment to formal imperial federation and leaning toward imperial education as an alternative raison d'être. But these ideas were as yet imprecisely defined. Some spark, some clear statement of purpose was required to galvanize opinion at the R.C.I. In the end such a catalyst was provided by Sidney Low, almost in the form of a revelation. His address in 1912 to the British Academy on the subject of Empire

studies was hailed by Lucas as a beacon showing the way to the founding of the Imperial Studies Movement and the moral regeneration of the R.C.I.⁷⁷

Sidney James Mark Low is remembered as a journalist but, as his biographer assures us, he was at heart a would-be historian and an imperialist who embraced the gospel of Empire with a burning faith. Low's interest in Empire can be traced back to his early days as a reporter and leader writer with the St. James Gazette in the seventies. He was among those who had urged Disraeli to buy up the Suez Canal shares. His growing attachment to the imperial creed eventually drove Low to forsake his allegiance to Gladstonian Liberalism and to swing toward the Conservatives in whom he thought he saw the true spirit of Empire.⁷⁸ Eventually he sat as a Conservative member on the London County Council and even considered running for Parliament in the Unionist cause, although he never actually stood for election. Low was a friend to many of the foremost imperialists of the era, including Milner, Curzon, and Kipling.

His thoughts on the question of imperial unity, however, differed somewhat from those of Lucas and his colleagues. To Low, the kind of day to day reliance on "pragmatic opportunism" that Lucas favoured was no longer a sufficient guarantee of imperial survival.⁷⁹ In his

opinion, what was needed was an efficient, thoroughgoing reorganization of the Empire and he therefore clung to the idea of a full-blown imperial federation. This stance, of course, set him apart from the central figures at the R.C.I.; but a point of contact was found in Low's assertion that an efficient Empire must be a well educated one.

Like Haldane and Sadler, Low was a proponent of national efficiency and attributed much of the success of England's foreign challenges to their superior organization and utilization of educational facilities. In his soon to be famous address to the British Academy, Low hammered this point home.⁸⁰ He outlined the work being done in Germany and France in the direction of accumulating and systematically analyzing knowledge that could be put to imperial purposes. The Ecole Coloniale in Paris, he noted, churned out highly trained imperial bureaucrats to man the administrative posts in the French Empire. This was done expertly and served to instil a high level of professionalism in the French imperial civil service. But it was to Germany, not to France, that one had to look for the fullest realization of what Low liked to term the "Imperial Seminary". In Low's opinion the Hamburg Colonial Institute was a model of its kind. There students were drilled in languages, administrative techniques, business

practices, and native customs. In addition the school served as a focal point for the collection and dissemination of all sorts of information on colonial affairs. All of this was made possible only because the Institute had the full and systematic support of the German government. How long, he asked, could Britain be expected to withstand such competition? How long could she afford to neglect the education of her own imperial servants?

In a sobering appraisal Low contrasted the state of imperial education on the Continent with its condition in Britain. He concluded that the opportunities open to the British student of Empire were not commensurate with the importance of the Empire in British life. Nevertheless, for him the situation was not totally irretrievable; there were still some recourses open to the student. For example, he pointed to the work being done by the School of Tropical Medicine, the School of Modern Oriental Languages, the Imperial College of Science and Technology, the L.S.E., the R.C.I., and its sister societies. This, he contended, constituted the nucleus of an "imperial seminary". What was lacking in Low's view was co-ordination, systematization, and direction among these agencies: "At present", he noted, "such facilities as do exist are scattered, irregular, and unrelated". He went on to show that there were a number of crucial fields of imperial

study that had as yet received little or no attention anywhere.

In this regard, Low had particularly harsh words for the neglect of imperial history in Great Britain. The Empire, he argued, was "our greatest achievement as a race", yet very few opportunities for studying its history were open to the student. At Cambridge, he noted, imperial history could safely be ignored by students altogether. Conditions at Oxford were a little better since the foundation of the Beit chair, but even there only seven out of one hundred and forty-two history students in 1910 had chosen the Empire as a special topic. This situation in his opinion accounted for the dearth of adequate books on imperial history, prompting him to write that "the greatest of Imperial nations has no Imperial literature worthy of the name".

Low's interest in imperial history stemmed from his experience after 1900 as a part-time lecturer in colonial history at King's College, London. He always harboured an ambition to be an historian but the need to earn a living stood in the way of the full realization of this dream.⁸¹ In any event, the atmosphere at King's College was doubtless congenial for Low's ideas on the need to improve the teaching of imperial history. There had been movements in that direction within the university itself even before

Low's address of 1912. Since the early years of the century historians such as A. F. Pollard and F. J. C. Hearnshaw had been calling for the promotion of imperial history in schools and universities.⁸²

In this connection one of the major issues had been that of how to go about fostering this and other imperial studies. To be sure, Pollard had helped to found the Historical Association, but there was nothing specifically imperial in its orientation. It was Low who came to develop the idea of a truly "Imperial Seminary", based on the University of London and capable of competing with similar Continental institutions. It was intended that imperial history be the special preserve of this school but it would also, it was hoped, be designed to cater to all other forms of knowledge which could be put to use in the Empire. Low felt that London was the ideal site for such a body for several reasons. Most obviously, it was the capital of the Empire. However, in addition, London could provide the "seminary" with a large corps of students, particularly men who were interested in pursuing imperial careers. Moreover, the faculty could be recruited from the many expert men of affairs who made their home in the metropolis. Finally, Low felt that London with its vast untapped stores of documentary material in the British Museum, the Public Record Office, and elsewhere, would be the ideal place for

a college emphasizing the study of imperial history. In fact, Low was firmly convinced that such a college would act as a sort of academic embassy and focal point of imperial unity, a Rhodes Trust Scholarship Scheme writ large.

On the practical side, Low envisaged no insuperable barriers standing in the way of his project. The costs of establishing the imperial school would be kept to a minimum simply by co-ordinating and making the best possible use of existing facilities. The buildings of the Imperial Institute of South Kensington could be used as the central campus. In addition no new libraries would be required since London was already rich in such facilities. Optimistically he predicted that colonial governments would shoulder half the burden of the original outlay and that the rest could be obtained from private subscription in the United Kingdom. The total cash requirements needed to launch the project were estimated by Low at some £3,800.

Altogether Low's 1912 address caused a considerable stir in the London academic community and imperial circles as a whole. Immediately following it he approached everyone who was in the least way likely to take a favourable view of his project. He personally enlisted the support of Lords Haldane, Grey, and Milner who in turn brought the matter to the attention of Otto Beit.⁸³ Throughout 1913 the subject was actively discussed. In February of the

following year Low gave an "Empire Study Dinner" at his own expense which was attended by Milner, Sir Henry Meirs, president of the University of London, and by professors A. P. Newton and F. J. C. Hearnshaw of the same institution. The upshot of this meeting was the establishment of the Imperial Studies Committee of the University of London, a body which included Milner, Lucas, Low, Newton, and Parkin. This committee's function was conceived to be that of promoting imperial studies within the University of London itself. Its major activities included the holding from time to time of public lectures at King's and University College and, during the war, the publication of a number of books on imperial themes. For the most part it remained exclusively an intramural committee of the University and did not attempt to do much outside London itself. Consequently it never became the core of the "imperial seminary" for which Low had called.

It must be remembered too that at that time the University of London had only recently been incorporated as a teaching institution and still required the constant financial support of men like Haldane and Rosebery to keep its head above water. All of its faculties were expanding rapidly at this time and the main effort seems to have been directed toward the improvement of the scientific departments, a move which paid off in a number of technological advances during the war years. Thus, while Low was urging

a concentration on historical studies, the University was, as a whole, moving in another direction. Once again, Low's scheme required the close co-operation of outside bodies like the L. of E., the V.L., and the R.C.I. if it were to be successful. As noted, the two leagues were not on especially good terms since the failure of the amalgamation movement of 1908. In the future similar squabbles would arise between the R.C.I. and the V.L. Little wonder, therefore, that Low's scheme did not reach complete fruition.

The most telling argument against the scheme was undoubtedly the financial one. Responding to Low's suggestions, the librarian of the R.C.I., P. E. Lewin, did not question the value of the scheme but seriously criticized Low's overly optimistic estimate of the costs involved.⁸⁴ Lewin took a more sober view of the situation and failed to see how the project for an "imperial seminary" could be undertaken for less than £100,000 at the outset and £10,000 on a yearly basis.⁸⁵ He was not opposed to the scheme in principle but merely felt it to be impractical and, therefore, he advised caution. Instead, Lewin suggested that societies such as the R.C.I. should take a larger and more active role in fostering the study of the Empire.

It was at this point that Lucas and his colleagues sat up and took notice of Low's views. It seemed that at

last a way might be found to breathe new life into the Institute. With Lewin's ideas in mind the council of the R.C.I. appointed a special committee to review its entire educational policy, Low's concept and the experiments of the University Committee were examined. The programmes of the L. of E. and the V.L. were also carefully studied;⁸⁶ indeed a joint committee with the V.L. had already been established to prevent overlapping and competition in educational work.⁸⁷ At the same time the statistics of Garrison's recruiting drive were compiled and weighed.

The Institute seemed to be on the move at last. The complete re-evaluation of its educational policy, which continued throughout 1914, eventually supplied the R.C.I. with the momentum required to shake it out of twenty years of lethargy. By the outbreak of war the quest for regeneration begun in 1909 was beginning to bear fruit. The keys to rejuvenation had been the recruitment of new leaders not bound to the fading cause of formal imperial federation and their willingness to search for an alternative raison d'être in the field of education. During the war the R.C.I., unlike many British institutions, was to prosper and flower. Indeed the Institute's doldrum years had decisively come to an end.

FOOTNOTES

¹In this regard the author's task has been made considerably easier by the publication of T. R. Reese's, History of the Royal Commonwealth Society 1868-1968 (London, 1968). Somewhat less useful is J. R. Boosé's Memory Serving (London, 1928). This is a personal memoir by a former secretary of the R.C.I. and, while it is useful in providing occasional personal insights, it tends to be an anecdotal rather than a serious study.

²Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 92.

³Ibid., p. 98.

⁴Ibid., p. 97.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 99; C.M.B., VIII (2 March 1909), p. 419; Boosé, Memory, pp. 59-60.

⁷C.M.B., VIII (8 June 1909), pp. 447-48.

⁸Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 103.

⁹J. D. B. Miller, Richard Jebb and the Problem of Empire (London, 1956), pp. 10-12.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 18-31.

¹¹Ibid., p. 30.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Kendle, Conferences, p. 75.

¹⁴Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 89.

¹⁵C.M.B., VIII (8 June 1909), pp. 447-48.

¹⁶ Ibid., IX (8 March 1910), pp. 45-46; L.C.M.B. (17 March 1910).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Bond was a member of the 1909 committee and after the war served as treasurer of the Institute.

²⁰ "Report of the Visual Instruction Committee", C.M.B., IX (21 March 1910), 51.

²¹ The inference that Garrison had been an evangelist is based on admittedly flimsy evidence. At one point he spoke of his having lost much of his old Non-Conformist following as a result of involving himself with the imperial lectures. C.M.B., X (November 1915), Minute B1.

²² For the details of this address see The Times (3 January 1913), p. 9.

²³ Although the fact that Garrison delivered many private lectures during the war has been noted in the press, none of the details of his speeches have come down to us. The Times (11 November 1914), p. 3.

²⁴ Ibid. (23 March 1915), p. 13; (24 March 1915), p. 10.

²⁵ Ibid. (20 March 1915), p. 13; (24 March 1915), p. 5.

²⁶ For this and all subsequent references to the first report consult C.M.B., IX (24 May 1910), pp. 82-83.

²⁷ Ibid. (12 July 1910), p. 91.

²⁸ Ibid. (18 October 1910), p. 125.

²⁹ Ibid. (11 January 1910), p. 23.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹L.S.C.M.B. (25 February 1915), p. 3.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴The reference is to Parkin's famous speech at the Oxford Union in 1873 which fired Milner's imagination. See, Wilson, Parkin, pp. 31-32.

³⁵L. Jacob, "Sir Charles Lucas", U.E., XXII (1931), 312.

³⁶Attention has been drawn to this theme in imperial thought by E. Stokes in his English Utilitarians and India (London, 1959), p. 308.

³⁷C. P. Lucas, "The Meaning of the Empire to the Labour Democracy", U.E., XI (1920), 110-121.

³⁸The Times (8 May 1931), p. 11.

³⁹H. F. Wilson, "Sir Charles Lucas", U.E., XXII (1931), 310.

⁴⁰Kendle, Conferences, p. 151.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 152.

⁴²The Times (15 December 1911), p. 14.

⁴³Ibid. (8 May 1931), p. 11.

⁴⁴Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 112.

⁴⁵C. P. Lucas, Greater Rome and Greater Britain (London, 1912), p. 171.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 172.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 166-67.

- 48 Ibid.
666. 49 C. P. Lucas, "Imperial Studies", U.E., VI (1915),
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Lucas, "Meaning of Empire", 111.
- 53 C. P. Lucas, "On the Teaching of Imperial History",
History, I, N.S. (1916-1917), 5.
- 54 Lucas, "Meaning of Empire", 111-121.
- 55 Report of the Imperial Education Conference of
1923 (London, 1924), p. 192.
- 56 The Times (30 September 1912), p. 6.
- 57 Ibid. (5 June 1914), p. 5.
- 58 Ibid. (28 January 1910), p. 4; (19 April 1913),
p. 7; Lucas, "Meaning of Empire", 117.
- 59 Lucas, "Meaning of Empire", 119.
- 60 Ibid., 117.
- 61 Ibid., 118.
810. 62 C. P. Lucas, "A Democratic Empire", U.E., VI (1915),
- 63 Ibid.

⁶⁴For example consult the letters received from Bristol Grammar School, King's College Tauton, and King Edward's School, Birmingham. These are enclosed in L.C.M.B.

⁶⁵R. Waterfield to the Council of the R.C.I., 28 July 1912, L.C.M.B.

⁶⁶S. R. James to the Council, 20 February 1912, ibid.

⁶⁷Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 97.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 101.

⁶⁹Sir Godfrey Lagden once said of Lucas that "he had no patience for irregularities or neglect of duty and always condemned mean or unbecoming conduct in a gentleman". G. Lagden, "Sir Charles Lucas", U.E., XXII (1931), 309.

⁷⁰Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 105.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²H. Begbie, Albert the Fourth Earl Grey: A Last Word (London, 1917). Except where noted all subsequent references to Grey's outlook and life are to be found in this autobiography.

⁷³Kendle, Conferences, p. 71.

⁷⁴V.L.M.N. (May 1913), p. 38.

⁷⁵The Times (7 May 1937), p. 18; Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 113.

⁷⁶Details concerning Wilson's life are scanty and may be found in Who Was Who (1929-40), p. 1470; The Times (7 May 1937), p. 18; Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 113.

⁷⁷ Lucas, "Imperial Studies", p. 665.

⁷⁸ Details concerning Low's life are to be found primarily in D. Chapman-Huston's, The Lost Historian: A Memoir of Sir Sidney Low (London, 1936). This is no ordinary biography; it is the result of Chapman-Huston's editing of notes which Low prepared for an autobiography shortly before his death in 1932. In fact the book is really Low on Low. Where the editor does intrude he proves it to be heavily biased in favour of his old friend. Nevertheless it remains the best source available on the topic of Low's life and ideas. Unless otherwise indicated all subsequent references to Low's life are to be found in this source.

⁷⁹ S. Low, "The Study of Empire", Fortnightly Review, XCIII (January 1913), 14.

⁸⁰ S. Low, "The Organization of Imperial Studies in London", Proceedings of the British Academy, V (1911-1912) p. 508. For this and all subsequent references to this address see the above.

⁸¹ Chapman-Huston, Lost Historian, p. 89.

⁸² M. M. Spector, "A. P. Newton", Some Modern Historians of Britain, eds. H. Ausubel and others (New York, 1951), p. 289.

⁸³ Chapman-Huston, Lost Historian, p. 195.

⁸⁴ P. E. Lewin, "The Co-Ordination of Colonial Studies", U.E., IV (1913), 494-95.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ L.S.C.M.B., 24 November 1914.

⁸⁷ C.M.B., X (4 March 1913), p. 383.

CHAPTER FIVE
"THE TIME OF OUR VISITATION"
1914-1918

The rebuff at the hands of the public schools late in 1912 had seemed to clarify what the Institute was not. It was not a body which was temperamentally suited to indulging in popular propaganda. On the other hand, the addresses and writings of Sidney Low and the experiment at the University of London had helped to channel the thought of Lucas and his fellow councillors along new lines. The committee formed in November 1914 to review the educational work of the R.C.I. crystallized the changing outlook of the Institute in this regard. It was felt that the time had come to establish the Institute's educational activities on a more systematic basis than had hitherto been the case.

The committee included Sir Harry Wilson, Sir Charles Lucas, and Major Evelyn Wrench.¹ Wrench was a member of the council with many years of service but his appointment to the committee undoubtedly owed a great deal to his position as the founder of the Overseas Club.² This body, established in 1910, was a patriotic society whose simple purpose was to inspire imperial unity by keeping lines of contact open between Britons at home and overseas.

The club never engaged in educational or political activity; its sole function was the holding of patriotic meetings at which elaborate ceremonial pledges of allegiance were given. All of its gatherings closed with the singing of the national anthem to which an imperial stanza was added:

One great united band,
Pray we through every land,
God guard our Empire grand,
God save the King.

There was evidently a considerable market for this straightforward creed during the war. Indeed, by 1915 the club boasted over 100,000 members at home and abroad. No wonder the council was anxious to have Wrench serve on its educational committee. It might well have hoped that his success would reflect on their own schemes.

From November 1914 to May 1915 the R.C.I.'s Lectures Sub-Committee, as it was called, communicated with the Victoria League, the League of the Empire, the Imperial Studies Committee and Sidney Low in an effort to study the work already being done in the field of imperial education.³ Their relations with the Victoria League were facilitated by a joint committee of the two societies, established in 1913 in order to exchange information on their respective lecture schedules and general work so that overlapping and competition could be avoided.⁴ Responding to the inquiries of the Institute in February 1915, the Victoria League stated that it would

perhaps be best to secure the services of a wide variety of experienced men as lecturers rather than relying on a single professional speaker.⁵ In this way, it was argued, first hand information on a multitude of topics could be presented by men who really knew what they were talking about and who were capable of impressing audiences on their own personal merits.

Garrison's name was not mentioned, but it is clear that the Lectures Sub-Committee was already thinking along the lines suggested by the Victoria League. Indeed at the first meeting of this group in 1914 Wilson had urged that Garrison's position be reviewed and that the statistics of his recruiting drive be collected and examined.⁶ This was done and the results of the investigation, cited previously, were decidedly favourable to Garrison. The committee however was left in something of a quandary. Its members felt uneasy about employing a man who had proven unacceptable to some of the country's most highly respected educational institutions and the V.L. had warned against employing such "professional" lecturers. Yet Garrison had proven to be the Institute's most potent weapon in its recruiting drive. In view of this no decisions on his status were made immediately. Instead further outside advice was sought from A. P. Newton, the then organizing secretary of the Imperial Studies Committee of the University of London.

Arthur Percival Newton was a natural selection here since he was already a protégé of Lucas and Egerton and was in complete sympathy with their aims and objectives.⁷ Newton was a former science master at King's College, London, who had recently turned to the study of imperial history. His career as a scientist seems to have gone sour after he lost an eye in a laboratory experiment. It is doubtful, however, that this accident actually determined Newton's ultimate choice of a career. Ambition, not misfortune, seems to have been the determining factor. Already past forty when the accident occurred Newton was convinced that, in any case, there was little or no future for him as a science master. Anxious to advance as quickly as possible he selected the less well-trodden field of imperial history in order to make a name for himself. In the words of his former student, M. M. Spector, "this struggle for recognition no doubt made him more ruthless and less mellow and affable, more aggressive and less polished than is customary in the English academic tradition".⁸ But whatever his personal shortcomings may have been, they did not prevent his rapid rise in London's academic community.

It is significant that Newton obtained all of his academic degrees at the University of London for it was there that he fell under the influence of those who were attempting to foster the growth of his chosen discipline, imperial history. The aspiring novice soon came to the

attention of Lucas and Egerton who apparently saw in him a rising young historian after their own heart. Consequently he was taken under their wing as it were and he freely acknowledged his respect and friendship for his two mentors.⁹ In fact it was Lucas who in 1914 gave Newton his first real chance to get ahead by recommending him for the post of organizing secretary of the Imperial Studies Committee. In like manner, it was Lucas' patronage which later secured for Newton a similar office at the R.C.I.¹⁰

Although Newton was urged forward by his own ambition, it would be somewhat misleading to explain his interest in imperial studies in these terms alone. Indeed he had no problem reconciling his personal aspirations with a genuine devotion to the cause of imperial unity. Newton was convinced that the Empire was a factor operating on behalf of justice and fair play on the world scene and his writings abound with statements revealing the depth of his commitment to the imperial idea. Writing of the spiritual forces which inspired British imperialism, he contended that "it is this conception of the 'White Man's Burden' that is the chief justification of imperialism and invests it with something of the force of a religious creed".¹¹ In 1917 he wrote that "none can deprive us of the spiritual unity the Empire has . . . attained, and thereon will be built, soon or late, the British Commonwealth, the Empire of our dreams".¹²

As an imperialist Newton shared Lucas' and Egerton's dislike of constitutional approaches to achieving imperial unity. Indeed he argued that it was the loose-knit nature of the Empire that had insulated it against the shocks which would have shattered into pieces a more logically constructed and rigidly centralized political body.¹³ Like his mentors, Newton felt that unity could only be based on the goodwill of the citizens of the Empire. Consequently he gravitated to the R.C.I. when it began to develop a policy aimed at stimulating that goodwill through education in his chosen discipline.

It was perfectly natural, therefore, that the Lectures Sub-Committee decided in February 1915 to sound out Newton's opinions concerning the future of the Institute's educational programmes. Newton suggested that the R.C.I. take on the task of duplicating Imperial Studies Committees like the one in London in every university in the United Kingdom.¹⁴ He felt that a start could be made in those provincial centres where there were already men alive to the importance of using education to foster imperial unity. As examples he cited Bristol where the Institute had a branch, and Leeds University where M. E. Sadler was Vice-Chancellor. Manchester was also seen as a potential field since Sir Harry Miers, who had helped to establish the London committee in 1914, had recently assumed the office of chancellor at the local university. Similarly,

Newton felt that H. A. L. Fisher, as Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, would ensure that institution's support of the idea.

On one particular point Newton was quite adamant. Garrison should not be identified with this aspect of the Institute's work. "The main point" he stated, "is to get men of the highest attainments and able to lecture well, and it is suggested that some of the Round Table men, such as Kerr, Curtis, and on the academic side, Temperley, Hearnshaw, Pollard, and Worsfold, might be asked to take part." Furthermore, Newton advised that the selection of speakers be placed in the hands of Lucas, Wilson, Sargant, Egerton, and Pollard, men who understood the nature of the task at hand. He was opposed to offering retaining fees as the R.C.I. had done in Garrison's case. Instead, he urged them to "get good men who will take pride in belonging to the Movement", as he liked to call it. As for Garrison, Newton felt that it would do no harm if his work were continued so long as it remained quite separate from that of the more respectable lecturers.

Newton, in fact, mapped out an entire plan of campaign for the R.C.I. In his view a series of lectures in the provincial universities could be used as the starting point for a number of local efforts to encourage the study of imperial subjects and the inculcation of imperial sentiment. Thus regional committees should be set up

immediately after "the first big gun" was fired by the Institute's lecturers. The outcome of all this, he predicted, would be the formation of local study circles to carry on the work. Toward the close of his letter to the council, Newton went so far as to envisage the spread of "The Imperial Studies Movement" to universities throughout the Empire.

In May 1915 the Lectures Sub-Committee reported to the council of the R.C.I. and strongly recommended the adoption of Newton's suggestions. In so doing the committee made it plain that two major objectives could be achieved. The educational work of the Institute would be placed on a systematic footing and the effort to enlarge the membership and found branches would be greatly facilitated.¹⁵

These must have been dark days for Garrison, given the committee's concern with reducing the popular content of the R.C.I.'s lecture scheme. Newton's insistence that Garrison's work be divorced from the new programme further undermined his already shaky position with the Institute. In May 1915 Lucas and Wilson held a private interview with Garrison in order to discuss his future as the official spokesman of the R.C.I. Garrison was shocked by the dissatisfaction they displayed. He pointed out that he had fulfilled the tasks set for him by the Institute and summoned on his own behalf the impressive statistics of

his recruiting drive.¹⁶ For Lucas and Wilson, however, this was not the point at issue. Ever since the rebuff from the public schools in 1912 they seem to have felt that the R.C.I. was committing a grave blunder in employing a popular orator as its primary speaker. In addition it is clear that they had concluded that the recruiting drive could be sustained by the more respectable lecturers whom they had in mind.

When Garrison was told of Newton's projected scheme, Lucas and Wilson also assured him that they had no intention of doing away completely with his popular lectures. They informed him, however, that from then on his work would be considerably reduced and that he was to be shorn of the title of official lecturer of the Institute. Deeply wounded, Garrison pleaded with them to reconsider. He said that his devotion to the R.C.I.'s lecture scheme had caused him to foresake many old clients and that he could not afford the cut in pay or the loss of his office space. This was undoubtedly a blow to Garrison's ego but he seems to have survived the shock fairly well. During the war he found other patrons who were more than willing to employ his services to whip up popular enthusiasm for various special causes. In any event he did not starve because of the council's decision to reduce his annual schedule to ten lectures.¹⁷

As this episode involving Newton and Garrison demonstrates, the R.C.I. was consciously redefining its attitude toward the promotion of imperial unity through education. Henceforth it would adopt a more systematic policy toward education. After 1915 the Institute pursued what its leaders considered to be a much more dignified and respectable approach to the nation's institutions of higher learning. In November 1915 the council resolved that its educational work, at least for the time being, be restricted to universities.¹⁸

In short, the R.C.I. was shifting from a grass-roots to an élitist approach. This, of course, was in line with the thinking of many Edwardians who, like Haldane, assumed that constructive and fundamental changes in society could only be induced from above. Lucas seems to have shared this assumption. He continually expressed the idea that workingmen had to be educated to appreciate their imperial inheritance if the Empire were to survive but he insisted that the first task was to influence "the thinking, teaching men" of society who moulded public opinion.¹⁹ Thus he and his colleagues at the R.C.I. focused their attention on the universities which produced society's educated élite. In this connection it is interesting to note that none of the key figures at the Institute ever envisaged the need for a fundamental change in Britain's educational

structure. There was no talk of democratizing education or opening the universities and secondary schools to a larger number of working-class students.

This élitist approach to education was undoubtedly strengthened by the tendency of the R.C.I. to draft university teachers and Round Tablers as its lecturers under the new programme known as Imperial Studies. In July 1915 Newton, now the organizing secretary of Imperial Studies for the Institute, sent out letters to thirty-six prominent figures in academic and imperial circles, inviting them to serve as the R.C.I.'s panel of lecturers. In his letter he outlined the kind of work that prospective speakers would be asked to undertake. He wrote that the panel would lecture on subjects of immediate imperial interest not with a view to simple propagandizing, but in the spirit of sound scientific enquiry.²⁰

In effect Newton was proposing that what was coming to be termed "Imperial Studies" be promoted as a broad academic discipline. Lucas obliged by providing a definition of the new field of study. It was, he wrote, "a specialized study of the past and present conditions that govern the life and development of the communities under the British Crown, together with the study of cognate problems".²¹ This would not involve the development of a wholly new field; rather it implied that an imperial slant ought to

be given to established subjects. If all knowledge, said Lucas, were divided into separate vertical columns no fresh columns need be added for Imperial Studies. Instead they would appear as a horizontal grouping stretching across all the columns.²²

However, in practice the academic bias of the R.C.I. was heavily weighted in favour of imperial history. This, of course, reflected the experience and interests of the men who dominated the Instituté's educational work, men such as Lucas, Egerton, and Newton, all of whom held that history was of particular value in shaping citizens.

As Newton indicated, however, the final choice of subject matter lay with the individual lecturer in consultation with the Lectures Sub-Committee. The fees and personal expenses of the lecturers were guaranteed by the R.C.I., but, it was emphasized, these should be kept to the bare minimum. In general terms Newton saw no need for the lecture fee to exceed five pounds. All in all Newton's scheme seemed to be workable and more in keeping with the temper of the Institute than the programme based on Garrison's tactics. The real test, for the moment, would be the Institute's ability to attract the first-rate men needed to staff its lecture panel.

In this respect the R.C.I. proved highly successful. Of the thirty-six men approached by Newton twenty-eight

immediately accepted his invitation.²³ Indeed many of them volunteered their services free of charge.²⁴ As Newton had hoped, the scheme attracted both prominent academics and leading figures from the Round Table. One of the first to come forward was H. A. L. Fisher, who, as will be recalled, was already a member of the L. of E.'s History Section and as such was well acquainted with the aims and objects of the R.C.I. His decision to join the panel would be of great significance for in 1916 he was appointed President of the Board of Education and as such given a seat in the Lloyd George cabinet.

The panel was further strengthened by the decision of Alexander Hill to take part in the new project. Since 1912 Hill had been the organizing secretary of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire and he enjoyed a wide range of academic contacts across the globe. The Universities Bureau was an offshoot of the Congress of the Universities of the British Empire which had been founded to promote closer relations among the Empire's institutions of higher learning. Its aims and objects were quite similar to those of the Imperial Education Conferences of the period. Indeed the two conferences evolved along parallel lines, raising the same issues, encountering the same problems, and producing the same insubstantial results. In 1915, however, the Congress still appeared to be a

dynamic entity and consequently Hill's participation in the R.C.I.'s lecture scheme gave the new programme added credibility.

Another distinguished academic, William Henry Hadow, elected to join the lecture staff. He is remembered as the author of the famous Hadow Report on Secondary Education of 1926 which urged efficiency and secondary education for all.²⁵ However, when he joined the R.C.I.'s panel in 1915 he was Principal of Armstrong College at Newcastle, although he was about to be appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Durham. Hadow was joined by a strong representation from the University of London which included F. J. C. Hearnshaw, Sidney Low, H. J. Mackinder, A. F. Pollard, and, of course, A. P. Newton.

W. Pember Reeves, Director of the London School of Economics, also tendered his services to the R.C.I. This former New Zealand cabinet minister had accepted the directorship of the L.S.E. after Mackinder resigned because he saw it as a means of persuading the ruling élite in British society to embrace the twin causes of efficiency and imperial unity.²⁶ As director of the L.S.E. Reeves continued Mackinder's policy of introducing imperial content into established courses. His acceptance of Newton's invitation, therefore, was almost wholly predictable.

From Oxford came, among others, H. E. Egerton,

Reginald Coupland, A. L. Smith, A. F. Basil Williams, and A. E. Zimmern. All of these men, except for Egerton, enjoyed close contacts with the Round Table movement and could be expected to take a keen interest in any project designed to further the cause of imperial unity. Coupland had fallen under the spell of Lionel Curtis who for a time had been the Beit Lecturer in Colonial History under Egerton. Curtis persuaded Coupland to take up imperial history as a duty to the nation and by 1920 he had risen to occupy Egerton's chair. Coupland was named a member of the inner moot of the Round Table in 1915 and thus remained in close and constant contact with his mentor and the closer union movement.²⁷ Newton's invitation to join the R.C.I.'s panel afforded Coupland an opportunity to pursue his two chief interests in life -- the promotion of imperial history and the cause of closer union.

If Coupland was a protégé of the Round Table Arthur Lionel Smith was one of its teachers. As a history tutor at Oxford he had taught Milner and virtually all the members of the kindergarten one of their first lessons in imperialism. In addition he had been since 1907 a member of the Workers Educational Association, a body interested in opening the gateway to higher education for the working classes. The W.E.A. also looked with favour on the project of advancing imperial unity through education and its

leader, Albert Mansbridge joined Smith on the R.C.I.'s lecture staff.²⁸

The influence of the Round Table was also a strong factor in prompting Basil Williams to enlist in the Institute's scheme. His imperial enthusiasm had originally been fired by Rhodes' example but, like so many others, it was under Milner's influence that his mature attitudes were formed. Having gone out to South Africa as a volunteer, Williams remained as Curtis' assistant and held a post in the education department of the Transvaal during the period of reconstruction. As in Coupland's case the cause of imperial unity drew him to the Round Table shortly before the Great War. An historian by profession, Williams therefore took a natural interest in the "Imperial Studies" scheme of the R.C.I. He was joined on the panel by yet another member of the moot, Alfred E. Zimmern, a fellow historian, author of The Third British Empire, and an inspector for the Board of Education. Finally, the Round Table's representation on the panel was further strengthened by the acquisition of Philip Kerr, one of the most influential members of the moot and the editor of the Round Table magazine. To him was entrusted the task of drumming up support for Imperial Studies among the universities of his native Scotland.

Kerr's task was facilitated by two prominent Scottish academics who served on the Institute's new panel -- Richard Lodge and Arthur Barriedale Keith. Lodge had been associated with Smith while a history tutor at Oxford and by 1915 had risen to the post of dean of the faculty of arts at the University of Edinburgh. His colleague, Keith, was Regius Professor of Sanskrit but his interests embraced imperial history as well. Newton undoubtedly saw him as a natural candidate for the panel since Keith was an old friend of Lucas, having served under him at the Dominions Department in 1907. Like Lucas, Keith was disillusioned with the concept of formal imperial federation and instead called for patience and gradualism in the quest for unity.²⁹ It was Keith, Lodge, and Kerr who in 1916 organized the first Imperial Studies Committee outside London.

Among the other members of the lecture staff were M. E. Sadler, George Parkin, and, of course, Lucas and Wilson. Altogether it was a rather impressive group of men. They were all recognized figures in university life or imperial affairs and a large proportion of them were historians. As the years wore on this undoubtedly both reflected and reinforced the tendency of the R.C.I. to specialize in an increasingly academic, elitist, and historical approach to imperial education. After all, many

of the new recruits were Round Tablers and as such they adhered philosophically to an elitist concept of society.

In fact, at first glance it may seem rather odd to find so many Milnerites willing to enlist in the ranks of the apolitical Institute. Had not Lucas, Egerton, Newton, Grey, and Jebb all been outspoken critics of the political approach to imperial unity that the Round Table espoused? It should be remembered, however, that there was no overt antagonism between the two groups, except perhaps on Jebb's part. Nobody at the R.C.I. rejected the constitutional reformation of the Empire as an unworthy goal; they merely felt that it was impractical and overrated as a solution to the problem of closer union. Instead, they posited that the path to a formal union, if one were deemed necessary, would have to be smoothed by the stimulation of public opinion through education. In their opinion it was a question of timing and priority. As noted, the personal contacts between the leaders of the Institute and Milner's group were manifold. Sidney Low, for instance, was a close personal friend of Milner and even proclaimed the desirability of imperial federation. Lucas and Milner were on the best of terms and had served together on the University of London's Imperial Studies Committee. The channels were open and the Round Tablers freely responded to the overtures of the R.C.I.

Nor did this represent a complete reversal of form by the Milnerites. While the Round Table tended to focus its attention on the leaders of society, it had from time to time dabbled in efforts to arouse the general public's interest in closer imperial union.³⁰ To that end it had in the past sometimes worked in conjunction with the Victoria League and the Workers Educational Association.³¹ The R.C.I.'s decision to try to permeate the educated elite with the gospel of Empire seems to have struck a familiar chord in the minds of Kerr and his colleagues who undoubtedly viewed the new project as an extension of their own activities, one thoroughly compatible with their particular tactical and strategic assumptions.

At any rate, the Institute's lecture scheme had begun well. The objects of the programme were clearly understood and, judging by the response to Newton's invitations, deemed viable. The general strategy and tactics to be employed were in keeping with society's traditional educational outlook. Most significantly, the R.C.I. had succeeded in drafting the kind of men it wanted to deliver its message. Moreover, it was generally felt that the moment was opportune to launch such an undertaking, for the Institute was beginning to shift into high gear as an educational organization. Its will to live and its sense of purpose had been recovered but above all the timing of this project appears to have been determined by the outbreak

of the war. In fact, much as they regretted the bloodshed and the destruction involved, the leaders of the R.C.I. felt that the war had created an atmosphere conducive to the consolidation of the spiritual bonds of Empire. Lucas and the rest, convinced that they were standing at a crossroads, believed their hour to have come at last.

II

Generally speaking, historians have viewed the Great War as a turning point in the dominions' quest for full autonomy.³² Thus it has been noted that the sacrifices of the dominions increased their separate sense of nationhood.³³ Jan Christian Smuts summed up colonial reaction to the war in a speech to the British House of Commons in 1917 in which he warned that any attempt at post-war centralization of the Empire would prove futile and disruptive.³⁴ A few years after the war he told A. J. Balfour that the war had bred a new sense of confidence and proven nationhood in the dominions that could not be undone.³⁵ During the war Boer nationalism even found an outlet in a minor pro-German rebellion in South Africa. Across the globe Canada was insisting on her right to sign the peace treaty as a separate nation and after the war she would adopt a distinctly isolationist policy.

Few men are gifted with clairvoyance, however, and during the war this bleak prospect for the future of the Empire was not as readily apparent to Lucas and other Britons as it was to Smuts. The example of dominion participation in the general war effort raised the hopes of Lucas and his colleagues to unparalleled heights. The newspapers were filled with glowing accounts of colonial sacrifices on the battlefield in the cause of Empire. Lucas captured the optimism of many imperialists when he wrote that

there is a general consensus of opinion that something must be done at the end of the War in the direction of a greater degree of Imperial co-operation; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, that the tide in the affairs of the Empire is flowing and must be taken at the flood; that an occasion has arisen, to be grasped by the hand, such as will never present itself again.³⁶

Meanwhile Milner had reached the same conclusion.³⁷ Prior to the war, he contended, the majority of people had been largely apathetic toward the question of closer imperial union. Now, however, he felt that the public was finally waking up and starting to grasp the importance of the Empire to Great Britain. This awakening he put down to the impact of the war. He added that, although he once saw the task of achieving closer union as a long and gradual one, he now believed that it might be accomplished more quickly thanks to the patriotic feelings bred by the war.

It was in order to take advantage of this windfall, he continued, that people should rally round those who were seeking to educate and shape public opinion on the Empire's behalf. This sense of urgency was infectious and rapidly gripped those who were attempting to foster education for the sake of closer union. In a speech delivered in 1915 under the Imperial Studies scheme Arthur Steele-Maitland, Milner's private secretary, addressed himself to this point.³⁸ He asked whether a democracy could govern an empire especially in view of the sweeping changes likely to be occasioned by the war. "Let the motto be 'Education, education, and always education'", he continued, "and the answer 'yes' should be given with increasing certainty". The task was that of acquainting the public with the importance of the issue of closer union. There was, in Steele-Maitland's opinion, a real need that matters not be allowed to drift. The masses, he asserted, will only take the "broad view" during times of great national crisis. In peace-time trivialities tended to obscure their vision. The time for action, Steele-Maitland argued, was now; "let us, therefore", he concluded, "make ready, and know the time of our visitation".

At a similar meeting the same year A. L. Smith elaborated on Steele-Maitland's theme. "Believe me" he told his audience at London University, "there is a wonderful field open here for the education of Democracy

in the great Imperial problem that has suddenly been evoked into urgency by this War."³⁹ In the past, he stated, ignorance had made the working classes the unwitting victims of anti-imperial shibboleths, but this could be corrected. Smith felt that the clubs, unions, and "local patriotisms" of the workers had prepared their minds for the concept of a larger allegiance to the Empire. Here was a fertile field awaiting the proper tillers. Smith argued that apathy and hostility were being rapidly erased by the war. This golden opportunity needed to be grasped and he called on imperialists and educators alike to "educate our masters".

This interpretation of the imperial significance of the war seems to have particularly captured the imagination of Lucas and Newton. Indeed they continued to cling to this view long after the peace treaty was signed and circumstances had changed. From 1921 to 1926 Lucas served as the editor of and chief contributor to, a series of historical accounts of dominion contributions to the war effort. He persisted in viewing the war as a necessary step in the evolution of the Empire toward improved relations in a loosely-knit political structure whose real bonds rested on sympathy.⁴⁰ It was a stage in the development of an Empire based on partnership rather than on subordination. At one point he went so far as to prophecy that colonial and dominion nationalism of the type which spurned

imperial ties would lose rather than gain ground as a consequence of the war.⁴¹ In like manner, as late as 1929 Newton still maintained that the war had served to strengthen imperial ties.⁴² Obviously, therefore, this feeling ran deep at the R.C.I. and helped to engender the momentum which led to the establishment and expansion of its lecture scheme.

The same reaction to the war was registered at Caxton Hall and at the offices of the Victoria League. In the main, however, the Victoria League suspended many of its educational programmes in favour of projects for softening the physical impact of the war at home. Its two major priorities became charity work among the families of the fallen and the provision of social comforts to colonial troops stationed in Britain. The Victoria League thus became a club of sorts for colonial and dominion servicemen in London.

The League of the Empire, however, decided to channel its energies into a project designed to take advantage of the current upsurge in patriotism. Its normal work with the Imperial Education Conference, the teachers associations, and the colonial boards of education had to be suspended to a large degree because of the dangers of wartime travel. In order to fill the void the League developed a scheme for the promotion of the study of imperial history among the general public. In part at

least, as shall be seen, this scheme was also prompted by the R.C.I.'s new programme.

Like Lucas and his colleagues at the R.C.I., Pollard felt that the opportunity presented by the war should not be neglected by those who were trying to foster imperial unity. "The League", he wrote in October 1915,

realising that enthusiasm is a priceless educational asset, and believing that the present unprecedented outburst of loyalty may be so directed as to be of permanent value to the Empire, is of the opinion that this is the right moment to impress upon the rising generation the duty of being adequately informed as to the history of the Empire.⁴³

Accordingly the League laid down plans for the establishment of its scheme for the study of imperial history.⁴⁴

What was envisaged was a three year course of study based on syllabi prepared by the League and a programme embracing all levels of society. The chief targets were the secondary schools, training colleges for teachers, evening classes and village schools, elementary schools, and as many citizens as wished to participate. In Pollard's words, it was hoped that people would undertake this sort of patriotically-oriented activity "in the same spirit as voluntary military drill".

Pollard and his colleagues aimed at the formation of local study circles in schools, towns, and villages. The League would provide the circle leaders with a syllabus which, it was emphasized, was intended "to be suggestive

rather than obligatory". In other words, the League was trying to encourage interest in imperial history and was not overly concerned with the actual content of local discussions. In its advertisement for the history scheme the Federal Magazine made it clear that "the subject will be dealt with on broad and humane lines, and not from a merely academic point of view". The idea was to inspire and excite, not necessarily to instruct. "The monthly papers", continued the advertisement, "will emphasize the picturesque aspects of the life of the Pioneers of Empire".

In short, the League's history programme, unlike that of the R.C.I., was distinctly grass-roots in orientation and content, a popular rather than a purely academic scheme. Although Pollard claimed that it was intended to complement the Institute's plans, there was a note of criticism in his thinking as well. He had some doubts about the usefulness of the R.C.I.'s intention to restrict its activities to universities. He reasoned that since a mere fraction of Britons went to university the effectiveness of the Institute's plans was open to question.⁴⁵ In Pollard's view it was simply not enough to influence a few highly educated people if one were trying to convert the whole nation to the cause of imperial unity. To him a programme such as the R.C.I. had in mind could only succeed if it were built upon a solid foundation provided at the lower

levels of the educational system. This of course had been the foremost strategic assumption of the League all along. Therefore Pollard concluded by observing that

this scheme of the League of the Empire is designed to assist in developing the means of understanding the Empire, without which a vote in Imperial matters is like a rifle in the hands of those who cannot shoot, not so much useless as positively dangerous.

In the fall of 1915 the League's history project was launched. As previously noted, however, the L. of E. was not particularly good at keeping statistical records and thus no quantitative estimate of the public response to the project is available. But a speech by Sir Frederick Pollock vaguely observed that its progress was "satisfactory given wartime conditions".⁴⁶ He expressed the hope that things would pick up after the war, but there is no evidence to indicate that the project was revived after 1918. Along with the Imperial Union of Teachers, it seems to have died a quiet death.

The reasons for the failure of the League's history programme can only be speculated about. It undoubtedly suffered because of the disruption which the war brought to the secondary and elementary school system. In 1914 the government froze expenditures on primary and secondary education thus leaving little room for innovations such as those planned by the League.⁴⁷ Instead of spending their spare time in extracurricular studies, children were on-

couraged to collect food, clothing, and other essentials for use at the front.⁴⁸ Moreover, a large number of teachers volunteered for overseas duty and the entire educational system suffered serious dislocation. Interest in imperial co-operation may indeed have been running high at this point, but the circumstances of public education did not favour its exploitation by the League. In fact the Board of Education took a rather harsh view of all attempts to use its schools as mere propaganda forums. It rejected for one thing the idea of compulsory military drill and consistently refused to sanction lessons in patriotism which were based on systematic manuals like those prepared by the League.⁴⁹ In addition, there was an unprecedented upsurge of interest in educational reform during the war as people contemplated the reconstruction of society to come.⁵⁰ The upshot was a plethora of schemes for reform which created a confusing situation in which the League's project was probably submerged.

As for workingmen and the general public whom the League was also attempting to reach, they too were pre-occupied with other things. Experience on the battlefield helped to blur social distinctions and men began to dream of a "Brave New World" in the days ahead. The hope that peace would bring a thoroughgoing reconstruction of society was deeply ingrained in the public consciousness and was

encouraged by the Lloyd George coalition. In this atmosphere the propagandists making the most successful appeal to the workers were E. D. Morel and the other leaders of the Union of Democratic Control.⁵¹ This group included J. A. Hobson, Bertrand Russell, and Ramsay Macdonald among its chief figures. During the war the U.D.C. kept up a constant attack on the ruling classes whose secret diplomacy was blamed as the real cause of the war and by 1918 it boasted almost a million members. As a whole the labouring classes grew increasingly bitter over what it felt to be the ruling class's mismanagement of the war. Early in 1915, a special congress claiming to represent the whole of the labour movement put forth a resolution of uncompromising opposition to the idea of conscription.⁵² This was repeated in 1916. In 1915 there had been extensive raids by the police on some labour organizations and numerous anti-war pamphlets were confiscated. In this general atmosphere it was unlikely that labour would be attracted to a scheme for the study of imperial history as a means of ensuring imperial unity.

Whatever the reasons for the failure of the history project, it is clear that the League lost much of its earlier momentum as a result of the war. The enforced suspension of its contacts with overseas educational bodies undoubtedly took a great deal of wind out of its sails.

For the most part, the League tended to stagnate during this period. Indeed, it never seemed to recover even after 1918.

In a way the fate of the League was shared by the Round Table whose early pace was also slowed by the war. As has been seen, the Round Table in 1914 was preparing to bring its crusade for imperial unity out into the open with the publication of Curtis' statement of policy.⁵³ The outbreak of war, however, forced the group to put off this public pronouncement since it was feared that it might be eclipsed by the current preoccupation with events in Europe. As the war dragged on many moot members took up other war work and the hatching of Curtis' "egg" was repeatedly postponed. Curtis himself became convinced that the war had produced such an upsurge in dominion patriotism that formal unification of the Empire was becoming impossible.⁵⁴ Towards the end of the war the Round Table magazine became less and less the champion of imperial federation and more and more a sophisticated and academic journal on international affairs. Milner himself grew increasingly skeptical of the effectiveness of small extra-parliamentary bodies seeking to inspire men with thoughts of closer union. In March, 1916 Sidney Low wrote to him suggesting that he and the Round Table lead the way in an attempt to revive the old Imperial Federation League.⁵⁵

Milner's reply was that of a profoundly disillusioned man: he completely quashed Low's suggestion that yet another private imperial society be established. "In this country", he complained, "that class of association never gets anything done".⁵⁶ This outburst undoubtedly reflected Milner's bitter frustration with the failure of the Round Table to produce results. Instead he called for the founding of a full-blown political party based on a commitment to closer imperial union. The war years were not particularly happy ones at the Round Table or Caxton Hall.

Conversely, the R.C.I. flourished. Why this was the case is not altogether clear. However, unlike those of the League, the Institute's programmes did not depend on overseas contacts for its market was clearly at home. Moreover the R.C.I. was dealing with a relatively small audience which was already well disposed toward its cause. On the other hand, the League was approaching a large public audience which found the war an increasingly disheartening experience. In contrast the R.C.I.'s university audiences, made up primarily of the offspring of the ruling classes, were generally in favour of the war and the Empire. The major exception was Cambridge where the intellectual leadership of the anti-war movement had a strong foothold and where the U.D.C. prospered.⁵⁷ Pre-

dictably therefore, the R.C.I. tended to neglect Cambridge and instead focused its efforts on Oxford and the provincial universities. Oxford had had strong imperial sympathies since the days of Jowett, Parkin, Milner, and Rhodes and could be expected to receive the Institute's message with enthusiasm. The provincial universities were still youthful institutions anxious to expand their facilities and grateful for any form of outside assistance from bodies like the R.C.I.

As for the Round Table, it had been hampered by its failure to persuade a sufficient number of dominion and colonial leaders to adopt the cause of closer union. In contrast, the R.C.I., as the composition of its lecturing panel attests, was immediately successful in gaining the support of important men in key positions at the various universities in which it intended to campaign. Men like Sadler at Leeds, Fisher at Sheffield, and Hadow at Durham were in a position to wield considerable influence on the Institute's behalf. Indeed, the R.C.I. seems to have been at least as successful as the then more widely-known Round Table as a society bent on shaping the ideas of an educated elite. Unlike the Round Table, the Institute was spared the sobering experience of trying to deal with overseas colonists, a group whom it never made a major effort to approach. Altogether the future prospects of the R.C.I.

looked bright indeed in the spring and summer of 1915.

III

The actual programme of R.C.I. lectures was launched in the last quarter of 1915 and in all twenty-four were given.⁵⁸ The universities participating were London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield and those lecturing included Sadler, Fisher, Smith, Kerr, Lucas, Low, Wilson, Parkin, and Hadow, to name a few. Low obligingly repeated his British Academy address at Manchester and Birmingham. Smith's speech at King's College has already been noted. Again at London, Sadler spoke of the need for the universities of England to lead the way in fostering the cause of imperial unity.⁵⁹

Lucas' contribution to the project was a lecture entitled "The Meaning of Empire" which was delivered at the University of Birmingham.⁶⁰ His theme was the need to reconcile democracy and Empire. In an effort to warm up his Birmingham audience, Lucas began by extolling the imperial vision of his old chief and former mayor of Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain. He argued that the ideal of imperial integration was as viable in 1915 as it had been in the days of the distinguished Colonial Secretary. As he had in the past Lucas then took great pains to dissociate the British Empire from the militaristic, aggressive

empires on the Continent, contending that freedom was the essence of the British imperial tie. "The present war", he continued, "is in truth a contest between the principle of uniformity [which he identified with rigorous centralization] for which Germany stands, and the principle of diversity for which the English stand." Diversity, Lucas argued, had many weaknesses, but it embodied the life-giving spirit of freedom. As proof of the contentment of Greater Britain with this arrangement, he pointed to the way in which the colonies had freely offered their assistance in the Mother Country's hour of trial.

He then warned his audience that the former indifference of the masses to the Empire could not be allowed to resurface after the war. If it had done nothing else, Lucas stated, the war had, in his opinion, shown Britons that England could not survive without her Empire and that on her own she would live on suffrance even for her daily bread. He concluded by saying that the workers could scrap the Empire if they wished but in doing so they would in the face of German aggression be throwing away the only effective guarantee of their own democratic rights.

None of the other lectures delivered under the Imperial Studies scheme have come down to us. If, however, Lucas' stirring speech was typical of the rest, then it was indeed a heady brew being served up by the Institute. More

importantly, this kind of oratory seems to have been well received at the time. In 1916 Newton rejoiced at being able to report that a total of eighty-three lectures were given during the year at institutions in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Manchester, Nottingham, Sheffield, Exeter, Edinburgh, Liverpool, and Newcastle.⁶¹

Newton drew great confidence from this evidence of progress and attributed it in part to the influence of the war which, he said, had caused the lectures to attract "overflowing audiences" everywhere.⁶² He was certain that the process of filtration would soon begin to take effect and that the series of lectures would serve as "the starting point for discussion among all sections of society".⁶³ The precise size of these audiences was not recorded but the important point was that Newton felt that he had some hard evidence on which to base his assertion that the war was inspiring a new public interest in the Empire.

In his opinion, however, it was not just these favourable circumstances which had led to the success of the R.C.I.'s project. It had, Newton said, recommended itself to people on its own merits as well. "Though our lecturers have dealt in the main with past events", he pointed out,

they have done so in no spirit of dry-as-dust academicism; their lectures have attracted so much interest because they have tried to use the lessons learned from past happenings to point out in scientific fashion the lines upon which true progress may be expected in the future.⁶⁴

With the experience of a year's work behind them Lucas' Lectures Sub-Committee paused in March 1916 to evaluate the scheme. It was decided that the lectures could be made even more effective if they were delivered as systematic short courses.⁶⁵ Five or six lectures with a consistent subject theme running through them would take the place of the previous year's random approach. Six basic themes were projected as possible topics for these packaged lectures, namely Imperial History, Imperial Geography, Ethnology and the Races of the Empire, the Natural Resources of the Empire, the Imperial Ideal, and Imperial Problems as Seen by the Colonists Overseas.⁶⁶ It is not clear, however, whether this system was ever put into practice since none of the later lectures have survived.

But the R.C.I. continued to press forward and the first of a number of Imperial Studies Committees modelled on that of the University of London were founded in three provincial universities in 1916. At Edinburgh Kerr and Keith had done their work well and a committee was established to carry on the work initiated by the Institute's lecturers in 1915.⁶⁷ At Durham University Hadow led the way in the setting up of a similar body.⁶⁸ Another group was formed at the University of Liverpool.⁶⁹

In May 1917, the Lectures Sub-Committee was renamed the Imperial Studies Committee of the R.C.I. This creates

some problems of terminology since the committee at the University of London went by the same name. In practice, however, it was the Institute's committee that carried the idea of imperial studies to the provinces because throughout the London University group remained a strictly intramural body. This is not to say that the University committee was idle. In 1917, for instance, it began the Imperial Studies Series, a collection of works on the history of the Empire under the editorship of Newton. This series died out shortly after the war but was later revived by the Institute on its own initiative.

At the Institute, meanwhile, the confidence of Lucas, Newton, and company in the future of the newly named Imperial Studies Committee was soaring. In July 1917 a motion was passed by the council urging the expansion of the committee in order that it might increase the scope of its activity and enlarge its membership.⁷⁰ To that end it was suggested that the committee should attempt to draft some representatives of organized labour into its ranks. It was felt that this would help to give the workers some sense of identification with the movement. In fact it was even proposed that the Institute pay the membership fees of workingmen who could not afford them. In the end, however, this whole proposal came to naught when the Institute failed to attract labour representatives to the

committee and the idea was dropped.

In 1915 Newton had suggested that the R.C.I. foster the growth of imperial studies in colonial universities once it had successfully launched its own domestic schemes.⁷¹ In 1917 it appeared to Newton and his colleagues that things were going well enough on the home front for them to approach the universities overseas. Accordingly a letter, based on Lucas's 1915 circular defining imperial studies, was drafted and sent to all of the major universities of the Empire encouraging them to establish committees of their own. The replies, however, were scanty and generally lukewarm in nature. Indeed there is no evidence to indicate that any imperial studies committees were ever established outside the United Kingdom.

In a similar connection the R.C.I. attempted in 1917 to promote the founding of branches of the society in Canada. This particular move was prompted by an encouraging letter from the Institute's honorary corresponding secretary in Montreal, Frederic Hague. Hague urged the council to take advantage of wartime patriotism in Canada and establish branches of the R.C.I. there while the situation still seemed favourable.⁷² He proposed that the 1,061 non-resident members of the Institute in Canada be provided with a national organization based in Montreal.

At that particular time Parkin happened to be touring the United States and Canada in an effort to cement

the friendly wartime ties between them and Great Britain. Seizing this opportunity, Wilson wrote to Parkin asking him to drum up interest in the R.C.I. in the North American centres he was to visit.⁷³ During the war the Institute had had great success in setting up branches in the places which its lecturers had visited in the United Kingdom, so much so that by 1917 Leicester, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Brighton all boasted off-shoots of the parent body. Wilson apparently felt that the war offered an equal opportunity to accomplish the same feat in Canada.⁷⁴

Parkin did his best for the Institute while on tour. He was, however, somewhat skeptical about the prospect of basing the R.C.I.'s Canadian operation in Montreal. After a preliminary survey of the situation he wrote to Wilson urging that the Institute select another site for its Canadian headquarters.⁷⁵ He argued that Montreal was unsuitable because of its large French-speaking population which had often displayed indifference and even outright hostility to the Empire in the past. Furthermore, he contended that Toronto would deeply resent being led by Montreal in imperial matters.⁷⁶ He was, in any case, sanguine about the prospects of furthering the cause of the Institute in Canada and commented upon what he felt was a real upsurge of imperial sentiment in the country.⁷⁷ He merely advised Wilson to seek out an alternative location

for the Institute's proposed organizational centre.

Wilson accepted Parkin's analysis of the situation. However, he was at something of a loss to suggest a different site of the Canadian headquarters, pointing out that the R.C.I. had not received an offer similar to Hague's from any centre in English Canada.⁷⁸ Indeed, the Institute never really proved to be very popular in Canada. Attempts had been made prior to the war to promote interest there in the R.C.I., but the indifference of Canadians, who already had their own Empire Club, had been discouraging. After 1914, in spite of Parkin's efforts, the Canadian membership actually declined and continued to do so steadily.⁷⁹ Some progress was made in the way of establishing branches in Australia and New Zealand after the war, but the senior dominion remained aloof.

However, none of these setbacks overseas seriously disturbed the leaders of the R.C.I. In their opinion the real work on behalf of promoting imperial sentiment and the welfare of the Institute had to be done in Great Britain itself. Like Lucas they assumed that imperial studios were needed most in the heartland of Empire "because consciousness of the Empire is weaker at home than beyond the seas".⁸⁰ Unlike the Round Tablers, Lucas and his colleagues had not had sufficient contact in recent years with the overseas Empire to understand that, in fact, imperial consciousness

was waning across the entire globe. In spite of Parkin's problems in Canada, the councillors clung to the conviction that once the heartland was converted to the cause of imperial unity the rest of the Empire would greet the news with relief and joy. This mistaken assumption would later prevent Lucas and his fellow councillors from making a realistic appraisal of their situation in the postwar period.

Meanwhile on the domestic front things seemed to be going well enough for the moment. The lecture scheme was still expanding. Indeed by 1918 so many lectures were being given in so many places that only the more important centres visited were mentioned in the R.C.I.'s journal.⁸¹ Newton was led to predict that with the coming of peace every university in Great Britain would be sure to make the establishment of a chair of Imperial History one of its major priorities.⁸² He pointed out that the Institute was already being swamped with appeals from non-university towns for a similar programme.

It was in response to these requests that the R.C.I. arranged some lectures in Hull, a town which lacked a university of its own. They were developed in co-operation with the Local Educational Authority and the Workers Educational Association, whose leader, Albert Mansbridge, was a member of the R.C.I.'s original panel

of speakers. The principal lecturer in Hull was George Parkin, recently returned from Canada. The text of his speech has not been preserved, but his impressions of the event have been. He wrote to Newton excitedly describing the lectures as "a great success".⁸³ He took great pride in noting that it was by far the largest meeting ever held in Hull's Commercial Club's rooms, recalling with satisfaction "a large body of teachers all busy filling their note books with such wise things as I could supply".⁸⁴ The success of this trial run led late in 1918 to the spread of the lectures scheme to other non-university cities such as Bradford, Great Yarmouth, and Winchester.⁸⁵ Although it is not altogether clear at whom these lectures were aimed Parkin's comment seems to indicate that the R.C.I. was hoping to use them to influence teachers who were not able to attend the university lectures.

The Institute was anxious to make the Imperial Studies Committee the organizing centre for all such work in Great Britain. Thus it encouraged other groups to send representatives to sit on the committee. By 1918, therefore, there were on the committee official delegates from the Victoria League, the League of the Empire, teachers organizations, and other educational bodies. This, however, did not mean that the grand amalgamation projected by Milner in 1907 had finally come to pass. Indeed, the R.C.I. was quite insistent on maintaining its own autonomy.

Throughout the war, and even before, the Institute enjoyed especially cordial relations with the Victoria League. As already noted a joint committee of the two societies had been established in 1913 in order to ensure co-operation and the elimination of pointless duplication in their educational schemes. As early as July 1913, the Victoria League had proposed using the joint committee as the basis of an effort to unite all of the societies in London working on behalf of imperial unity.⁸⁶ The R.C.I. had dragged its feet on this issue when it was first proposed and in later years proved to be no more enamoured of the idea than the League of the Empire had been in 1908 and 1909.

In 1918 the Victoria League was still promoting amalgamation and complaining of wasteful overlapping.⁸⁷ In practice it was well understood that the League would continue its work with the elementary schools on its own while the R.C.I. concentrated on "higher education in imperial subjects".⁸⁸ Nevertheless, as the Institute's scope of activity continued to expand in an ever widening area, the V.L. feared that direct competition would result. Thus in January 1918 the V.L. suggested a formal division of labour among the various imperial societies in order to reduce the strain on each society's finances.⁸⁹

Speaking for the Institute, Lucas objected strongly

to the whole proposal. What he desired, he said, was complete amity among the various societies and on this point he was in full agreement with the V.L.⁹⁰ He made it clear, however, that he would tolerate no interference by these bodies in each other's work. It must be remembered that one of the primary objectives of the Imperial Studies scheme was that of enlarging the membership and founding new branches of the Institute. In this connection the R.C.I. had been eminently successful during the war. In 1909 the total membership had been approximately 4,500; by 1918 it had risen to over 13,700.⁹¹ With the exclusive pride of society that characterized the Institute's leaders, Lucas was unwilling to submerge the identity of the resurgent R.C.I. in a general amalgamation. Instead, he retorted that the best way to secure the results which they all desired was for the other imperial societies to send more delegates to the Imperial Studies Committee. After all, what else could one expect from a man who in 1919 said that it was "the bounded duty of the British Empire to last for ever in order to justify the faith and work of the Royal Colonial Institute"⁹²

In later years Lucas claimed that there was an historical justification for his rejecting all attempts at a merger.⁹³ He pointed out that the R.C.I. had been the first unofficial agency to promote the study of the British Empire. The League of the Empire, of course, might

have been eager to dispute this claim, but this did not trouble Lucas. As the trailblazer, Lucas argued, the R.C.I. had led where others later followed. This, he asserted, gave the Institute a claim to leadership. "Why", he asked, "among the various organizations should preference be given to the Institute?" In reply he said that, while he had no wish to demean the work of sister societies, he felt that preference should be given to the older society as long as it was in full vigour. Obviously, Lucas considered the R.C.I. to be in fine health.

The V.L., however, was still concerned about the prospect of competition with the Institute and in February 1918 it once again raised the question of amalgamation.⁹⁴ Anxious to avert an open split with the V.L. and yet equally eager to avoid union, the R.C.I. shunted the entire matter into the hands of a committee, probably hoping that thereby the issue would be quietly shelved. Indeed, by July 1919 the whole idea had been dropped in spite of the complaints of the V.L. about the futility of the societies' conducting simultaneous financial appeals.⁹⁵ In the end not only did the projected amalgamation go by the boards but the joint committee was dissolved as well.

In spite of the R.C.I.'s disclaimers, the V.L. had good reason to fear competition from that quarter. The Institute, in a spirit of buoyant self-confidence, was

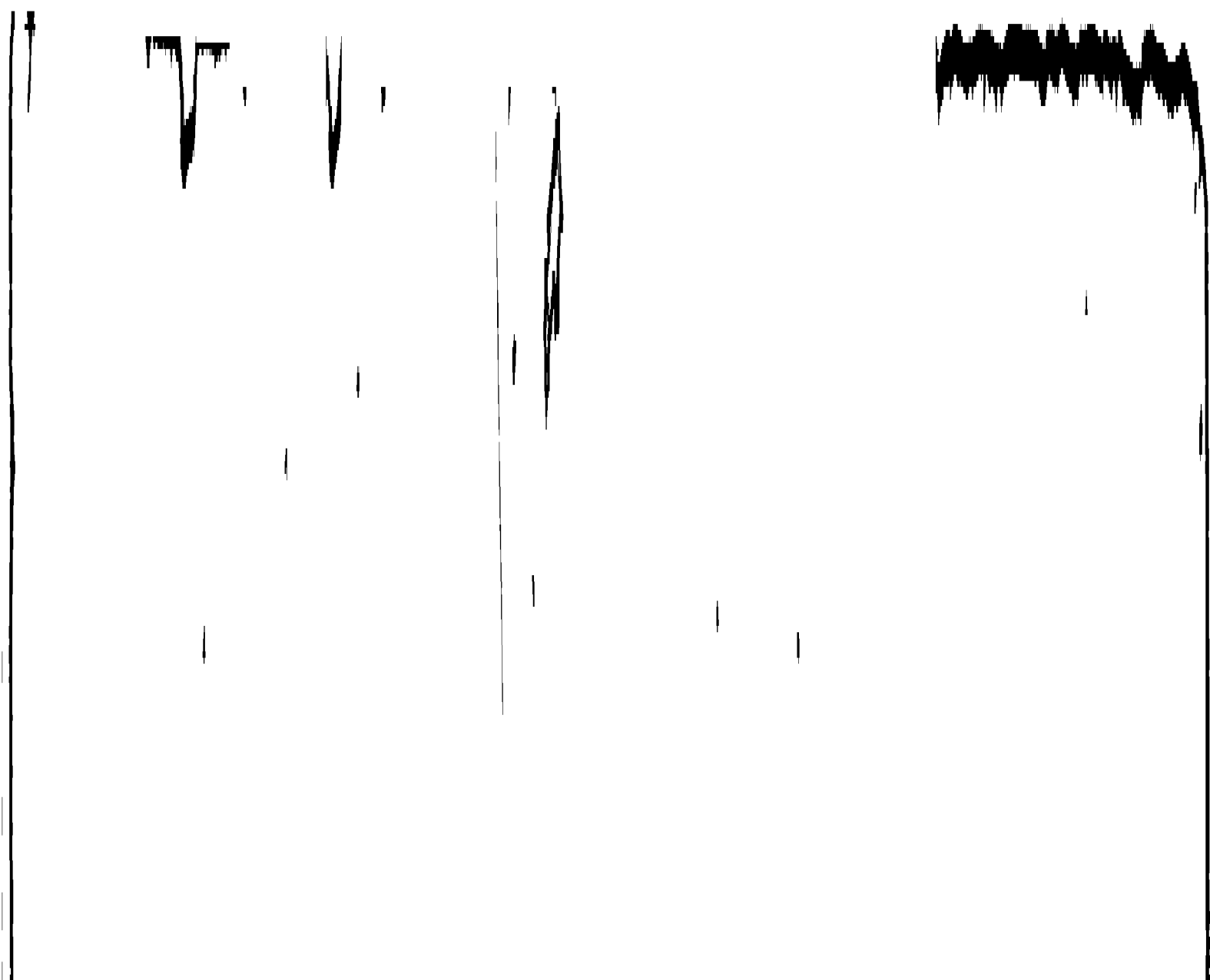
starting to show an interest in expanding its educational work beyond the confines of university lecture halls. Symptomatic of this was the decision in 1918 to treble the size of the Imperial Studies Committee and to explore new fields of endeavour. At Wilson's suggestion the R.C.I. decided to move into the area of primary and secondary education, formerly the preserve of the L. of E. and the V.L.⁹⁶ Three new sub-committees were formed to bring the study of imperial history to the three corresponding levels of the educational system. But before taking concrete action the Institute for the first time decided to approach the Board of Education for assistance.

Up to this point the R.C.I. had never sought official support for its programmes and had been content to promote its cause by means of its own resources. The Institute's deeply ingrained dislike for political commitments had determined this policy. Rugged individualists like Lucas did not normally encourage state involvement with what was essentially a private scheme. Now, however, the R.C.I.'s ambitions were reaching beyond a piecemeal effort to develop imperial history and imperial sentiment. Lucas and his fellow councillors, surveying past successes, evidently felt that the time was right and, in turning to the Board, were making a bid to bring their message of imperial salvation to the entire nation. A bold step, it reflected the glowing optimism of the R.C.I. at the

pinnacle of its wartime process of regeneration. In effect, this move represented the effort of the Institute to put the capstone on four years of strenuous and seemingly successful campaigning.

Thus in June the R.C.I. promoted and led a joint deputation to H. A. L. Fisher who was then Minister of Education in the Lloyd George coalition. Included in the deputation were representatives from the Imperial Studies Committee, who did most of the talking, the Victoria League, the League of the Empire, and the Working Men's College of London, of which Lucas was the principal.⁹⁷ The presentation focused on the need to encourage the study of imperial history at all levels of the educational system. Three major proposals were tendered to Fisher. Wilson, speaking for the others, called first of all for the official endowment of chairs of imperial history in every university in the United Kingdom. He then urged Fisher to make the study of this historical field compulsory in all teachers' training colleges. Finally, Wilson urged that it was of vital national importance that all subjects lending themselves to such an approach be given an imperial orientation.

Of course, none of this was news to Fisher. As a long-time member of the L. of E.'s History Section and the R.C.I.'s lectures committee, his sympathy with these proposals could be taken for granted. But sympathy is one thing and an ability to act decisively is quite another.



At this very moment Fisher was learning a bitter lesson in British educational politics. In piloting his famous Education Bill of 1918 through the House of Commons, he had encountered stern resistance from those local authorities and vested interests which had helped to make chaos of the British educational system since 1902. Firmly opposed to any extension of the Board's central control, these interests had opposed Fisher's plans to raise the school-leaving age and extend the practice of part-time studies.⁹⁸ The final version of his act was a watered-down, highly amended remnant of the original bill which, in any case, was never fully implemented. Sobered by this experience, Fisher doubtless took a rather skeptical view of the deputation's sweeping schemes.

In another connection, it is possible that Fisher had lost his taste for educational propaganda. Early in 1916 he had been sent to France by the British government to study the French system of propaganda. In the end he arranged for the closer integration of propaganda efforts between the two countries but he was doubtful that such methods actually had much influence on public opinion. Moreover, Fisher was disgusted with the grossness of French propaganda and this in turn may have caused him to have second thoughts about using British schoolrooms for any such exercise.⁹⁹ This seems unlikely, however, since he later took an active part in trying to promote Empire

studies at the postwar Imperial Education Conferences.

Whatever his personal feelings may have been, Fisher publicly praised the ideals expressed in the deputation's presentation while elaborating privately on the impracticability of the measures recommended. He told the delegates that not much could be done with respect to the training of teachers. The training colleges' curricula were already too overcrowded and the period of instruction too short to allow for the introduction of new material. Admittedly, Fisher applauded the R.C.I.'s efforts to influence teachers informally through private lectures but, he pointed out, this probably represented the most that could be done at that time. The lack of textbooks and instructors, in Fisher's opinion, would also effectively rule out a successful programme in the secondary schools. He noted that there was considerable resistance in these schools to carrying the study of history much beyond 1815 since most boards feared to trench upon current political controversies.

Similarly, Fisher felt that the delegates' plea for officially endowed chairs in colonial history in provincial universities was laudable but impractical. In the first place, he maintained, proper research facilities were to be found only in London and these were largely inaccessible to outlying colleges. Consequently, graduate schools in imperial history were out of the question.

Indeed Fisher doubted that much could be done beyond providing informal lectures as the R.C.I. was already doing. Nor was he thoroughly convinced that anything more should be done. In spite of his own historical interests, Fisher, while Vice-Chancellor at Sheffield, had come to believe that the provincial universities had to be patterned on the commercial and industrial interests of the communities they served since it was from these interests that they derived their major financial support. In any case, Fisher's thoughts on university curricula were largely irrelevant since those institutions were beyond the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.

After all this, it may have been of some small comfort to the delegates that Fisher offered his full moral support to them. However, it was clear that he was not prepared to take any official action on their behalf. He did not spell this out in so many words for, after all, the delegates were old friends and associates. Nonetheless he left them in no doubt that they would have to proceed on their own. When he looked back on his experience at the Board, Fisher later noted a further impediment to all forms of wartime educational innovation. Financial considerations, he said, had frustrated the aspirations of what otherwise might have been one of the greatest ages in the history of British educational reform.¹⁰⁰ As will be seen, this financial barrier to the introduction of new educational

programmes was if anything to grow in the post-war period.

The war and with it the hey-day of the R.C.I. was drawing to a close. After four years a seemingly unbroken train of successes had ended in the failure of the Institute to carry forward its boldest bid to foster Imperial Studies on a nation-wide basis. In the final analysis Fisher's polite rebuff meant that the R.C.I. would be thrown back upon its own slim resources. Lucas and company had been warned by the V.L. to expect determined resistance to their plans from the L.E.A.'s and Teachers' Associations but this admonition had gone unheeded in the optimistic atmosphere pervading the Institute in 1918.¹⁰¹ Not even Fisher's objections made much of a dent in their conviction that the spirit of the age was on their side.

Lucas and Newton might be criticized for drawing some overly optimistic conclusions about the imperial significance of the war. It could be objected that their outlook was deeply influenced by their tendency to view events too exclusively from the Institute's vantage point. In fairness, however, the R.C.I.'s wartime experience did offer some justification for their cheerful disposition. After all, the gospel had been carried to Oxford and the provincial universities. Numerous branches had sprung up to assist the R.C.I. in the fulfillment of its task. Most importantly, the Institute had acquired a new sense of vitality and an enlarged membership when many other

imperial societies had tended to wane. Oblivious to the growing force of dominion nationalism, the Imperial Studies Committee continued to look forward to the triumph of its cause during the period of post-war reconstruction that lay ahead, little realizing, however, how widely its vision of the "Brave New World" differed from that of most Britons.

FOOTNOTES

¹L.S.C.M.B., 24 November 1914.

²For details on the Overseas Club consult Reese, History of R.C.S., pp. 148-50.

³L.S.C.M.B., 26 February 1915.

⁴Minutes of Joint Committee of the R.C.I. and the V.L., 17 January 1913; 25 February 1913.

⁵L.S.C.M.B., 26 February 1915.

⁶Ibid., 24 November 1914.

⁷Spector, "Newton", 288.

⁸Ibid., p. 290.

⁹Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁰C.M.B., X (27 May 1915).

¹¹A. P. Newton and J. Ewing, The British Empire Since 1783 (London, 1935), p. 157.

¹²A. P. Newton, The Old Empire and the New (London, 1917), p. 140.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴"Minutes of Meeting with Mr. A. P. Newton", C.M.B., X (27 May 1915).

¹⁵"Report of Lecturing Sub-Committee", ibid.

¹⁶"Minutes of Meeting with Mr. Garrison", ibid.

- ¹⁷"Report of Lecturing Sub-Committee", ibid.
- ¹⁸L.S.C.M.B., 5 November 1915.
- ¹⁹Lucas, "Imperial Studies", 666.
- ²⁰This letter was penned by Newton on 6 July 1915 and a copy was enclosed in the L.S.C.M.B.
- ²¹Lucas, "Imperial Studies", 665.
- ²²Ibid., p. 666.
- ²³The complete panel of lectures is to be found in L.S.C.M.B., 3 July 1915.
- ²⁴Minutes of Joint Committee, 7 December 1915.
- ²⁵The report and its author's life and ideas are considered in Kazamias, Secondary Education, chapter x.
- ²⁶G. R. Parkin to W. P. Reeves, 31 March 1914, Parkin Papers, XXXIX, p. 10814.
- ²⁷Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 205.
- ²⁸The papers of the W.E.A. are currently housed in Mills Memorial Library, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. They are, unfortunately of little or no use in connection with this present study.
- ²⁹A. B. Keith, Imperial Unity and the Dominions (Oxford, 1916), pp. 8, 589.
- ³⁰Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 207.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²Thornton, Imperial Idea, pp. 153-203.

³³R. C. K. Ensor, England 1870-1914 (Oxford, 1949), p. 371.

³⁴Hancock, Smuts, II, 431.

³⁵J. C. Smuts to A. J. Balfour, "Memorandum on the British Commonwealth Constitution", Balfour Papers, M.S.49775, p. 210.

³⁶C. P. Lucas, "Empire on the Anvil", Nineteenth Century and After, LXXIX (June 1916), 1162.

³⁷For this and subsequent references to Milner's opinion on this point consult The Times (18 November 1915), p. 5.

³⁸For this and all subsequent references to Steele-Maitland's address on this issue consult The Empire and the Future, ed. A. P. Newton (London, 1916), pp. vii-xv.

³⁹Smith's address entitled "The People and the Duties of Empire" is also to be found in ibid., pp. 29-44.

⁴⁰C. P. Lucas, The Empire at War, I (Oxford, 1921), 303.

⁴¹C. P. Lucas, The War and the Empire Some Facts and Deductions (London, 1919), p. 39.

⁴²Newton, Empire Since 1783, p. 228.

⁴³Fed. Mag., CIII (October 1915), 822.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵For this and all subsequent references to Pollard's article on this point consult his "Forward to the Scheme for the Study of Imperial History", ibid., CVII (March 1915), 775-76.

⁴⁶Pollock, "League of the Empire", 739.

⁴⁷Kazamias, Secondary Education, p. 210.

- ⁴⁸Selleck, English Primary Education, p. 5.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁵⁰Kazamias, Secondary Education, p. 211.
- ⁵¹A. J. P. Taylor, "E. D. Morel and the U.D.C.", The Left and War, ed. P. Stansky (New York, 1969), 118-130.
- ⁵²G. D. H. Cole, "The Labour Party in Session", ibid., 136.
- ⁵³Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, pp. 214-219.
- ⁵⁴Ibid.
- ⁵⁵S. Low to Milner, 22 March 1916, Milner Papers, Box 167.
- ⁵⁶Milner to S. Low, 24 March 1916, ibid.
- ⁵⁷Left and War, p. 120.
- ⁵⁸"Lectures Under the Imperial Studies Scheme", U.E., VI (1915), 771.
- ⁵⁹Ibid.
- ⁶⁰For this and all subsequent references to this speech consult "Democratic Empire", 801-810.
- ⁶¹L.S.C.M.B., 20 March 1916.
- ⁶²A. P. Newton, "The Progress of Imperial Studies", U.E., VII (1916), pp. 90-91.
- ⁶³Ibid.
- ⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵L.S.C.M.B., 20 March 1916.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Minutes of Joint Committee, 10 July 1916.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰C.M.B., XI (10 July 1917), 265.

⁷¹"Minutes of Meeting with Mr. A. P. Newton",
ibid., X (27 May 1915).

⁷²F. Hague, to H. F. Wilson, 28 March 1917, Parkin
Papers, XLV, p. 12461.

⁷³H. F. Wilson to F. Hague, 6 June 1917, ibid.,
p. 12486.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵G. R. Parkin to H. F. Wilson, 5 July 1917, ibid.,
p. 12542.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 12543.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 12545.

⁷⁸H. F. Wilson to G. R. Parkin, 25 July 1917, ibid.,
p. 12577.

⁷⁹Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 211.

⁸⁰Lucas, "Imperial Studies", 668.

⁸¹"Imperial Studies", U.E., IX (1918), 471.

⁸²Ibid., p. 453.

⁸³G. R. Parkin to A. P. Newton, 19 December 1918, Parkin Papers, I, p. 13479.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵"Imperial Studies", U.E., IX (1918), 471.

⁸⁶Minutes of Joint Committee, 1 July 1913.

⁸⁷Ibid., 16 January 1918.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Reese, History of R.C.S., pp. 104, 134.

⁹²Boosé, Memory, p. 36.

⁹³C. P. Lucas, "Sixty Years of the R.C.I.", U.E., XIX (1928), 309-313.

⁹⁴Minutes of Joint Committee, 7 February 1918.

⁹⁵Ibid., 15 July 1919.

⁹⁶"Imperial Studies", U.E., IX (1918), 102.

⁹⁷For this and all subsequent references to the deputation consult "Imperial Studies Deputation", U.E., IX (1918), 358 and "Deputation to the President of the Board of Education", ibid., 397-401.

⁹⁸For details concerning the Education Act of 1918 consult Ogg, Fisher, pp. 80-83; Musgrave, Society and Education, pp. 81-82; Kazamias, Secondary Education, pp. 225-28.

⁹⁹Ogg, Fisher, pp. 57-59.

¹⁰⁰H. A. L. Fisher, "Education and the Empire",
Empire Review, XXXVII (1923), 579.

¹⁰¹Minutes of Joint Committee, 16 January 1918.

CHAPTER SIX
FADING PROSPECTS IN THE TWENTIES

I

The "Brave New World" of Imperial Studies failed to materialize in the twenties in spite of the confident expectations of Lucas and Newton. Indeed the years following World War One proved most inhospitable to all those who still entertained imperial convictions. The exponents of imperial education who, during the war, had conceived such great hopes for the period of reconstruction found instead that their schemes lost rather than gained ground. The grand imperial awaking which they had prophesied never came to pass and imperialism as a creed waned in the face of post-war apathy and disillusionment.

To all but a few people like Lucas it was becoming painfully obvious that Britain was failing to hold her own in the contest of nations. A temporary and short-lived post-war economic boom was followed by a disastrous slump characterized by wide-spread unemployment, falling prices, and an end to the public's faith in Lloyd George's promises of "a world fit for heroes".¹ In short, it was impossible to finance a major reconstruction of society and its aging institutions.

The disappointment of the general public with this state of affairs was acute. To many, like the young Lytton Strachey, it seemed as though all the sacrifices endured during the war had gone for nothing except to preserve the old society and its outmoded values. Many people heaped scorn upon the institutions and ideals of the Edwardians whose nationalism and supposedly aggressive imperialism were seen as fundamental causes of the war itself.² The restrictions and disappointments of post-war life resulted in youth's estrangement from the normal political life of the nation.³ There was a "general Anti-Victorian revolt on the part of young British intellectuals such as Leonard Wolfe, John Maynard Keynes, and their friends in the Bloomsbury Circle. Hugh Gaitskell, then an undergraduate at Oxford, later recalled his generation's rejection of Victorianism which resulted in "an outburst of scepticism, a mistrust of dogma, a dislike of sentimentality, and of over-emotional prejudices or violent crusades".⁴ In this atmosphere of general domestic disenchantment there was little room for men of Lucas' sentimental, emotional, and crusading cast of mind.

In more specific terms, imperialism as a creed was decidedly out of favour in the twenties. It was identified with war and came under attack from the growing pacifist element in British society.⁵ In addition old Cobdenite

complaints about massive expenditures abroad in spite of social and economic distress at home were revived to plague imperialists. "Mesopotamia and Mess-up-at-home-here" became a popular anti-government slogan.⁶ Predictably, therefore, the governments of the twenties intentionally avoided raising imperial issues for public debate at a time when taxation per head had increased sixfold from the levels of 1914.⁷ If, as Newton thought, the war had awakened public interest in imperial unity in Great Britain, post-war conditions quickly reversed the situation.

Nor did imperialism find much favour in the post-war dominions. South Africa's intention to pursue an autonomous path was clearly outlined by Jan Christian Smuts even while hostilities were still raging in France.⁸ For her part Canada drifted into isolation for fear of becoming involved in more imperial wars. When in 1922 Britain and Turkey faced each other on the brink of war at Chanak, the government of W. L. Mackenzie King curtly refused Canadian support for the Mother country. Australia and New Zealand were falling under American influence as Britain proved less and less able to guarantee their defense, having withdrawn her fleet from the Pacific after the Washington Conference of 1922. As a whole the dominions tended to prefer individual action at the League of Nations to joint commitments engineered at Imperial Conferences.

The conferences in the twenties became polite forums for the exchanging of views but the issue of closer union was scrupulously avoided by the British government in 1921 and 1923 in order to head off an outright confrontation with the dominions.⁹ This upsurge in dominion nationalism did none of the societies encouraging imperial education any good but it undoubtedly affected the League of the Empire the most in the short run since its work was based so heavily on its contacts overseas.

But imperialism was not the only Edwardian ideal to suffer as a result of Britain's post-war problems. The movement for educational reform, which had supplied some of the impetus behind the campaigns of the R.C.I. and the L. of E., also experienced a crippling setback. In 1918 the Advisory Committee on Education of the Labour Party drafted a report condemning the class structure of education and calling for the end of the old élitist "ladder system".¹⁰ The class tensions swirling around education were exacerbated in the twenties by the failure of successive governments to enact dynamic measures of reform.

Economic dislocation was the major factor inhibiting educational reform. With the sudden collapse of the post-war boom the government turned for a solution to huge reductions in public expenditure. At the very moment when

complaints were being voiced about the cost of imperial commitments similar dissatisfaction was being expressed concerning the soaring Treasury grants to educational bodies. For example, in 1919 the total Treasury bill for education was over nineteen million pounds; by 1921 it had exceeded forty-three million and was still climbing.¹¹ Reacting to mounting public criticism of this situation, the Geddes Committee on National Expenditure approved drastic reductions in public spending and singled out educational expenditures as an area of particular extravagance.¹² Thus overall expenditures on education were cut from a projected fifty million pounds to thirty-four million and the Board placed a virtual ban on the introduction of new schemes.¹³ This step undoubtedly placed a serious obstacle in the path of the R.C.I. and the L. of E. in their attempts to modify to suit their purposes the curricula of the nation's institutions.

Altogether the waning respectability of the imperial creed combined with the cut backs in educational spending and the increasingly volatile nature of educational debates to produce an environment distinctly unfavourable to those promoting imperial education. Yet none of this seems to have made the least impression on Lucas, Newton, and their colleagues. They appear to have completely ignored or mis-read post-war developments both at home and abroad when they

formulated their policies for the twenties. If they had any serious misgivings they failed to voice them clearly. In any case, regardless of their optimism, both the League and the Institute rapidly lost their momentum in the early years of the new decade.

II

With the coming of peace the League of the Empire attempted to renew its activities with the overseas boards following the disruption which the war had caused. Its energies were once more channelled into the teacher exchange programme and the Imperial Education Conference. From 1919 to 1923 the League tended to concentrate on the exchange scheme and in 1921 a conference was held in Toronto to bring the issue to a head. The conclave attracted little or no attention even in the Canadian press, perhaps because it proved to be as inconclusive as had all previous deliberations on this delicate and complicated question. The same objections which had precluded the development of an effective exchange programme before the war were once more forced to the surface.¹⁴ Undaunted by the negative results of these proceedings, the League decided to press the interchange issue at the Imperial Education Conference planned for 1923.

The exchange question was viewed as the key to the future of imperial education co-ordination, not only by the League but by other observers as well. In an article in The Times Herbert Branston Gray, an ex-public school headmaster and long-time champion of imperial education, expressed the hope that the Conference would help to revive that interest in imperial affairs which had been lost sight of in the confusing atmosphere of post-war domestic politics.¹⁵ In his opinion the best service that the Conference could render to the cause of imperial unity was to find a solution to the exchange problem. The Times itself drew attention to this point in an editorial announcing the approach of the Conference.¹⁶ Educational co-ordination was portrayed as "the best cement for so scattered a community of nations as the British Empire". However, it was argued, co-ordination depended ultimately on the establishment of a teacher exchange system. The words of L. S. Amery of Round Table fame were cited to bolster the point. Disillusioned by the failure of the Round Table to excite interest in formal imperial consolidation Amery now stated that sentiment would have to be considered as the final bastion of unity. In the promotion of that imperial sentiment, he continued, teacher exchanges were all important because in the future educators would have to lead the way as the "missionaries of sound [imperial]

doctrine".

The Imperial Education Conference of 1923 met in London from 25 June to 8 July under the joint auspices of the League and the Conservative Government of Stanley Baldwin. As in 1907 and 1911 the meetings were opened with a rousing address emphasizing the significance of educational co-operation in the search for imperial unity. This time the Duke of York stood on the podium and informed the delegates of the imperial ideals which it was their duty as teachers to uphold in the classrooms of the Empire.¹⁷ But in spite of the Duke's fine words the 1923 conference was rather subdued, even in comparison with its forerunners. Missing was the elaborate round of social events heavily spiced with pro-imperial speeches; gone was the extensive press coverage which had attended the gatherings of 1907 and 1911. The Manchester Guardian, which had followed previous proceedings in great detail, devoted only a single short article to the conclave of 1923.¹⁸ The overseas press was virtually silent as were the other major London papers with the exception of the ever-thorough Times.¹⁹

The exceedingly dry and technical nature of the talks undoubtedly had much to do with their failure to spark the enthusiasm of the press. To be sure, the traditional topics relating to teacher exchanges and a permanent educational bureau for the Empire were aired but

the majority of the topics discussed were of interest only to professional educators. Infant education, the reliability of intelligence tests and other such subjects were not calculated to excite general interest.²⁰

For its part, the Board of Education was in no mood to beat the drums of imperialism and educational reform. Significantly, while the conference was still in session the Board tabled its annual report in the Commons. In keeping with the mood of the hour in Whitehall, the report emphasized the need for severe retrenchment.²¹ Earlier in the year Edward Wood, who succeeded Fisher as president of the Board, had made good his long standing reputation as a champion of economy by reducing all teachers' salaries by five per cent.²² Wood presided over the 1923 conference and could not be expected to foster any elaborate schemes for imperial co-operation which would involve increased spending. Consequently when the issues of teacher exchange, a permanent bureau, and a common educational nomenclature were raised, the Board quickly stifled discussion of them.

The deliberations on the exchange question never really began. In the face of numerous overseas objections to the idea, the Board suggested that the matter be shunted to a special committee where it eventually died a quiet death. The Board, of course, was already noted for side-

stepping expensive and controversial issues, an attitude which may have been accentuated by a squabble that occurred earlier in 1923. On that occasion the Board had received an irate letter from the Prime Minister of New Zealand, complaining bitterly of a supposed snub given by the English Board to some New Zealand teachers the previous year.²³ Apparently the Board had refused to recognize certain types of New Zealand teaching certificates and the indignant Prime Minister roundly criticized Whitehall for its unco-operative attitude. This encounter may well have induced the Board to avoid fresh confrontations over this issue at the 1923 conference. At any rate, the entire question was skirted and finally shelved during the deliberations.

When the conference turned to the matter of establishing uniform educational statistics and nomenclature throughout the Empire, first the overseas delegates and then the Board flatly rejected the scheme. The dominion representatives once more pointed out that the fundamental differences in the various systems of the Empire militated against such a proposal.²⁴ Some suggested that a permanent bureau might help overcome these obstacles but Wood, speaking for the Board, quashed this idea as well. He made it clear that the English Board simply lacked the manpower and resources to organize an imperial bureau.²⁵ Wood's principal objection was a financial one but, apart from this,

he felt that the project was entirely too grandiose for any one agency to handle. Moreover, he said, the Board was in no position to take on such a task since it did not have universal authority even within the confines of the United Kingdom.

Indeed within the context of this imperial assembly it soon became evident that the Board itself represented just one more vested regional interest. Its position on the question of imperial centralization was outlined by Sir Hugh Orange, one of its chief financial experts. Orange professed to be shocked that anyone should suggest that the Board's nomenclature be altered to suit that of any other authority.²⁶ He stated with considerable pride that it had taken years for the Board to develop its own statistical method and that it would not abandon its system lightly. In any event, he continued, the whole project was impossible to fulfil. The various imperial boards could never arrive at acceptable common modes of describing circumstances which varied so much from country to country. In his opinion the only way in which a uniform nomenclature could be developed was by the coercive power of the British government and this was out of the question given the dominions' zest for autonomy. Thus the idea of establishing a common approach to statistics and a permanent bureau was shelved along with the exchange programme.

In this atmosphere Sir Charles Lucas' address to the Conference on the history of the Empire seemed rather out of place.²⁷ Lucas' theme for the occasion was drawn from Kipling. "What", he asked, "should they know of England who only England know?" Very little, concluded Lucas. This set the stage for a lengthy argument on behalf of the study of Imperial History and Geography in the Empire's classrooms. Perhaps Lucas was thinking of the post-war reaction against imperialism when he contended that although blatant jingoism was bad so was the belittling of one's own achievements. In a moment of pique Lucas felt moved to point out that "the British Empire is not a colossal expansion of original sin as some seem to think". He concluded by stating that the spiritual unity of the Empire could only be maintained by the promotion of Imperial History and Geography.

On the whole Lucas' address was rather vague. He never pinned himself down to concrete proposals or methods of introducing Imperial History into the curricula of the Empire's various boards. Perhaps this accounts for the favourable reception which his words received. In fact, apart from purely procedural matters, Lucas' address was the only one to become the object of a general resolution of the conference. Yet even here the delegates were content merely to assign the task of settling the problems involved in developing imperial history to an outside body, the

Imperial Studies Committee of the R.C.I.²⁸

As a matter of fact, the conference intentionally avoided making any further general resolutions. The final report of this assembly made it quite clear that the delegates had seen it not as a step toward eventual union, but as a forum for the simple exchange of views on largely technical matters. For the sake of continued good relations it was decided not to bring any controversial matters to a general vote.²⁹ When the conference next met in 1927 it had become a matter of established policy that "no attempt should be made to organize the discussions with a view to formal conclusions, embodied in agreed documents".³⁰ In effect these conferences, under the influence of dominion nationalism and the cautious parochialism of the English Board, became little more than polite gatherings of professional educators and the original purpose of developing an imperial educational federation was shelved and forgotten.

Thus in the early twenties the League of the Empire saw its hopes fade away rapidly. Its two most cherished objectives, the establishment of an exchange system and the development of the conferences as a basis for an educational federation, came to naught. The League itself continued to operate as an unofficial liaison between Whitehall and the overseas boards but it was unable to employ this position to open the channels of official co-operation.

It would seem too that the press lost interest in the affairs of the League after 1923. Prior to that date The Times and The Guardian had regularly charted its round of activities but afterwards one is hard pressed indeed to find even the slightest reference to the League in the newspapers. This undoubtedly reflected the League's loss of dynamism at that time. There is, for example, no evidence to indicate that its private teacher exchange programme was kept up after 1923. In the same year the final number of the Federal Magazine was published, making it all but impossible to trace the history of the League in its last years. The L. of E. seems to have faded when the hope of educational federation dissolved at the conference of 1923 and was ignored by the delegates to the 1927 gathering. Without the assistance of the Federal Magazine and because of the silence of other sources like the R.C.I.'s journals, it is impossible to tell whether the League simply dissolved itself or amalgamated with another society in the late twenties. Whatever its fate, the twenties witnessed an end to the great hopes that the League had once entertained for achieving imperial unity through educational federation.

III

The R.C.I., unlike the League of the Empire, did not have to retrace its steps in 1919 or try to re-establish

old pre-war projects. Instead, it merely continued the programmes which had proved successful during the war. Its leaders were convinced that the Institute was a stronger, more dynamic body than it had been in 1914. Admittedly, the approach to Fisher and the Board of Education in 1918 had been unsuccessful, but this occasioned no alarm among the councillors. After all, it had never been the policy of the Institute to depend on official channels in the first place. It appears to have been widely assumed that the Imperial Studies Committee would continue to progress under its own steam. Thus in 1919 the Committee reported to the council that it envisaged its work as a permanent one with a great future in the period of reconstruction to come.³¹

The Committee of 1919 was considerably larger than the old Lectures Sub-Committee of 1915. It now included representatives from the League of the Empire, the Victoria League, the Working Men's College, the University of London, the Board of Education, and a number of teacher's associations.³² As a pressure group, therefore, it had broadened its base to become representative of more interests. With the League of the Empire on the wane, the R.C.I.'s Committee was rapidly becoming the most prominent agency fostering imperial unity by means of education. The future, indeed, seemed bright.

The failure to interest the Board of Education in the task of promoting Imperial History did not deflect the Institute from its course. Rather it decided if necessary to take up the mantle of leadership alone. Accordingly, in 1919 the Imperial Studies Committee addressed a circular letter on this theme to all of the local Educational Authorities, public and secondary schools, and universities and public libraries in the United Kingdom.³³ Lucas, who drafted the letter, sought to make two points. "English history", he wrote,

henceforward must mean, not the history of the British Isles but the history of the British Empire; and the extension of the parliamentary franchise makes the teaching of this history the plain duty of all who are charged with the business of public instruction in the United Kingdom.

There was a rather pompous tone to this letter which may have alienated many who read it. In any event, teachers and Local Educational Authorities always resented any outsider who attempted to define their "plain duty" for them. None of the replies to this communication were recorded but one suspects that they were few and unfavourable. For one thing, the Institute always took careful note of anything in its own favour. For another, the letter had included forms enabling the L.E.A.'s to contact the R.C.I. should they wish to have some help in setting up programmes of imperial studies but there is no record of any local authority applying for such assistance.

There was one tangible result of this whole affair. In 1918 the delegation to Fisher had called for the creation of chairs of Imperial History in the civic universities. For the moment nothing was done. Lucas' circular of the following year, however, renewed the plea and the greatest civic university of them all, that in London, responded. The Imperial Studies Committee of the Institute, in company with its namesake at the University of London, petitioned the Rhodes Trust to endow a chair of Imperial History at King's College. The Trustees, led by Milner, responded with a permanent endowment of £500 per year for the establishment of the chair. The only stipulation they made was that it should be known as the Rhodes Chair of Imperial History.³⁴ The University was happy to accede to this request and the chair came into being late in 1919. Its first occupant was A. P. Newton who held the post until 1938.

In the meantime the R.C.I. was at work expanding and diversifying its educational work. Late in 1919 the Imperial Studies Committee took over the lantern slides and other materials of the Visual Instruction Committee of the Colonial Office. The reason for this transfer was not made clear at the time but from the later history of that body it seems that Chamberlain's original committee was running low on funds and finding it very difficult to publish its material. The Colonial Office may have felt it wise to

relinquish its control of this losing proposition and transfer it to private hands. The R.C.I. was the natural choice since Lucas had been the committee's first chairman in 1902.

In 1921 the Institute also took over the direction of the Empire Day Movement. Lord Meath was growing old and said that he was no longer able to cope with the organization and promotion of the "movement".³⁵ Further diversification came in the form of the Cinema Sub-Committee of the R.C.I. In 1923 this off-shoot of the Imperial Studies Committee arranged for two photographers to accompany the fleet on its tour of the Empire for the purpose of making an educational film.³⁶ The upshot of this effort was Britain's Birthright which, according to the sub-committee, enjoyed fairly wide distribution throughout the nation's cinemas, although precise figures were not recorded.³⁷

Thus things seemed to be progressing fairly well for the Institute. Nevertheless there were some disturbing portents as well. In 1918, it will be recalled, the Institute had tried to attract some representations of the labour movement to the Committee but it had failed in its attempt. In spite of his confidence in the process of permeation, Lucas by 1920 was clearly worried about the failure of labour to respond. In February of that year he delivered a speech under the Imperial Studies lecture scheme to a public audience at Central Hall, Westminster.

His theme was "the meaning of the empire to the labour democracy".³⁸

One can sense an undercurrent of frustration and a sense of urgency in Lucas' words. He described the educational function of the R.C.I. as one of preaching "the gospel of Empire". Following this Lucas launched an extended tirade against the notion that imperialism was to be identified with warlike, aggressive, and grasping capitalism. This, of course, was one of his favourite themes and he warmed to it as he berated the growing tendency to burlesque imperial heroes and underrate imperial achievements. What, he asked, was the true significance of the Empire? The answer to Lucas was simple: it was the greatest carrier and insurance of democracy in the modern world. In short, he argued, the Empire should appeal to the worker as "the greatest triumph of work and the greatest empire of democracy yet devised".

The following year, 1921, Lucas addressed a party of teachers at the Institute. He spoke with pride of the accomplishments of the R.C.I., particularly in the field of university education.³⁹ He was forced to admit, however, that "great difficulty was being experienced in impressing upon Labour the responsibilities of Empire". He was shocked, he told the teachers, to find not just apathy, but outright hostility among the workers. The solution,

he claimed, was to win the teachers of the nation over to the cause of Imperial Studies. He asked his visitors to remember "that it is to their profession that we look to counteract such sinister influences and to breed up a strong, true, clean race throughout the Empire".

This theme had formed a major part of the delegation's presentation to Fisher in 1918. Fisher had argued, however, that little could be done to influence private teachers in training colleges since the curriculum was already so overcrowded. Instead, he urged the R.C.I. to bring its message to the teachers through an extension of their lecture scheme. This task was given to Sub-Committee "C" of the Imperial Studies Committee which after 1919 developed a scheme to promote study circles among teachers in the London area. In 1920 H. J. Mackinder gave a series of lectures to teachers on Empire studies under the joint auspices of the Committee and the London County Council Education Department.⁴⁰ Throughout the early twenties a number of "At Homes" were held by the Institute for teachers from the United Kingdom and for those who were visiting from abroad.⁴¹ As has been mentioned, a fairly successful effort was also made to recruit representatives of various teachers' associations for the Imperial Studies Committee. Thus the Headmasters' Conference and the Headmistresses' Association sent delegates to the R.C.I. In addition, E. E. Allan, the editor of the magazine Teacher's World,

also became a regular member of the Committee.⁴²

During the twenties, however, the Institute proved to be unable to capitalize on these opportunities, partly because it lacked the financial resources to do so. Time and again new projects had to be shelved or watered down in the face of growing deficits. The membership of the Institute, which provided through fees the major monetary prop of the R.C.I., failed to rise. In 1918 the membership stood at 13,700; by 1920 it had risen to 15,000.⁴³ During the post-war slump, however, it fell off slightly because in the unstable economic circumstances of the times the Institute maintained its high fees. In 1927 the enrolment was down to 14,000. But this decline may also have reflected the growth of post-war disillusionment with imperialism. At any rate it became impossible for the Institute to put forth any kind of large-scale effort.

Some financial support, however, had long been supplied by the Rhodes Trust. It was hoped that the Trustees might come to the rescue of the R.C.I. and enable it to expand in spite of the slowdown in the recruitment drive. But the Trustees adamantly held to the policy established in 1908 that no significant amounts of capital would be invested in the educational projects of the League and the R.C.I. until they pooled their efforts. In 1924 the R.C.I. asked the Trustees for a special donation to its

building fund in an effort to finance an extension to its facilities in Northumberland Avenue.⁴⁴ In addition the Institute, the L. of E., and the V.L., each petitioned the Trust to increase their annual grants of £500. Once again the Trustees brought pressure to bear on the three societies to amalgamate. They were informed that the Trustees "could not continue their grants until [they were] satisfied that they were being usefully and economically expended".⁴⁵ Negotiations to achieve a union were undertaken but failed as had all previous attempts. Consequently the Trustees, true to their word, steadfastly refused to enlarge their grants.

During the war the R.C.I. had been able to make do without massive financial infusions from the Rhodes Trust because of its rapidly expanding income from membership fees. The size of the Trust's grant, therefore, had not been of critical importance. But when the recruitment drive stagnated and fell off in the twenties the attitude of the Rhodes Trust became of vital significance to the future of the Institute's educational programmes. In the changed atmosphere of the twenties it may not have mattered whether the Institute was capable of mounting a major effort or not. The fact is, however, that it lacked the resources even to try.

For example, in 1920 it was proposed that the Institute encourage original research into Imperial Studies

by staging an annual monograph competition with a gold medal, one hundred guineas, and life membership in the R.C.I. as the prizes.⁴⁶ The competition would be restricted to students at accredited universities and would emphasize scholarly, original research. The entire project was greeted enthusiastically by the council. It was seen as the basis of providing the raw materials for new reference books on Imperial History and Geography. The plans were approved and the first contest was scheduled for 1920. In February, however, Lucas drew attention to the mounting financial problems of the Institute and advised that the project be set aside for at least a year.⁴⁷ Its implementation was actually deferred until 1926.

In 1920 the R.C.I. was also urged to add new life to its old essay contests by staging a nation-wide publicity campaign.⁴⁸ The Imperial Studies Committee suggested that general reports on the essays, lists of medals and prize winners, and a list showing the percentage mark gained by each competitor should be sent to every school in the United Kingdom in the hope of exciting a competitive spirit. This scheme was also set aside as being beyond the financial capability of the Institute. In a similar vein the treasurer in 1921 called attention to the need for economy, particularly with regard to typing and the circulation of reports and memoranda.⁴⁹ The Imperial

Studies Committee was singled out as the chief source of such expenditure and was asked to cut back on its paper work.

Throughout the twenties the R.C.I. took a great interest in the matter of providing adequate textbooks for the study of imperial history. In 1923, for example, the Institute was asked by the Imperial Education Conference to look into this whole question.⁵⁰ Newton greeted this overture with enthusiasm and proposed joining forces with the Historical and Geographical Associations to deal with this request.⁵¹ The upshot was the convening of an Imperial Text Book Conference in November at which all three bodies were represented.

In spite of the R.C.I.'s optimism, however, the conference concluded that it was "neither necessary nor desirable to devise new textbooks".⁵² The delegates had apparently been swayed by the forceful arguments of J. C. Stobart, a representative of the Board of Education on the Imperial Studies Committee. Stobart warned the assembly that the Board had never approved and would never approve particular publications by name since this would unduly upset its independently minded teachers.⁵³ He also argued that the temper of the times was wholly unfavourable to works of a propagandistic nature, particularly when that propaganda was imperial in content. Stobart concluded by

saying that any official syllabus on Empire studies would be ignored by teachers if left optional or would become the object of heated controversy if made compulsory. The autonomy of the individual teacher was jealously guarded by the National Union of Teachers (N.U.T.) and had been a problem which had frustrated the efforts not only of the Institute and the Leagues but also of the whole educational reform movement since the turn of the century.

Stobart's criticisms carried a great deal of weight at this meeting. He was speaking not as a member of the R.C.I. or as a private individual, but as the official representative of the Board of Education. His memorandum on the subject of official texts was a carefully prepared statement of the Board's position and reflected its continuing concern with retrenchment, its dislike of propaganda, and its ever-present fear of antagonizing local interests. In any event, his statements served to put a damper on the original enthusiasm of the delegates. They contented themselves, therefore, with recommending the drafting of Empire study pamphlets and the revamping of Pollard's British Empire (1909). The Institute's delegates were disappointed with these results, but they did not feel that the R.C.I. could successfully finance a textbook scheme of its own.

There were sound reasons for the Institute's caution

on this occasion. In 1919 it had been hoped that its absorption of the Visual Instruction Committee would enable the R.C.I. to provide instructional pamphlets for Empire teaching. During the early twenties the V.I.C. attempted to do just that. By 1923, however, it was in serious trouble. In July it reported to the council that it was down to one third of its original funds and was experiencing great problems in finding a publisher for its works.⁵⁴ It was, therefore, decided that all publication should cease in the following year and that the committee's efforts would be directed toward obtaining increased publicity. An indication of the gravity of this body's financial troubles came when it dismissed its paid secretary.⁵⁵ Later in the year the V.I.C. again pleaded with the council to help publicise its work.⁵⁶ Lucas obliged by sending a circular letter to every educational authority in Britain advertising the V.I.C.'s work. It was all, however, to no avail and the V.I.C. was forced to cease its operations in 1927. Small wonder, therefore, that the Institute shied away from the idea of drafting syllabi or textbooks on its own in 1923.

The entire textbook issue was put aside until 1925. Then in May of that year Sir Frederick Lugard, the apostle of "Indirect Rule" in Africa, appealed to the council and urged the R.C.I. to produce "empire readers" for use in schools.⁵⁷ The suggestion was greeted with enthusiasm but many felt that the Imperial Studies Committee's funds

were wholly inadequate for such an expensive scheme. The treasurer said that the Institute, which was only just emerging from a long period of deficits, could not bear the financial strain which such a scheme would impose.⁵⁸ After considering the idea for a month, the Imperial Studies Committee reluctantly rejected it because of the costs involved. Instead, the Institute revived its Gold Medal project and agreed to run an annual contest for the best research monograph submitted on an imperial theme.⁵⁹ Predictably the first winner was Lugard himself for his Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa. In later years the Gold Medal competition gave way to the Imperial Studies Series. This series, which continued until 1968, was made up of original monographs on imperial subjects whose publication was assisted by the R.C.I. in co-operation with the University of London. Among the most notable works in this series are Aileen Dunham's Political Unrest in Upper Canada (1926) and John Kendle's The Colonial and Imperial Conferences (1967), both of which have become classics. Although the series constituted a solid contribution to historical knowledge, it was not a fulfillment of the textbook scheme which the Institute had hoped to promote.

Viewed as a whole, therefore, the R.C.I. was unable to accomplish the goals which it had set for itself in the immediate post-war period. As a consequence serious misgivings were expressed by the rank-and-file of the

membership. In 1923, for example, J. W. Grice, a member of the Institute, in the R.C.I.'s journal noted that the recent Imperial Education Conference had demonstrated the rapid advances made in the previous decade in all areas of education save a vital one -- imperial history.⁶⁰ Grice was disheartened to find that the development of local and world history was fast outstripping that of imperial studies. He expressed considerable disenchantment with the fact that the R.C.I. was pouring its slim resources into a scheme which was yielding so little in the way of tangible results. But it was not until 1924 that the volume of criticism and disillusionment reached a peak within the membership of the Institute. In that year another fellow of the society, G. B. Atkinson, wrote a sad commentary on the lack of progress made in Imperial studies.⁶¹ In general he tended to uphold the old assumption that the schoolmasters were to blame for this sorry turn of events and that "new blood" was needed in their ranks before the R.C.I. could hope to carry its plans forward.

Atkinson's open letter sparked a number of similar reappraisals. For instance, D. Algar-Bailey had just recently returned from a prolonged stay in the colonies when he seconded Atkinson's judgments in the Institute's journal.⁶² He spoke of the lamentable failure of the R.C.I. to drive its message home to a significant proportion of

the Empire's population. He wrote of an "appalling indifference in the masses and benevolent paternalism in the classes", but he was even sadder to see "no Empire vision in the heart of the Empire itself". A. R. Pontifex took up this theme and likewise complained of the frustrating apathy of schoolmasters toward the cause of imperial education.⁶³

An H. Ashton, perhaps in an effort to sum up the misgivings of his colleagues, added yet another voice to this chorus of disenchantment.⁶⁴ "The Englishman", he wrote, "who has gone to live in a distant corner of the Empire, looks out upon the strangers around him and wonders how long British subjects will have anything in common". This growing estrangement, he said, reflected the failure to capitalize on the once strong sentimental ties that had bound the Empire together. Ashton deplored the lack of co-operation among those groups attempting to foster imperial education and their tendency to approach this immense task "in bits and pieces". He warned his colleagues that time was running out and that the opportunity to promote understanding and unity through education would soon be lost in the changing atmosphere of the post-war Empire. Old romantic ideals of Empire, he continued, were dead or dying. New ideas based on mutual understanding must be developed immediately or a gulf would soon open between England and her dominions which could never be bridged.

Altogether the disillusioned mutterings of 1924 call to mind the circumstances that led to the reform movement of 1909. But the resemblance was merely superficial. Significantly nobody called for the development of a new raison d'être for the Institute as had been done before the war. None seemed to question the importance or viability of promoting imperial education as the policy of imperial federation had been questioned in 1909. The complaints were inspired by frustration. Yet the unfavourable comments of Ashton and his associates were clearly at odds with the still optimistic views of Lucas and Newton concerning the relative progress of the R.C.I.'s post-war schemes. A tactical rather than ideological rift was beginning to open between the rank-and-file and the council. But in the face of mounting financial deficits this uneasiness undoubtedly helped to curb the R.C.I.'s expansion of its educational programmes in the twenties.

As far as they were concerned, both Lucas and Newton felt that the war had had a salutary effect on imperial relations and the public consciousness of the Empire. Indeed, at the same moment as Ashton and his fellow members of the rank-and-file were expressing dissatisfaction with the progress of Imperial Studies, Lucas was arguing that great progress had been made. In an address delivered in 1924 Lucas maintained that infinitely

more was known about the Empire than had previously been the case. The war, in his opinion, had been "the greatest propagator of knowledge about the British Empire",⁶⁵ a statement probably tailored for publication. But Lucas may have merely been trying to keep up a bold front; as already indicated he was well aware of the financial problems faced by the R.C.I. Nevertheless he does seem to have genuinely believed that the efforts of the Institute had had and would continue to have a telling effect on public opinion. From a distance, however, it is clear that the Institute was losing its force as an educative body. Nothing illustrated this deterioration better than the Imperial Studies Conference of 1924.

In June 1923 the R.C.I. was invited by the organizers of the forthcoming Empire Exhibition at Wembley to organize an Imperial Studies Conference as part of the overall proceedings.⁶⁶ The matter was discussed by the Imperial Studies Committee who reported its conclusions to the council. In general, they said, it was a laudable and necessary undertaking but in their view the R.C.I. should avoid any such commitment because of its scope and the costs involved. Sidney Low, who drafted the report, argued that the task was too large an undertaking for the Institute to take up.⁶⁷ Instead, he merely proposed that the R.C.I. offer its full moral support and advice to the organizers of the exhibition.

He also suggested that no such conference would be complete without representation from the League of the Empire and the Victoria League. It is mere speculation, of course, but one suspects that had this offer been tendered five or six years earlier the R.C.I. would have jumped at the chance of leading the proposed conference. Apparently Low's suggestions were approved and the matter was settled. Once again limited resources had prevented the Institute from seizing what must have seemed a golden opportunity to preach its gospel to a larger audience.

It was not, however, a dead issue in the minds of those planning the exhibition. In September 1923 they again appealed to the Institute to organize the conference.⁶⁸ This time Lucas came down in favour of the project and his influence seems to have tipped the balance. His reasons for supporting the motion have not been recorded and one can only speculate about them. In all likelihood, however, Lucas viewed this as an opportunity which was just too good to decline. In the first place it probably appealed to his pride in the R.C.I. Here was a chance for his society openly to assume the leadership in the campaign to promote imperial studies. Secondly, the conference afforded the Institute the opportunity of assembling all of those groups and individuals interested in Empire study in one place and of promoting a wider effort. Furthermore, as Newton later pointed out, although there had been many imperial education

conferences in the past, none of them had dealt solely with imperial studies.⁶⁹ The manner in which the conference was financed has not been recorded but it is possible that subscriptions were obtained from the numerous associations which sent delegates. In any event, the council went ahead with its plans to hold the meetings.

The R.C.I. spent a year preparing for the conference. The opinions of leading educational authorities were sounded out and they proved favourable to the idea. An impressive list of associations agreed to send delegates. Those co-operating in the venture include the V.L.,⁷⁰ the L. of E., the N.U.T., the English, Historical, and Geographical Associations, the W.E.A., and twenty-six other groups.⁷⁰ It was an imposing array and represented most of the nation's educational interests, with one notable exception. The Board of Education declined to send an official delegate. Indeed, the Board had already decided not to exhibit at the Empire Exhibition and refused to set up a special educational section.⁷¹ It may have been the case that the Exhibition's organizers only turned to the R.C.I. after the Board's refusal to become involved. For that matter, the Wembley Exhibition was poorly supported by the government as a whole and depended almost completely on private funds.⁷² According to one observer these private guarantors lost a great deal of money because of the

ominously poor attendance at the festivities.⁷³

The Imperial Studies Conference was held from the 26th to the 29th of June 1924. As Newton put it in his introduction to the conference's official report, this meeting "seemed to afford an excellent opportunity of taking stock of what has been achieved and of surveying future tasks".⁷⁴ The subject selected for discussion was "The Place of Imperial Studies in Education". Optimistically he noted that the public was awaking to the importance of this issue as a result of the war and that mass ignorance of the Empire was no longer a problem.⁷⁵ In practice, however, the conference experienced great difficulty in giving concrete form to this conviction. If, as Newton indicated, the conference was designed to serve as a forum for the realistic appraisal of past policies and the starting point of a renewed effort he must have been somewhat disenchanted with the outcome.

By and large there was little done at the conference in the way of a detailed analysis of the progress made by imperial studies since 1900. Most of the speakers contented themselves with rehashing old ideas. In fact, taken as a whole, the speeches of Lucas, Hadow, Lady Jersey, and the other spokesmen of the Institute and the Leagues were marked by stirring rhetoric and noble sentiments but by very few practical proposals.⁷⁶ There was nothing in their addresses which had not been said as early as 1914. Frustrated and

more than a little annoyed by this lack of purposeful discussion, the chairman of the conference, Lord Burnham, who had made his fortune in Fleet Street as proprietor of the Daily Telegraph intervened in the proceedings to voice his displeasure.⁷⁷ He may have been persuaded to chair the conference by his employee, Sidney Low, but it is more likely that he was invited to assume that post as a prominent figure in the educational world in his own right, having settled a number of wage disputes between the government and the N.U.T. in 1919.⁷⁸

Burnham halted the speeches for a moment to remark that he was weary of empty oratory and wanted to see some action for a change.⁷⁹ The delegates, he went on, had supposedly gathered to discuss how to persuade teachers to adopt an imperial approach to the curriculum, yet all they had heard were vague incantations of old platitudes. He scolded the speakers for the wandering, arid nature of their addresses and closed the day's proceedings on an unpleasant note, pleading with the delegates to come to grips with the contemporary problems of imperial education.

The teachers themselves finally came forward and, while proclaiming their faith in the principle of imperial education, they proved far less sanguine than Newton about the future of the programme. Many complained of the overly academic approach which the R.C.I. had adopted in its efforts to excite the interest of mere schoolchildren.⁸⁰

Moreover, others cautioned against expecting immediate results since education by its very nature was a slow process.⁸¹ Some teachers even suggested that the whole scheme was unworkable in primary schools since children were incapable of grasping complicated notions of imperial or even social relationships.⁸² In addition a number of the delegates felt that it would be far too easy for imperial education to degenerate into crude propagandizing which, it was said, was hardly to be encouraged given "the present uneasy state of the world and the provocative nature of much that is called imperialism".⁸³ As a body, therefore, the teachers at the 1924 conference came out squarely against the concepts propounded by Lucas and his colleagues just as Stobart had warned that they would. None of this, however, seems to have made an impression on Lucas who in his closing address clung to vague statements about the beneficial effects of the war on the Institute's campaign and about his faith in the future of Empire.

When the conference's official report was published in 1925 Stobart seized the opportunity to expose what, in his opinion, were some rather dubious assumptions in the minds of its organizers.⁸⁴ He criticized Lucas, Jersey, and the others for focusing their attention almost exclusively on the Empire to the detriment of the pupil. Sarcastically he commented that "there is no evidence in the whole volume

that any of the speakers had ever been or seen or spoken to a real child". As a teacher, Stobart chided the organizers of the conference for their apparent lack of understanding of child psychology. The basic assumption of all the speakers, he said, was that children were grossly, wickedly, and avoidably ignorant of imperial history. But, argued Stobart, this supposition merely betrayed the speakers' ignorance of the inability of schoolchildren to grasp principles and policies in an abstract sense. To him the tactics of the R.C.I. and the Leagues at the primary level of education were all wrong and he pleaded for "more humanity, more sympathy, and more common-sense in the way we present Empire to the young person".

As a commentary on the R.C.I.'s overall programme Stobart's critique was perhaps somewhat misdirected. After all, the Institute's chief energies were primarily focused not on schoolchildren but on the universities. In this sense its intellectual and academic approach was probably well suited to its audience. As a criticism of the L. of E.'s tactics Stobart's assertions were almost wholly unfounded for, as noted, the League pursued a symbolic and sentimental rather than a purely academic approach to imperial education at the primary level. Nevertheless there was an element of truth in his reflection on the conference. The R.C.I. had indeed approached the issue of expanding its activities to embrace primary schools without giving much

thought to altering its strategy and tactics. It seemed to be groping for solutions to the decline of its programmes without first adjusting its outlook to the changing circumstances of life in post-war Britain.

The ineffectual nature of the Wembley Conference was symptomatic of the gradual decline of the overall campaign for imperial education. Yet it did not collapse altogether. Indeed the Imperial Studies Committee maintained a shadowy existence until the late sixties although, to be sure, its inner dynamic was sapped by frustration, slim resources, and its failure to find an enthusiastic audience. As early as 1925 Lucas, frequently sick and perhaps finally a little disillusioned, began to look forward to retirement.⁸⁵ In that year he wrote that the committee would have to function on an ad hoc basis in the future. "Its pioneer work", continued Lucas, "is no longer needed to the same extent as it was some years ago and the committee devotes its energies and small funds as occasion arises."⁸⁶ Systematic education of public and scholarly opinion was now failing to sustain the Institute and proved to be a luxury which it could ill afford. In future the R.C.I. would continue to promote the study of the Empire through the Imperial Studies Series, essay competitions, and the encouragement of scholarly research, but its efforts in this regard more closely resembled the on again-off again approach

of the nineties than it did the concentrated action of the period 1914 to 1924. In 1909 the R.C.I. had abandoned the project of political federation because it no longer seemed feasible and therefore no longer provided a viable raison d'être for the continued expansion of the Institute. Likewise in the mid-twenties the scheme of imperial education was slowly set aside for similar reasons. In time the Institute completely dropped its former allegiance to the concept of imperial unity in the standard sense and came to espouse the Commonwealth ideal which has sustained it to the present time.⁸⁷ This transition was slower than the one undertaken in 1909 and no precise dates can be established to mark it but with the retirement of Lucas as chairman of the Imperial Studies Committee in 1926 another era in the history of the R.C.I. may be said to have come to an end.

FOOTNOTES

¹For details concerning the violent fluctuations in Britain's post-war economy consult D. Aldcroft, The Inter-War Economy (New York, 1970), pp. 36-37. One of the best discussions of the war's impact on the economy is to be found in W. Ashworth's, An Economic History of England (London, 1960). P. Deane and W. A. Cole provide a good statistical analysis of the process whereby Britain was transformed from a creditor to a debtor nation during the war in their British Economic Growth 1688-1959: Trends and Structure (London, 1967), pp. 36-37.

²A classic statement of this view was provided by Robert Graves in his Goodbye To All That (London, 1929). See also Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. 304.

³Graves, Goodbye, p. 236.

⁴H. Gaitskell, "At Oxford in the 'Twenties", Essays in Labour History, eds. A. Briggs and J. Saville (London, 1960), 7.

⁵R. Graves and A. Hodge, The Long Week-End (London, 1963), pp. 215, 265.

⁶Ibid., p. 70.

⁷Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. 184.

⁸J. C. Smuts to A. J. Balfour, "Memorandum on the Constitution of the British Commonwealth", 1921, Balfour Papers, M.S.49775, p. 210.

⁹Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. 189.

¹⁰Parkinson, Labour Party and Secondary Education, p. 10.

¹¹Ogg, Fisher, pp. 82-83.

¹²Parkinson, Labour Party and Secondary Education, p. 13.

¹³Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁴As in the past these objections included the variations in teachers' salaries, income tax, superannuation schemes, and methods of certification which persisted throughout the Empire. For a summary of the speeches and debates at the 1921 meeting consult the League's Interchange Report, pp. 9-12.

¹⁵Herbert Branston Gray was the headmaster of Bradfield Public School from the eighties until 1913. He consistently sponsored the spirit of efficiency and a devotion to the cause of imperial unity. For details concerning his career and ideas consults S. Gray, Gray of Bradfield: A Memoir (London, 1931); D.N.B. (1922-30), pp. 358-59; Who Was Who (1929-1940), p. 547, and The Times (6 April 1929), p. 15.

¹⁶The Times point of view in this regard was outlined in an editorial which appeared on 7 June 1923, p. 15.

¹⁷Report of I.E.C. 1923, p. 11.

¹⁸Manchester Guardian (26 June 1923), p. 16.

¹⁹The only other major newspaper to cover this conference was the Daily Express which merely noted the opening session in a brief article on 26 June 1923, p. 8.

²⁰For a complete agenda see the Report of I.E.C. 1923, pp. 3-4.

²¹The Times (4 July 1923), p. 16.

²²Ibid. (2 June 1923), p. 13.

²³Report of I.E.C. 1923, pp. 34-37.

²⁴Ibid., p. 227.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 231-32.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 190-199.

²⁷Ibid., p. 275.

²⁸Ibid., p. 285.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Report of the Imperial Education Conference of 1927 (London, 1927), p. 93.

³¹"Imperial Studies Committee", U.E., X (1919), 197.

³²"Imperial Studies", ibid., 36.

³³"Imperial History in Schools", ibid., 90-91.
Consult this source for all future references to this letter.

³⁴Lord Milner to J. Morgan, September-October 1919, Milner Papers, Box 96.

³⁵C.M.B., XIII (8 February 1921), 200.

³⁶I.S.C.M.B., II (30 November 1923).

³⁷Report of I.E.C. 1927, p. 3.

³⁸For this and all subsequent references to this speech consult Lucas, "Meaning of Empire", 110-120.

³⁹For this and all subsequent references to this address consult Lucas, "Teachers and the Empire", U.E., XII (1921), 664.

⁴⁰"Imperial Studies Committee Report to the Council", U.E., XI (1920), 203.

- ⁴¹I.S.C.M.B., II (31 October 1924), 9.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³Reese, History of R.C.S., p. 124.
- ⁴⁴Minutes of a Meeting of the Rhodes Trust, 16 December 1924, #245, found in Milner Papers, Box 95.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., #241, 18 November 1924.
- ⁴⁶C.M.B., XII (20 January 1920), 264.
- ⁴⁷Ibid. (17 February 1920), 286.
- ⁴⁸Ibid. (20 April 1920), 326.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., XII (26 July 1921), 206.
- ⁵⁰Report of I.E.C. 1923, p. 275.
- ⁵¹I.S.C.M.B., II (28 September, 1923), 6.
- ⁵²Ibid. (30 November 1923), 1-2. Consult this source for all subsequent references to Stobart's arguments.
- ⁵³Ibid.
- ⁵⁴Ibid. (31 July 1923), 6.
- ⁵⁵Ibid.
- ⁵⁶Ibid. (30 November 1923), 6.
- ⁵⁷Ibid. (29 May 1925), 58.
- ⁵⁸Ibid.
- ⁵⁹Ibid. (26 June 1925), 59.
- ⁶⁰J. W. Grice, "Making Citizens for the New Empire", U.E., XIV (1923), 481-84.

- ⁶¹G. B. Atkinson, "Public Schools and the Dominions", ibid., XV (1924), 202-203.
- ⁶²D. Algar-Bailey, "Public Schools and the Dominions", ibid., 322-23.
- ⁶³A. R. Pontifex, "Public Schools and the Dominions", ibid., 323.
- ⁶⁴H. Ashton, "Education and Empire", ibid., 356-58.
- ⁶⁵Imperial Studies in Education, ed. E. C. Martin (London, 1924), p. 149.
- ⁶⁶I.S.C.M.B., II (1 June 1923), 2.
- ⁶⁷Ibid.
- ⁶⁸Ibid. (28 September 1923), 7.
- ⁶⁹Imperial Studies in Education, p. iii.
- ⁷⁰I.S.C.M.B., II (29 February 1924), 156.
- ⁷¹Ibid. (27 July 1923), 4.
- ⁷²G. Lagden, "The British Empire Exhibition", U.E., XVI (1925), 135.
- ⁷³Ibid.
- ⁷⁴Imperial Studies in Education, pp. iii, xii.
- ⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 8-11.
- ⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 149-50.
- ⁷⁷Gollin, Proconsul, p. 537.
- ⁷⁸Musgrave, Society and Education, p. 99. Burnham was also chairman of the Board's committee on training colleges in 1924.

⁷⁹Imperial Studies in Education, p. 17.

⁸⁰Ibid. } p. 34.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 18-22.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴For this and all subsequent references to Stobart's criticisms of the conference consult his article "The Child: The Empire", U.E., XVI (1925), 174-76.

⁸⁵I.S.C.M.B., II (27 February 1925), 4.

⁸⁶C. P. Lucas, "The Educational Side", U.E., XVI (1925), 384.

⁸⁷As a symbolic gesture the Institute was re-named the Royal Commonwealth Society in the thirties.

CHAPTER SEVEN
"A SUCCESSION OF SEELEYS"

I

As an organized force the campaign on behalf of imperial education may be said to have petered out at some point in the mid-twenties. Although it is always dangerous to generalize when trying to measure the impact of an idea on any society, in this case the evidence would seem to suggest that the public efforts of the R.C.I. and the two leagues had little or no lasting influence. No wide-spread imperial awakening occurred in Great Britain or the Dominions to reverse the drift toward indifference to the imperial connection. In the early thirties even Lord Beaverbrook, with all of his Fleet Street influence and more modern propaganda techniques, failed to attract mass support for his "Empire Crusade".¹ In our own time the almost complete disintegration of the Empire has prompted little soul-searching in the metropolis or elsewhere and Britain herself has turned to Europe.

Nevertheless the Imperial Studies campaign cannot be written off as a total failure. It must be remembered that an attempt to stoke the fires of imperial patriotism was never the sole objective of Lucas, Newton, and their scholarly colleagues. The campaign which they led was

always deemed to have a particular academic function as well. As historians they were as anxious to promote imperial history as a formal discipline as they were to instil a love of Empire in the general public. However, it must be emphasized that Lucas and his allies did not draw a distinction between their work as propagandists and their efforts as pioneering historians. On the contrary, they saw a direct and intimate relationship between these two aspects of Imperial Studies. Thus imperial history became for them a pedagogical weapon in the battle for public opinion and, conversely, a victory in that battle was viewed as a step toward providing an expanding audience for the new discipline. Accordingly, a discussion of the contributions of Lucas, Newton, and Egerton to the historiography of the British Empire does not constitute a digression from the central narrative of this study but serves to complete the picture being drawn, especially when one considers the fact that the real legacy of Imperial Studies was an historiographical rather than an ideological one. Indeed Lucas and his associates, working from the early model provided by Seeley, helped to establish the conceptual framework, labels, and interpretations which came to characterize the traditional school of imperial history.

In recent years their entire synthesis has come under attack from many quarters. It has even been suggested

that this approach to imperial history was tractarian in nature and reflected not historical reality but the fears, hopes, and aspirations of Edwardian imperialists who twisted history to serve their own immediate ends.² The same has been said of their arch-rival, J. A. Hobson, whose ideas have been minutely examined in the context of the times in which they were formulated.³ Curiously, however, there has been no real attempt to assess the motivations and ideas of Lucas, Newton, and Egerton. Yet we have seen that they too were anything but armchair historians. Rather they were imperial activists who saw themselves locked in a life and death struggle with the forces of indifference and Hobsonian anti-imperialism. They pictured themselves standing at a crossroads in the history of the Empire and threw their energies into a scheme designed to publicize and preserve the imperial creed which they held so dear.

In the opinion of this triumvirate the historian had a positive and impelling duty to assist in the fashioning of contemporary public opinion. To Lucas, Newton, and Egerton, the central issue of the day was that of preserving imperial unity by means of an appeal to sentiment through what they termed "Imperial Studies". Lucas aptly summed up their ideas. "Want of belief", he once wrote,

by an Englishman in the value of the Empire in normal times is due partly to revolt against the unwise vapourings of unwise writers and speakers, and partly to a want of knowledge.⁴

He concluded that in the midst of this general confusion and ignorance it was the function of the historian to provide clear concepts and purposeful direction. "We need", Lucas wrote,

a succession of Seeleys to teach strongly and soberly the evolution of what is called by the somewhat repellent term Empire, to teach it not as a subject for boasting . . . but as a thing vital to our national existence, and as our own special contribution to history.⁵

As historians, Lucas, Egerton, and Newton, regarded themselves as the heirs of Sir John Robert Seeley. They felt that their own work was merely an extension and perpetuation of Seeley's ideas and interpretations. Seeley was revered by them as the master who had made the clearest pronouncements concerning the nature and principles of British imperialism and had shown the way to all future historians who wished actively to promote the cause of Empire. They congratulated themselves on adding flesh to the skeletal outline of imperial history sketched by Seeley in the eighties.

II

Seeley's thoughts on the connection between education and the Empire have already been noted; so have his ideas about the relationship between history and politics and the relative worthlessness of emotion and literary technique as historical tools. He was concerned to establish an "inductive science of history and politics" and employed his most famous work, The Expansion of England, to elaborate upon this theme. His focus was on the evolution of the Empire as an expression of the English state and it was with these thoughts in mind that Seeley took up his pen in 1883.

The book began with a statement of his theories about history and politics. Seeley made clear his intention to isolate, identify, and trace the governing theme in the history of the English state over the preceding two centuries. "No one", he wrote, "can long study history without being haunted by the idea of development, of progress."⁶ The evidence of progress was manifest in the position of England in world affairs and her leadership in the arts of industry and commerce. What, he asked, had been the primary expression of this progress? How could it be traced? How does one make sense of England's past and in what direction was she headed?

Seeley immediately cast aside the views of those historians who had seen liberty and democracy as the central

threads of modern British history. These themes, he contended, were not continuous, nor did they span the two centuries that he examined. The real unifying theme, the true continuity of English history, was to be found in the expansion of the British state overseas. He castigated historians for missing this vital point through their indifference to Greater Britain. "We seem", he wrote in perhaps his most celebrated passage, "to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind."⁸ He avoided making any value judgements about British expansion and instead stated that "good or bad it is evidently the great fact of modern English history".⁹

Greater Britain was equated by Seeley with a simple enlargement of the English nation state. It was not a collection of dissimilar appendages artificially tacked on helter-skelter to the main body of the state. Properly understood, he said,

our Empire is not an Empire at all in the ordinary sense of the word. It does not consist of a congeries of nations held together by force, but in the main of one nation, as much as if it were no Empire but an ordinary state.¹⁰

For the most part Seeley's attention was riveted upon the white Anglo-Saxon settlement colonies. For this reason it was easy for him to maintain that this vast English nation was homogeneous throughout and founded on the transmission of British institutions and the British sense

of nationality. He merely glossed over the French-Canadian and Boer elements within the Empire as minor exceptions to the general rule. Given this vision of an imperial nation-state, Seeley argued that the old questions regarding the expense of maintaining the Empire should never arise. If people were once taught to regard the Empire as a simple extension of England, they would never ask whether the colonies "paid" just as they would never ask whether Dorset or Cornwall "paid".¹¹ Seeley drove the point home in one of his most frequently cited passages:

When we have accustomed ourselves to contemplate the whole Empire together and call it England, we shall see that here too is a United States. Here too is a great homogeneous people, one in blood, language, religion, and laws, but dispersed over boundless space.¹²

Seeley traced the development of this nation from its origins to the American Revolution after which there was supposedly a lull in expansion. He denied Turgot's theory that it was as inevitable that mature colonies would separate from the mother country as it was for ripe apples to fall from a tree. This argument, he contended, had been the chief weapon in the hands of the pessimists of the "Free Trade Era" which followed the collapse of the "Old Colonial System".¹³ Instead, Seeley maintained that the American Revolution was the product of specific historical circumstances which could be studied and guarded against in the future. The dissolution of the Empire, then, was not in-

evitable. On the contrary, he saw the history of the Empire entering a new phase in his own day. The dark days of alleged laissez-faire indifference were being succeeded by the dawn of an era in which federalism would be the guiding imperial principle.¹⁴ Indeed, in his view, large federated empires were not outmoded but represented the wave of the future. In the context of his own age, therefore, Seeley felt that Britain had only two recourses open to her: she could either federate her Empire or decline to the status of a second-rate power.

In Seeley's view, however, a movement toward federation need not involve the creation of an aggressive, jingoistic spirit. The whole tone of the Expansion is one of studied moderation. The glorification of size, unstinted praise for the empire builders, and arguments for maintaining the Empire as a matter of honour and sentiment, these are strictly avoided. In describing the territorial holdings of Britain Seeley was careful to point out that he did not quote these figures in order to gratify national pride.¹⁵ He did, however, take pains to demonstrate that the empire was not the product of aggression and rapacity and that it did not constitute a dangerous burden better cast off.

As evidence of this he pointed to India. The sub-continent, he maintained, was the only part of the Empire that was really an Empire at all.¹⁶ In other words, it was not an expansion of the English state but a foreign

territory held in trust. In Seeley's opinion there was no "White Man's Burden" to be born in India. In fact he held a very high regard for Indian culture and civilization. Britain's justification for retaining control of the sub-continent was the role which she played as a force preventing anarchy. Her reward for fulfilling this difficult duty was the fact that India produced enough revenue to more than pay the cost of British administration. In none of this, Seeley continued, was there to be found any evidence of naked aggression or ruthless exploitation.

In summary, Seeley portrayed the growth of the British Empire as a natural and largely pacific phenomenon which constituted the major theme of modern English history. He had justified the Empire and prescribed the means to make it permanent. Seeley concluded with the statement that there was "something fantastic" about suggestions of abandoning the Empire. "Do we think", he wrote, "that we can turn the flow of two centuries of growth by a whim?"¹⁷ He assured his readers that they were controlled far more than they realised by the march of time and the force of historical circumstances. As one observer has recently commented:

Under Seeley's influence, the progress of the British Empire came to be regarded as an inexorable evolutionary process marked by almost inevitable, predetermined stages as the Empire turned into the Commonwealth through the genius of responsible government in one age and dominion status in another.¹⁸

This same reviewer has argued that Seeley had promoted the notion that Britain had a providential destiny which was revealed in imperial growth.¹⁹ This is a fairly accurate assessment of the way in which his contemporaries interpreted Seeley's work. Similarly, Lucas, Egerton, and Newton, saw the Expansion in this light. It seemed to afford a rational, dispassionate justification of their own emotional commitment to the cause of Empire.

As we have seen, however, Seeley himself, in spite of what others thought, was not advocating that Britons rely on any supposed evolutionary principle or providential destiny. He was trying to outline what he thought were the concrete historical factors which affected the growth and development of the Empire in order that they might be understood. Just as he believed that there was nothing inevitable about the collapse of empires so also there was nothing guaranteeing the unity of Greater Britain. Seeley was no fatalist. He deplored complacency and men who trusted in vague notions of racial destiny. In a similar vein he felt that to proclaim the doctrine of hero-worship as others had with respect to the empire-builders was to despair of society.²⁰ It was a sign of pessimism and of a lack of faith in ordinary men to control their own lives.

In large measure, Seeley's ideas were taken out of context by his own generation and the next and were used to bolster views in which he had little or no faith at all.

Indeed he was perhaps one of the least understood imperial thinkers of the late Victorian period. For instance, it was never clearly realized by his contemporaries or his supposed heirs that Seeley was not an out-and-out imperialist. In describing the growth of the British Empire he was careful to point out that it was far from a unique phenomenon. This expansion, he noted, was a European as well as an English development.²¹ Greater Britain, he argued, was the sole survivor of a whole family of European empires founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Britain's success in this venture was the result not of any special racial qualities but of fortunate historical circumstances. Thus, he continued, if one is to understand British imperial history one must study it in relation to general European developments.

In fact Seeley staunchly maintained that the study of history had to be international in scope and orientation.²² His own outlook was Eurocentric and he viewed Europe as an international society whose history must be studied as a whole. Seeley condemned parochialism in any form whether it was reflected in an obsession with British domestic or imperial history. He looked forward to the day when Europe would be united in a federal association -- a new United States.²³ Seeley's internationalism was obscured by those who read only the Expansion and ignored his other works. In truth, to be clearly understood, the Expansion

must be set beside his Growth of British Policy (1895). It was in this latter work that Seeley portrayed Britain and her expanding Empire as part of a developing European state system. Of course there was a superficial contradiction in all this. Seeley seemed to be preaching internationalism and urging Britain to develop her own independent security at the same time. It is probable, however, that he saw a strong Empire as Britain's only guarantee of equality in the projected union of Europe.

Thus, Seeley's historical and imperial ideas were far from simple. In addition they were difficult to grasp as a totality because they were slowly developed in a number of different publications over a long period of time, indeed from 1865 (Ecce Homo) to 1896 (Introduction to Political Science). It was perhaps inevitable, therefore, that he would be misunderstood and it is significant that he is remembered almost exclusively for the Expansion.

Lucas, Egerton, and Newton were not unique in seeing themselves as the disciples of Seeley in spite of the major differences between their assumptions and his. From Seeley they were to draw their conceptual framework of imperial history and their conviction that the historian's primary function was to shape citizens. They also adopted Seeley's highly political, consitutional, and seemingly Anglocentric approach. Similarly they shared with him the

conviction that the achievement of imperial unity was the greatest issue of their day. In like manner they too insisted that history must deal with grand themes and that the study of the Empire's development must be viewed as a whole and not fragmented into isolated regional studies. As will be seen, however, they gratuitously added a great deal to Seeley's vision of imperial history which their erstwhile mentor would have disavowed. In fact, while they owed much to Seeley, they also drew inspiration, apparently unconsciously from a wide range of other sources.

III

Lucas, Egerton, and Newton shared a wide range of assumptions concerning the manner in which imperial history should be written. Like Seeley they firmly believed that the tendency to treat imperial history as a mere sub-field subordinate to domestic English history was symptomatic of a deep-seated misunderstanding of the true significance of the Empire's growth. Properly understood, they all insisted, imperial history was English history.²⁴ In effect they called upon historians to accept Seeley's premise that the colonies were extensions of England itself and not mere appendages to be dealt with in the back pages of textbooks. As Lucas put it, "true English history is the

record of the human growth of an island into an Empire".²⁵
In his estimation domestic history was a subject to be studied in preparation for a deeper investigation of England's destiny beyond the seas.

A Canadian historian, Carl Berger, has recently remarked with justice that "a determined mental effort was required to grasp the interrelationships and see the geographical reality of Empire".²⁶ Lucas, Newton, and Egerton seem to have been aware of this problem. In part their educational campaign represented an effort to clarify the situation by popularizing their own vision. It was for this reason that they placed such a heavy emphasis on Seeley's contention that the Empire was no "mechanical forced union" but a genuine expansion of the English nation. This was the very core of their historical concept of the Empire. Seeley had expressed this outward movement of the English people not in terms of racial destiny or providential design but as an enlargement of the British state. His was primarily a political explanation of this growth. For their part, Lucas, Egerton, and Newton took a similar yet somewhat different view.

They maintained that the Empire was the result of "organic growth". All three of these men employed the term regularly, but none of them ever really spelled out its precise meaning and implications. It seems to have been something which they all took for granted and did not feel

compelled to define at length. In his general introduction to Newton's The Old Empire and the New, published in 1917 at the zenith of the R.C.I.'s campaign, Lucas attempted to outline his philosophy of organic growth. "The British Empire", he wrote,

is a great and beneficial organism of which we in this country form the inmost part. It is unique alike in kind and extent, the result of growth to which no parallel can be found.²⁷

At first glance all this might appear as the purest version of Seeley. Certainly Lucas thought that this was the case. Seeley, nevertheless, would have taken strong objection to the idea that the Empire was unique and had no parallels in history. Ignoring Seeley's internationalism, however, Lucas, Newton, and Egerton simply seized on his assertion that the Empire was not an artificial development. Lucas drew on Seeley when he wrote that the "British Commonwealth is the outcome of growth, that the Empire with all its diversities, is an immeasurably enlarged version of an island".²⁸ He and his associates went beyond Seeley in their description of the Empire as a living organism. As Newton put it, the Empire was an organism unto itself. "Just as in the body", he wrote

the cells perform many functions in widely different ways, so the Empire which has grown in adapting itself to diverse conditions, and has vastly changed as it has grown, yet remains the same in being. To compare it to a living organism is to use no far-fetched metaphor.²⁹

Lucas continually pressed the point that the Empire was "not the creation of a government or a ruler, but the result of the growth of a people".³⁰ In consequence, the imperial organism was something greater than the sum of all its parts and had a life and meaning of its own.³¹

The theory of organic imperialism was not an original creation of these three Edwardian historians. In truth, it owed more to J. A. Froude than to Lucas, Egerton, Newton, or Seeley. In his English in the West Indies Froude had compared the West Indies to links or "half-organic fragments" in the great corporate body of the Empire.³² "The West Indies", he wrote,

are a small limb in the great body corporate of the British Empire, but there is no great and small in the life of nations. The avoidable decay of the smallest member is an injury to the whole.³³

Indeed he maintained that so intimate was the nature of this organic Empire that "if we pinch a finger, the smart is felt in the brain".³⁴ In the late nineties Kaitie had described the empire as "one great whole, an organism which must have room for development and expansion".³⁵ Milner was fond of employing the same analogy in the pre-war years.³⁶ In short, this was an idea which long had been circulating and it did not really originate with Seeley as Lucas and his colleagues seem to have assumed.

This rather vague notion of organic growth had distinct advantages for historians like Lucas and his

colleagues who sought to defend the good name of the Empire against the slanders of Hobson and his followers. By maintaining that the growth of the Empire was evolutionary in nature and the product of natural rather than artificial forces its development could be portrayed as the work of an entire people, rather than as the simple product of greed, aggression, or class interest.³⁷ Lucas and the others wished to dissociate the Empire from the image of militarism and blatant domination which it had acquired since the South African War.³⁸ Time and time again they stressed the point that Britain's overseas dominions had been procured not as the result of design or conquest, but as the outcome of peaceful and natural expansion.³⁹ Since the Empire had no parallels in history it could not be judged by the standards applied to other imperial powers and could not be equated with Napoleonic, Belgian, or German imperialism.

In this connection they do not appear to have taken any notice of Joseph Schumpeter's comparative study of imperialism, which was published, in German, in 1919. If they had read it they would most likely have rejected its conclusions out of hand since Schumpeter emphasized the periodic reappearance of a militaristic atavism as the dynamic force behind imperialism.⁴⁰ In one sense, however, Schumpeter and the men of Imperial Studies were in agreement. They all rejected Hobson's thesis that imperialism was the result of a capitalist plot. Lucas in particular

took pains to demonstrate that it had nothing to do with the supposed acquisitive character of capitalism. After all, he said, all men are capitalists in the sense that they want to profit from their labours.⁴¹ There was, he argued, nothing sinister or unhealthy in this. In following their urge for legitimate gain those Englishmen who had travelled beyond the seas had merely answered the call of a fundamental instinct.⁴² Indeed, he argued as had so many imperialists before him, that Christianity, commerce, and civilization went hand in hand and were inseparable as motives for the establishment of the British Empire.⁴³

Hobson had asked the question "cui bono?" because he believed that man was essentially a rational creature. Lucas, Egerton, and Nowton, however, were not troubled by this question. None of them ever wrote anything directly concerning their view of human nature. It is clear, however, that they saw the basic driving force behind imperialism as an irrational, emotional, and instinctive one. In their view the urge to expand was the result not so much of conscious planning as of a deeply ingrained racial instinct which operated independently on governments or individuals. This seems to have been the meaning which they attached to Seeley's "absence of mind" quip.

The degree to which they parted company from Seeley can be measured by Lucas's assertion that the Empire

"has all been a matter of natural growth, and the particular genius of our British stock has lain in following the lines of natural growth".⁴⁴ Here was Lucas garbling the message of his master, appealing to racial arguments and urging his fellow countrymen to forego long-range planning and to rely on their supposed age old talent for "muddling through". Like so many others, Newton, Lucas, and Egerton thought that they had found in Seeley an argument portraying the expansion of England as an irresistible, inevitable, and evolutionary process.

In a series of lectures on the British Empire, delivered to the Working Men's College in 1915, Lucas traced the development of this racial instinct for expansion. His presentation had all the characteristics of a stirring Wagnerian romance. Deep in the misty recesses of time the race had been strengthened by the injection of the imperial Roman strain.⁴⁵ The Danes and Saxons had later combined to give this spirit of adventure a maritime orientation.⁴⁶ The Normans augmented the roving urge in English blood to the extent that the Elizabethans "sucked in the instinct of maritime enterprise with their mother's milk".⁴⁷ In turn, the growth of the Empire was then compared with the coming of age by a man and the founding of a family.⁴⁸

Thus racial instinct and racial virtues, not capitalist greed or militaristic conquest, accounted for the

peaceful, organic growth of the Empire. Like Froude, the exponents of Imperial Studies emphasized the values of Elizabethan enterprise, at least as they saw them. Newton, like the others, argued that the basic traits of character which led the race to expand in the days of Elizabeth remained unchanged throughout the ages. "The present", he wrote, "is the child of the past; times change, but the same ancestral traits are there."⁴⁹

Unlike Froude, however, Lucas, Newton, and Egerton were not concerned about the effect of industrial society on these instinctual characteristics of the race. Froude had felt that he was witnessing the deterioration of those values which had inspired Elizabethan enterprise. The impact of industrial, urban society was, in his opinion, sapping the strength and the will of the nation.⁵⁰ Froude contrasted the invigorating life of English colonists with the bleak existence of "our poor helots at home [who] drag on their lives in the lanes and alleys of our choking cities".⁵¹ Imperialists of a later period echoed his concerns. For his part Rosebery was convinced that "an Empire such as ours requires as its first condition an imperial race -- a race vigorous and industrious and intrepid".⁵² He was of the opinion that a truly imperial race could not be bred in the "rookeries and slums" which still survived in England.⁵³ Thus, he, Milner and

Chamberlain all argued that social reform was an immediate prerequisite of imperial survival.

The leaders of Imperial Studies, however, assumed that the instincts governing imperial growth were immutable and invulnerable to stress. They needed only to be awakened in the new rulers of the nation in order to blossom. Consequently, social reform was never an element in their thought. They merely argued that the workers' prejudices against the Empire were the products of historical misconceptions fostered by ignorance and misinformation. All that had to be done, therefore, was to set the record straight by elucidating the true principles of imperial growth. This was the function of the historian. Like Seeley and Froude, they contended that the expense involved in maintaining the Empire would never be questioned if people were taught to regard it as a simple extension of England herself.

In the minds of Lucas and his colleagues the concept of organic growth also served to answer the charge that the Empire was too diverse ever to be considered as a whole. In Newton's opinion the casual observer was constantly misled by the plethora of forms and practices within the Empire.⁵⁴ In fact, he suggested, diversity was a natural and healthy phenomenon. It made for vitality within the fabric of the Empire and allowed each region to realise its full potential while remaining a part of the greater whole.⁵⁵

Lucas was fond of employing the family analogy in explaining how unity and diversity could be harmonized. The various members of the Empire were, in his view, like children of the parent stock. As they grew older and more independent, a certain amount of friction was bound to develop, as it does in any evolving family relationship.⁵⁶ The basic loyalties of the family, however, would always remain to bind the members together, even after they left home. Consequently, Lucas and his associates had no fears regarding the growth of dominion demands for autonomy.

This particular theme was an old one in imperial thought. Curiously, it had been voiced in the past most often by those figures who had come to be identified with the policy of separation. Goldwin Smith was a particular target of abuse at the hands of the exponents of Imperial Studies. Newton once described him as the foremost spokesman of "Little Englandism", a point of view which he equated with narrow, money-grasping anti-imperialism.⁵⁷ Smith was denigrated as the leader of a school which was "entirely oblivious of all sentiment or sympathy with kin".⁵⁸

In reality there was little to differentiate the attitudes of Smith from those of the Imperial Studies group who castigated him for indifference. To be sure, Smith had urged the political separation of the colonies from the Motherland. On the other hand, the leaders of Imperial Studies themselves placed little faith in constitutional

ties. There was, however, a great deal more to Smith than Newton's rather superficial analysis would suggest. There was a large area of agreement between the two of which Newton appeared not to have been aware.

As noted, the supposedly bloodless and unfeeling Smith employed the same racial and emotional arguments about the essential unity of the Empire that Lucas, Newton, and Egerton would later adopt. That this element in Smith's thought was overlooked by these historians is not surprising. After all he was traditionally identified with separation and these men were great adopters of labels. In fact, however, they seem to have been able to harmonize, unconsciously perhaps, any and all ideas favourable to the Empire with their own particular views. In spite of this eclecticism, however, they persisted in the belief that they were pure Seeleyites. Yet, as we have seen, even that supposed arch anti-imperialist, Gladstone, held views on imperial unity which were very similar to their own. In fact, their historical thought concerning the Empire was a synthesis of a wide variety of old ideas couched in evolutionary terms. There was much fatalism in their thinking. It was, however, not a fatalism characterized by dour forbodings but by an optimistic reliance on providential guidance and productive racial instincts.

IV

The basic, if rather loosely defined, assumptions of Newton and his colleagues concerning imperial history were reflected in the format and interpretations which they developed. Their most typical historical production was the general survey based on a chronological and topical approach; they were not given to writing narrow monographs or case studies. Attention was consistently and systematically focused on the general development of the Empire. How else, they asked, could the theme of organic evolution be portrayed? How else could imperial history be developed as a tool for promoting a spirit of unity? As Egerton explained it, there were two possible approaches to a subject as vast as imperial history. One could departmentalize it and study its various elements in isolation, or one could focus on the grand sweep of imperial growth by dwelling on selected principles and facts. Egerton and his associates at the R.C.I. assumed that a synthetic approach to the history of the Empire was not only possible, but mandatory. Modern historians have, by and large, drifted away from this emphasis on general principles and have indulged in the production of limited monographs which demonstrate a complexity in imperial history that was lacking in the work of Egerton and his associates.⁵⁹ Un-

doubtedly, this recent trend is partly the result of disillusionment with the inability of current revisionists to construct a new and viable synthesis after toppling the old one fashioned in the era of Imperial Studies.

Such problems, however, did not confront the exponents of Imperial Studies. Egerton claimed that there were a number of broad principles discovered by Seeley which could guide the imperial historian in his selection of facts and themes. These were the growth and decline of the Mercantile System, the development of responsible government, and the rise of the federal principle.⁶⁰ For the most part, these principles of selection became the orthodoxy of Imperial Studies and of generations of historians to come. They were fully outlined in Egerton's classic, A Short History of British Colonial Policy, published in 1897.

In this work Egerton maintained that the Navigation Act of 1651 had established an attitude towards colonies known as mercantilism.⁶¹ This ushered in the "period of trade ascendancy"-during which colonies were relegated to a subordinate place in the imperial economic and political system.⁶² This subordinate status was the cause of the American Revolution, after which a note of timidity crept into Britain's imperial policy.⁶³ This bleak outlook, however, was partially dispelled by the development of the theory of systematic colonization by the so-called "Colonial

Reformers", headed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Charles Buller, and Lord Durham.⁶⁴ Here, in Egerton's estimation, were some heroes who had kept the gospel of Empire intact during a period when the debilitating anti-imperialism of the "Manchester School" free traders had threatened to stifle the instinct for organic growth.⁶⁵

According to Egerton the period of systematic colonization was short-lived and soon succumbed to the general triumph of laissez-faire. The dark days of Manchester's indifference were swept away by militarism on the Continent and by the inspiring words of Seeley at a later date.⁶⁶ The search began for a federal solution to the problem of imperial unity, expansion was resumed and Britain entered into her true inheritance as an imperial nation.⁶⁷ Thus did Egerton adopt a synthetic approach to imperial history.

Newton like Egerton, insisted on an Anglo-centric general thematic approach to imperial history.⁶⁸ His method, as he frequently explained, was not geographical, as was the case in many imperial works. "If that method is adopted", he argued, "and the history of each part of the Empire is traced independently in succession, it fatally obscures the integral unity of the story."⁶⁹ That integral unity, of course, was supplied by the process of organic

growth. Spector tells us that Newton eschewed theorizing,⁷⁰ but, in fact, he was one of the foremost exponents of organic imperialism.

Newton's viewpoint was Anglo-centric and he contrasted the mere history of the colonies with true colonial history. "The subject", he wrote,

has frequently been confused with the history of the colonies, and has thus often become merely a collection of disconnected narratives of events in certain of the European communities beyond the seas, . . . ; it is in reality something quite different and much broader in character, and deals with the sequence of domestic events in the various oversea communities only when those events had some direct bearing upon the common life of the empires concerned.⁷¹

This concern with reflecting the integral unity of imperial history was quite natural in men who were trying to introduce their discipline to the educational system and the public at large. The grand, all-embracing survey was the vehicle they chose to illustrate their theory of organic growth and to drive home the lessons they tried to teach. As Newton put it, "this method . . . brings out that there is really a history of the Empire as a whole, which is more than the sum total of each of its parts".⁷²

It should be noted, however, that Lucas was a late convert to this particular approach. His own first historical effort, prior to his joining the R.C.I. in 1912, typified the very fault which Newton and Egerton later denounced. Lucas wrote a number of volumes and served

as general editor of a series entitled A Historical Geography of the British Colonies. They were all of a piece; capsule historical and geographical descriptions of the various colonies of the Empire, each viewed largely in isolation.⁷³ The contrast between this series and his The British Empire: Six Lectures, published in 1915, was marked by his adoption of a synthetic approach, which, undoubtedly, was due to Newton's and Egerton's growing influence.

Newton, like his colleagues, took a political and constitutional approach to the study of imperial history. This, of course, was to be expected from men who subscribed to Seeley's dictum that history's public function was to serve as the school of politics. As Egerton pointed out, his principles of selection were designed to be "of real use for the practical work of Imperial citizenship".⁷⁴ Some lip service was paid to the need to incorporate economic and social considerations into the body of imperial history⁷⁵ and, in fact, Newton once roundly denounced other historians for ignoring these factors.⁷⁶ Yet even in his The Empire Since 1783, which was supposed to rectify this fault, he provided little beyond a token analysis of economic and social factors in the course of his essentially political narrative.

It is indeed ironic that these historians, who had so little faith in the ability of constitutional methods to

produce imperial unity in their own day, wrote almost exclusively on constitutional and political themes. In the changes from mercantilistic centralism to partial self-government, and finally to the full autonomy of the dominions, they felt that they had perceived a genuine and irresistible line of constitutional evolution. The Empire, in short, was evolving from one of total subordination of one part to another into one of full partnership. The key to an understanding of imperial history, therefore, lay in following this constitutional theme, which was the outward expression of organic growth and the racial instinct for liberty.

These historians never quite spelled out this conclusion in such explicit terms, but the assumption was there. Yet, as has been seen, they had all come to the conclusion that constitutional and political methods were failing to produce imperial unity in their own day. Curiously, however, this never undermined their faith in the future of what they supposed to be the inevitably beneficial outcome of imperial evolution. As God Martin has remarked in a recent study, Lucas, with his unshakable faith in the perfectability of political man, read history as a whig historian.⁷⁷ Thus, in his eyes progress was inevitable and all history was marching toward some happy consummation. In imperial terms this progress could be measured by constitutional advancement within the Empire. As should be obvious by now, the

same assumptions were shared by Egerton and Newton.

Within the framework supplied by this general, political approach they developed a number of themes and labels which long served as the orthodoxy of imperial historians. Egerton's contribution in this respect has already been mentioned. Lucas elaborated on his ideas in his Six Lectures, where he developed the theme of racial instinct.⁷⁸ His Religion, Colonizing, and Trade, published in 1930, was an attempt to demonstrate the peaceful and natural quality of the motives which went into the construction of the old Empire.⁷⁹ More will be said later in this connection, concerning his edition of the Durham Report.

For the moment, it would be wise to confine our attention to the general surveys published by Newton, in order that the detailed structure of the format and concepts developed by this group may be brought into clearer focus. If Egerton provided the rough draft, then Newton filled in the details. It is a measure of the depth of his conviction concerning the organic evolution of the Empire and his blindness to the realization of imperial disintegration that no perceptible change of outlook or approach is discernible in the corpus of Newton's writings, even though he continued to write until the 1930s. He produced three general surveys of imperial history, one in 1917, another in 1929 and yet another in 1938, each of which is marked by the same con-

ceptual framework and optimistic view of the future. Indeed, all three are virtually identical.

In The Old Empire and the New, published in 1917 at the zenith of the Imperial Studies campaign, Newton drew his readers' attention to the theme of the organic continuity of imperial growth.⁸⁰ In spite of the lulls which had occurred in imperial growth from time to time, Newton assured his readers that, in reality, the old ancestral traits of maritime enterprise never died and that there was a perceptible and basic unity of movement.⁸¹ He was confident that none could deprive the Empire of the spiritual unity which had been built up over the centuries and that "the empire of our dreams" was as viable as ever.⁸²

1929 witnessed the publication of Newton's The British Empire Since 1783, a work sponsored by the R.C.I. It was intended to provide an analysis of the economic and social forces moulding the Empire but it lapsed into the same old political narrative. The history of the Empire was divided into periods and various groups were labelled "Colonial Reformers" or "Little Englanders", depending on Newton's estimate of their positive or negative influence on the process of organic evolution. This whole question of periodization and labelling will be dealt with in the discussion of Newton's A Hundred Years of the British Empire, which was a classic statement. For the moment, however, it must be pointed out that even in 1929 Newton

could perceive no threat to the fundamental unity of the Empire. Speaking of the impact of the Great War on imperial relations, he felt confident that the dominions would perpetually continue to value the well-being of the imperial organism above their own narrow national interests.⁸³ So unshakeable was his optimism that he did not consider the Chanak crisis of 1922 worthy of mention.

This same optimism is apparent in his A Hundred Years of the British Empire published in 1940. In complete disregard of the weakening of imperial ties between the wars, Newton could still describe the Empire as a living organism, unique in history, and still full of vitality.⁸⁴ Thornton would have us believe that Newton portrayed the growth of the Empire as a peaceful, natural process because he was influenced by the need to keep the national reputation unsullied at a time when Britain was engaged in delicate negotiations with Germany.⁸⁵ Yet the evidence adduced so far would seem to indicate that he was merely restating an old and favourite platitude; the whole pattern of imperial history, as developed by Newton and his colleagues in the Imperial Studies campaign, was once more elucidated.

After the American Revolution there was, according to Newton, a period of disenchantment during which the Treasury and colonial officials proved unwilling to shoulder any additional imperial responsibilities.⁸⁶ The only

glimmer of hope in the 1830s was offered by a resolute band of "Colonial Reformers", led by Wakefield and Durham.⁸⁷ This was the period labelled by Egerton as the era of systematic colonization, which had followed the collapse of the "Old Colonial System".⁸⁸ The key date in this era was 1839 when Durham's report was published.

The next transition point in the framework was 1846. This brought the introduction of Free Trade and the debilitating influence of the so-called "Manchester School" under Cobden and Bright. These were dark days for the Empire and "the commercial classes", wrote Newton, "ceased to think imperially".⁸⁹ Indeed, the wheel of Empire was coming full circle, as the Manchester industrialists repeated the folly of the old mercantilists by evaluating the Empire solely in commercial terms. "The old policy", wrote Newton,

had proved false because empire involves something more than commercial profit, the new policy . . . was just as commercial and it took twenty years before the true implications of Britain's inescapable imperial destiny again began to appear in the utterances of our leaders.⁹⁰

True believers in the imperial credo as they were, Lucas, Newton, and Egerton did not hesitate to dispense praise and blame. The men of the "period of laissez-aller principles" were condemned as "Little Englanders", a term synonymous with the policy of the "Manchester School". Nevertheless, this era was not one of total darkness. The

whole atmosphere of supposed metropolitan indifference had one salutary side effect. It allowed for the blossoming of responsible government and, in the case of Canada, autonomy, which was the fulfilment of Durham's report and the wave of the future.

According to Newton, however, the tide finally turned in favour of Empire in 1872. It was at this juncture that Disraeli supposedly "voiced the feelings of most Englishmen" in his Crystal Palace Speech, and took advantage of a new wave of imperial idealism.⁹¹ This was all, it was said, part of a general shift towards a healthy imperialism, founded not on commercial considerations, but on pride of race and a sense of mission. It signalled the opening of a new era.⁹² Thus the "New Imperialism" was born in an atmosphere of spiritual and moral dedication to the fulfilment of Britain's imperial destiny. In spite of his own experience in the difficulty of reaching the democracy with the message of Empire, Newton could write of this phenomenon in terms which implied a mass conversion to the imperial creed. "Never again", he wrote, "could they leave imperial affairs to be only the concern of the specialists, and henceforward they were always near the centre of British ideas."⁹³ The march of imperial history toward the greater unity of the Empire was evolutionary in nature and could not be reversed.⁹⁴ The pattern of imperial growth was following the path outlined by Lord Durham, whom Newton and his

colleagues took to be the father of the Commonwealth.

The mention of the heroic Durham, requires some additional comment. As J. S. Galbraith has noted, the interpretation of imperial history fostered by Newton, Lucas, and Egerton owed a great deal to the viewpoints expressed by Wakefield, Durham, and other so-called "Colonial Reformers" of the 1830s.⁹⁵ In large measure the proponents of Imperial Studies accepted their views at face value. In turn this adopted outlook coloured very deeply their interpretation of early and mid-Victorian imperialism. Since this is the very aspect of their conceptual framework which has been the butt of most revisionists, it would be well to take a closer look at the attitude of Lucas and his associates towards Durham in particular.

All three historians were quick to praise the "Colonial Reformers" as prophets of the Commonwealth in an age dominated by the "Little Englandism" of the "Manchester School" of free trade. For his part, Egerton edited a collection of Sir William Molesworth's speeches on colonial reform in 1903.⁹⁶ The clearest expression of the group's admiration for the "Colonial Reformers", however, is to be found in Lucas' edition of the Durham Report, published in 1912.⁹⁷ Volume one constituted his introduction which amounted to a veritable hymn of praise for a man who was the "father of the system of colonial self-government".⁹⁸

In an era blighted by the narrow self-interest of Manchester principles, Durham, in Lucas' eyes, stood out as a beacon of "strong and healthy imperialism".⁹⁹ His brief experience in Canada was lauded as an outstanding application of constructive attitudes to Empire. Durham's mission was to search for a solution to political and social problems in Upper and Lower Canada which had given rise to the abortive rebellion of 1837. His views on these matters were set down in his now famous Report of 1839. They were a constructive legacy for the future. "In this constructiveness", wrote Lucas,

he [Durham] has beyond any other man illustrated in writing the genius of the British race. It is as a race of makers that the English will live to all time, and it is as a prophet of a race of makers that Lord Durham lives.¹⁰⁰

The recommendations in the report were interpreted by Lucas as the foundation of the future federal approach to imperial constitutional unity. He was enough of an historian to realize that Durham had not invented the idea of responsible government for Canada.¹⁰¹ It was not to the specific clauses of the report that Lucas looked for Durham's lasting contribution. It was to the spirit of constructive federalism implicit in the report that he drew his readers' attention. The broad, far-seeing outlook adopted by Durham was evidence of "the courage and insight, amounting to genius, with which he gave to the world the doctrine of responsible government, not as a prelude to

the creation of separate peoples, but as the cornerstone upon which a single and undivided British Empire should be reared to abiding strength".¹⁰²

It was as though Durham had glimpsed the future and had foretold all, in spite of the indifference and hostility of his contemporaries to the colonies. Lucas maintained that the report was too outspoken for the anti-imperial Whig government of the day. Durham is portrayed as "a better and broader Englishman than Brougham" who spoke for those who sought to abandon Canada in the Parliamentary debate on the report.¹⁰³ For a time Durham's was a voice crying in the wilderness and no immediate action was taken on his suggestions. Nevertheless, his impact on the course of later imperial development was formidable. Indeed, Lucas maintains that the whole process whereby responsible government and later full autonomy was granted to the great settlement colonies was consciously founded on the principles enunciated by Durham.¹⁰⁴ In short, Durham was one of those few individuals who kept the imperial instinct alive until it could blossom at a later date.

Lucas further contended that valuable lessons could still be drawn from the timeless ideals of Durham. He went so far as to consult the report as a guide in dealing with contemporary problems in Ireland. Durham had recommended self-government for the alien racial element in Lower Canada but not Home Rule, a phrase he seems to have

equated with the sundering of imperial ties. Could this solution not be applied to the seemingly analogous situation in Ireland? Lucas concluded that it was "a mistake over to have given it [Ireland] any shred of separate treatment".¹⁰⁵ The Empire must be viewed and treated as a whole, with no favouritism; Ireland must be content, he argued, with self-government.

Thus, for Lucas, the timeless value of the report was proven time and time again. Britons, he warned, must never lose sight of Durham's message; they must never again allow themselves to become mired in the mud of "Little Englandism". "If", Lucas wrote,

England continues to be inspired by what Lord Durham taught so well, then as Great Britain has grown into Greater Britain, so Greater Britain will grow into Greatest Britain, to the glory of God the Creator, and to the well-being of mankind.¹⁰⁶

In the hands of Lucas, Newton, and Egerton, therefore, imperial history was invested with a rigid conceptual framework and a set of labels which supposedly mirrored shifts of opinion and constitutional practice.

This whole school of thought had a profound influence on later historians. Galbraith has noted, for instance, that the vast bulk of historical literature concerning the Empire-Commonwealth has been developed along the constitutional lines that Imperial Studies favoured.¹⁰⁷ Typical of this approach to imperial history was the work

of Arthur Berridale Keith himself a member of the Imperial Studies campaign who between the wars produced a number of constitutional histories of the Empire. This tendency to view imperial history in political and legal terms also persisted in the works of Sir W. Ivor Jennings and Kenneth C. Wheare, among many others.¹⁰⁹

Apart from this general bias in favour of legalistic and political history, however, much of the detailed structure of the model produced by the men of Imperial Studies passed into the writings of future historians. Most notable in this respect was the wholesale fashion in which the chronological framework and the labels, "Manchester School", "Colonial Reformer", and "New Imperialism" employed by the group, were adopted by inter-war historians such as the Dane, Carl A. Bodelsen, and the American, Robert Livingstone Schuyler.¹¹⁰ In their hands the model became even more deeply entrenched in the foundations of imperial historiography. Bodelsen elaborated on the intellectual and emotional upsurge which accompanied the rise of the "New Imperialism". For his part, Schuyler focused on the transition from the old mercantile approach to Empire to the imperial indifference of the age of laissez-faire.

The Durham myth also proved to be an especially potent one. Throughout the inter-war period Lucas' edition of the Durham Report was accepted as a classic, as was his analysis of the text. Historians such as Egerton's successor

at Oxford, Reginald Coupland, and the Canadian, Chester New, continued to view the report as the Magna Carta of the second British Empire.¹¹¹ In 1939 a meeting of the Canadian Historical Association was held to commemorate the centennial of the report's appearance. The Governor-General, John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir, was in the chair and he concluded his opening address to the assembled membership with high praise for Durham, the constitutional seer. "I believe", he said,

that democracy in the widest sense must remain the creed of western civilization, Of that democracy, responsible government is the core and heart, and we do well to pay tribute to a man who sacrificed health and reputation in its cause.¹¹²

Chester New, in turn, delivered a stirring panegyric on Durham's behalf. The report, he maintained, stood out as an example of far-sighted imperialism in an age of indifference.¹¹³ New then proceeded to cite Lucas' arguments about the constructive nature of Durham's thought.¹¹⁴ Finally, he assured his audience that the great statesman's dying thoughts were of Canada for which he had sacrificed his own health.¹¹⁵ This tendency to laud the "Colonial Reformers" at the expense of the "Manchester School", has found its most recent spokesman in Paul Bloomfield, who in his 1961 biography of Wakefield speaks of his subject as the "far-sighted" founder of an Empire.¹¹⁶

Examples of the pervasive influence of the model of

imperial history constructed by Lucas, Egerton, and Newton could be traced almost ad infinitum. In effect, they had taken the rough chronological outline provided by Seeley, enlarged upon it, and made it historical dogma. The model constructed by the men of Imperial Studies was often amended in detail, but its broad outlines continued to provide guidance for most historians who wished to develop a synthesis of imperial history not indebted to Hobson.

V

Even in its hey-day between the wars, however, the conceptual framework of imperial history first elaborated by Newton, Egerton, and Lucas, was not without its critics. As early as 1934 Charles R. Fay, an economic historian, drew attention to the existence of a commercial empire extending beyond the formal political boundaries of the empire studied by men like Newton and Egerton.¹¹⁷ He called this the "informal empire", a term which was later to have a tremendous impact on the old historiographical model furnished by Imperial Studies. In effect, Fay implied that a simple constitutional approach to the study of imperial growth was insufficient.

But the discovery of the informal empire should not be attributed solely to Fay. Hobson seems to have been aware of the existence of informal methods of Empire-

building.¹¹⁸ Beyond this Oliver Macdonagh assures us that even Cobden and Bright recognized the fact of informal empire, although they heartily condemned it.¹¹⁹ In any event, this line of argument concerning informal imperialism was, as will be seen, used later with devastating effect as a criticism of the concepts of Newton, Egerton, and their heirs.

A different sort of departure was made in the thirties and early forties by the Australian historian, William Keith Hancock. As has been mentioned, Hancock was alarmed by the head-in-the-sand approach of his contemporaries who continued to view the history of the Empire as an inevitable march toward some vaguely perceived, higher destiny.¹²⁰ Observing the centrifugal forces at work in the Empire of the thirties, he concluded that the imperial fabric was wearing a trifle ragged at many points.¹²¹ He grew to be dubious of the whole approach then being fostered toward imperial history; the result was his Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs.¹²² In this work Hancock broke away from old patterns and, rather than producing a general thematic survey, concentrated on particular limited problems in order to demonstrate the depth and complexity of Imperial history.¹²³ In short, he rejected the easy approach to a synthesis of Imperial history pursued by Egerton, Lucas, and Newton.

The two lines of criticism sketched by Fay and

Hancock had no immediate large-scale impact on the model of imperial history assembled by the men of Imperial Studies. Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that, although fading, the Empire was still a viable object of nostalgia and hope during the inter-war period for people like Newton and Coupland who had seen it in its hey-day. There had been no large-scale dissolution of imperial holdings before 1939 and the support of the dominions during the Second World War undoubtedly provided a spur to sanguine predictions of a great future for the united Commonwealth. All this, however, was shortly to change.

The emancipation of India in 1947 followed by even more grants of autonomy in the fifties and sixties were visible signs of the gradual devolution of imperial power. The rise of the United States as a paramount force in world affairs with economic tendrils reaching out to the farthest portions of the globe seemed to represent a new form of subtle imperialism wholly overshadowing the flagging Commonwealth. The Suez Crisis of 1956 found parts of the Commonwealth in strong opposition to the last vestiges of British gunboat diplomacy. A series of wars between India and Pakistan seemed to demonstrate the fundamental inability of the old imperial spirit to override national considerations. Taken together, the fifties and sixties have laid before historians the prospect of an Empire in decline, in

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which the sources of disunity appear to have outweighed those providing for cultural and spiritual unity. It was in this milieu of fundamental and obvious change that the earlier critiques offered by Fay and Hancock flourished.

In 1953 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson struck the first really successful blow at the old conceptual framework of imperial history. Perhaps influenced by the rapid spread of American influence through economic methods they revived Fay's notion of informal imperialism and delivered a strong attack on the old model. It was their contention that an undue concentration upon the formal, constitutional aspects of imperial history had led historians to emphasize change in the form of periods at the expense of continuity.¹²⁴ The focal point of their attack was on the traditional interpretation of the so-called period of Free Trade indifference from 1846 to 1872.

Far from being an era of simple "Manchester School" indifference, argued Gallagher and Robinson, the mid-Victorian era was marked by a vigorous attitude toward expansion. Previous historians, they argued, had overlooked this because of their preoccupation with formal acquisitions, flag-raising, and constitutional developments. The truth of the matter was that England continued to expand, but informally through trade agreements and the monopolization of markets. Only when external threats or the internal disruption of a market area made it necessary was formal

annexation resorted to. This formal approach was expensive and inconvenient and generally represented the failure rather than the success of British designs. The "new imperialism" was a myth fostered by historians with their eyes riveted on formal expressions of imperialism. In reality, formal annexations increased after 1870 only because of the growth of foreign competition in the imperial sphere. Rather than being an expression of self-confident empire-building, this late-Victorian land-grabbing was symptomatic of the relative inability of Great Britain to cope with external pressures.¹²⁵ The fostering of imperial interests was continuous throughout the nineteenth century. Only the methods varied. Turning the old model on its head, Robinson and Gallagher assert that, far from having been a period of indifference the mid-Victorian era was the high noon of confident imperialism.

Thus Gallagher and Robinson attempted to provide a new framework for imperial history at a time when the Empire-Commonwealth was in obvious decline. Although some related criticism of the old model predates that of these two historians, it was only after 1953 that the attack became general. No aspect of the old concept was left untouched. The 1783 datum point was strongly assailed by Vincent T. Harlow in 1952 in the first volume of his Founding of the Second British Empire, a work which sought to demonstrate that the main lines of nineteenth-century

imperial development were already established before the American Revolution.¹²⁶ He too stresses the theme of continuity. The major brunt of the onslaught of revision, however, was directed at the traditional interpretation of the era of free trade.

Following up the arguments of Gallagher and Robinson, John S. Galbraith tried to demonstrate the meaningless nature of, among others, the labels "Manchester School", "Little Englander", and "Treasury Mind". He contends that there were no static, well-defined groups, but a broad spectrum of opinion concerning colonies.¹²⁷ He notes, for instance, that everyone subscribed publicly to humanitarian principles and the need for economy and that no one called himself a "Little Englander". Too much faith, he argues, has been invested in the propaganda of Durham and Wakefield who used the stigma of "Little England" to blacken their opponents.¹²⁸ W. D. Grampp in his Manchester School has gone so far as to deny the existence of the Manchester group of anti-imperialists after the abolition of the Corn Laws.¹²⁹ Even more damaging to the interpretation of Newton and Egerton is the contention of R. J. Moore that Cobden and Bright, spokesmen of the so-called anti-imperialism of Manchester, were more than willing to employ imperialistic and monopolistic methods in India in order to ensure Britain's supply of raw cotton.¹³⁰ Thus the group labels began to disappear from imperial historiography and the term "informal

empire" became a stock phrase of revision.

Nor have the "Colonial Reformers" escaped attention in the re-analysis of early and mid-Victorian imperialism. In particular the Durham myth has recently been the subject of a shattering piece of revision by Ged Martin. He has effectively attacked the traditional interpretation which pictured Durham's report as a formative influence upon Victorian imperialism.¹³¹ The traditional assessment, he argues, was based too much on assumption and too little on evidence. Lucas and his contemporaries, caught in the midst of the hostile atmosphere produced by the South African War, felt the need for a revival of the great imperial heroes. The only problem, Martin argues, was that they tended to manufacture them in retrospect to suit contemporary needs.¹³² Thus, the Durham myth was in reality an expression of Edwardian aspirations and fears. In fact, says Martin, the report was "remarkably unimportant" in its own time and was only effectively revived by nostalgic historians after 1900.¹³³ It was merely one of a sea of documents that poured out on Canada in the 1840s and received little or no attention from the press or Parliament.¹³⁴ The author of the report is portrayed as a vain, arrogant man with an arbitrary cast of mind.¹³⁵ Durham's comportment while in Canada was, says Martin, characterized by high-handedness and gross errors in judgment.¹³⁶ Rather than a seer and a constructive idealist, Durham appears as a narrow, unheroic,

and gravely limited man of his times; and so another element of the old model is discarded.

Pursuing a somewhat different argument, J. W. Cell has also sought to deflate the reputation of Durham as a far-seeing prophet of a liberal Empire. In the first place, he demonstrates the highly derivative nature of Durham's thought, influenced as it was by Benthamite principles and the debates in his own days concerning the domestic constitution.¹³⁷ The core of Cell's argument, however, is that Durham's report was designed, not as a blue-print of Empire, but as a solution to an immediate problem. Indeed Cell goes so far as to say that any attempt to implement fully the ideas in the report would have made the future evolution of the Commonwealth impossible since they were founded on an unworkable paradox.¹³⁸ To be sure, Durham recommended responsible government but he also made a point of safeguarding imperial authority. Lord John Russell, whom Cell portrays as a clear-sighted man of this time, rejected the report because he felt it would in the long run undermine imperial authority. Thus Cell and Martin together have seriously questioned the Durham myth.

The revisionists have also dealt out a good deal of criticism against the idea that the early 1870s were a crucial turning point in imperial affairs, the dawn of a "new imperialism". Apart from Gallagher and Robinson's general critique more specific arguments have been leveled

at Disraeli's alleged role in precipitating this rapid conversion to the promotion of Empire. S. R. Stemberge has assailed the notion that Disraeli's Crystal Palace Speech of 1872 marked a significant phase in the development of imperial thought or motivation.¹⁴⁰ He points out that imperial affairs figured only marginally in the speech and that what "Dizzy" did have to say concerning the Empire was simply a restatement of old ideas and not a response to some new wave of imperial sentiment.¹⁴¹ His remarks about the Empire were not seized upon by the press and imperial questions played little or no part in the election campaign of 1874,¹⁴² all of which of course, is in direct contradiction to the views of Newton and Egerton. A more sweeping revision of the traditional role assigned to the Disraeli Ministry in the history of the "new imperialism" has been provided by David McIntyre.¹⁴³ He has set out to demonstrate that the fundamentals of a forward policy were developed at the Colonial Office during Gladstone's second ministry, prior to the election of the Tories. In addition, he claims that the early expansion of the late-Victorian Empire was normally the product of decisions made by the man on the spot rather than the results of a co-ordinated policy fashioned in Whitehall.

Having said all this, none can deny that many late Victorians thought that they were witnessing something new in the physical expansion of the Empire. The rhetoric of

the "new imperialism", however, has been described as an after effect of this growth, a justification and a rationale.¹⁴⁴ It has also been pointed out that much of the supposedly imperial literature of the period churned out by Kipling, Buchan, and Conrad, among others, found its primary motivation not in Empire per se but in an effort to investigate major psychological problems.¹⁴⁵ Thus the hand of revision appears to have left no aspect of the old model intact.

Yet it might be suggested that a great deal of this criticism is misconceived and wide of the mark, at least as it relates to the work of Lucas, Egerton, and Hewton. In general, the main lines of recent criticism have been directed toward deflating the impression of change created by the conceptual framework of the old school of imperial historians. On the surface this would seem to be a valid method of revision. Beneath the rather simple framework of change, however, we have seen that the Imperial Studies group did try to promote the idea of continuity in imperial growth based on the themes of organic evolution and irresistible racial instinct. The various periods which they identified were seen by them as stages in the evolution toward an Empire-Commonwealth. Even the dark days of mid-Victorian indifference were not without their Durhams, Wakefields, and Bullers. The roots of the Commonwealth were to be found, they argued, in the loosening structure of

Manchester's Empire.

We are faced, it would appear, with a superficial conflict between change and continuity when contrasting the views of Lucas and his colleagues with those of more recent historians. At a deeper level, however, it is really a conflict between two different arguments for continuity. The old argument was based on constitutional and racial considerations. The new one is based on a mixture of economic, political, and diplomatic factors, depending upon the interests of the historian involved. The division of the old school's framework into periods has had the effect of masking its insistence on the continuous evolution of imperial growth.

On the other hand, a number of early imperial historians, like C. A. Bodelsen and R. L. Schuyler -- both foreigners it should be noted -- did not share in the personal imperial enthusiasm of Lucas, Newton, and Egerton. They could employ the same framework and yet avoid the themes of organic evolution and racial instinct which gave continuity to the material discussed within it. The historians of the Imperial Studies campaign have been inaccurately lumped together with their foreign peers. This in part has obscured the message which the former tried to deliver. In truth, what they sought to provide was a concept of imperial history which reconciled change and continuity.

It is for this reason that they must be studied as a separate historiographical group whose intentions were half polemical and half academic. Unlike their foreign successors they had a definite and highly personal credo to espouse.

In any event, by the early sixties the conceptual framework first developed by the men of Imperial Studies seemed to lie in ruins. Nevertheless the attempt of Gallagher and Robinson to achieve a new synthesis of imperial history has not quite carried all before it. Some historians, reacting to the conflict over the lines which a new synthesis should take, have thrown up their hands in despair and joined with Hancock in the study of particular aspects of the highly complex account of imperial history. In fact, it has been suggested that a broad synthesis is out of the question.¹⁴⁶ Consequently, as Galbraith notes, there has been a drift away from the general survey approach to imperial history and a tendency toward that monographic specialization that was anathema to Newton and Egerton.¹⁴⁷ In addition, a number of historians, including Richard Koebner and Bernard Porter, have cautioned us concerning the misuse of the term "imperialism" itself.¹⁴⁸ The men of Imperial Studies were wont to bandy the term about and apply it to a number of different periods. In fact, it appears as though the word underwent a considerable change of definition throughout the nineteenth century which makes it a hindrance rather than an aid to the study of the

Empire. At any rate, there is now a tendency in some circles to discount the value of general surveys.

On the other hand, some historians have reacted differently to the recent wave of revisionism. The new model of imperial history constructed by the critics of the old school has, in turn, produced what might be called counter-revisionists. Much of this criticism, directed primarily at the economic interpretation of imperial history, has tended, sometimes only half intentionally, to rehabilitate at least to a degree the work of Lucas, Egerton, Newton, and their successors. In a sense the historiographical wheel seems to be coming full circle. Attempts to deflate the economic interpretation of imperialism have resulted in a reversion to the old arguments based on emotion, sentiment, and idealism.

D. K. Fieldhouse has attacked the entire economic interpretation of imperial motives and in the process has rejuvenated the term "new imperialism".¹⁴⁹ After a prolonged attempt to counter the economic arguments of Hobson, Lenin, and their adherents, Fieldhouse concludes with an observation similar to Newton's assertion that the "new imperialism" found its inner dynamic in spiritual forces. He notes that by Hobson's time the imperial movement had become irrational and "owed its popular appeal not to the sinister influence of the capitalists, but to its inherent attractions

for the masses".¹⁵⁰ By Chamberlain's day Empire was no longer evaluated according to the logic of the counting house. It had become a "mystical faith", "a sacred cow", and a "psychological necessity".¹⁵¹ In effect, Fieldhouse pushed the chronological starting point of the new factors in imperialism ahead to the ninties instead of dwelling, as did Newton, on the seventies. Again, he differs from Newton, and his associates in that he does not find this aggressive form of nationalism a particularly healthy phenomenon.¹⁵² Nevertheless, the logic of his argument does lead him to accept something of the conceptual framework provided by the traditional historians.

An even more direct return to the interpretation of imperial history based on idealism and emotion is to be found in the work of Eric Stokes. In his The English Utilitarians and India, first published in 1959, Stokes contends that the late-Victorian imperialists were motivated primarily by a quasi-religious sense of mission which featured the transference of evangelical enthusiasm to secular objects such as the Empire.¹⁵³ In a later pamphlet he restated this theme and, like Newton, Lucas, and Egerton, described imperialism primarily as a moral and emotional attitude.¹⁵⁴ Something of this same theme is observable in Richard Faber's recent general survey of imperial thought entitled The Vision and the Need.¹⁵⁵

In another context, H. A. Cairns has looked closely at the role which missionaries, traders, and explorers played in preparing the way for British expansion in tropical Africa.¹⁵⁶ He has concluded that Christianity, commerce, and a civilizing mission all went hand in hand in precipitating late Victorian imperial activity in this region. In short, religion, colonizing, and trade, which were identified by Lucas as the springs from which imperialism flowed, are re-emphasized by Cairns.

J. S. Galbraith has studied the formal expansion of the Empire in the mid-Victorian period and has in part returned to the old argument that the Empire was the result of growth not design.¹⁵⁷ A "turbulent frontier" on the far-flung borders of the Empire pulled the area of settlement forward even against the reluctance of Whitehall to assume further imperial responsibilities. Thus, "the 'turbulent frontier' . . . contributed to the paradox of the nineteenth century Empire that 'grew in spite of itself'".¹⁵⁸ In their attempt to combat the conspiracy theory of Hobson Lucas, Newton, and Egerton had consistently maintained the premise that the Empire was the result of spontaneous growth rather than cold calculation. In part, Galbraith's findings tend to bear out this "fit of absence of mind" theory, although he strips it of the arguments based on racial instinct supplied by Lucas and his contemporaries.

A similar thesis has been advanced regarding late-Victorian expansion by D. S. Landes who maintains that it was all a question of power abhorring a vacuum and the inner logic of the natural desire of everyone to make a profit and to dominate his neighbour.¹⁵⁹ Thus, in reacting against Hobson and Gallagher and Robinson, who see a long-term premediated policy uniting the whole of imperial history, Landes and Galbraith have partially revived the ideas of Imperial Studies in looking for instinctual and spontaneous sources of imperial growth.

The opinions of Oliver Macdonagh stand as a compromise between the old school and the revisionists. He argues that the free traders of Manchester, notably Cobden and Bright, were aware of informal imperialism but far from condoning or sponsoring it, they condemned it root and branch.¹⁶⁰ The traditional historians were, he feels, wholly correct in characterizing the "Manchester School" as anti-imperialist. The error was made in attributing more influence to Cobden and his followers than they actually disposed of in their own day.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the true impact of this school of thought was fully registered in the supposedly anti-imperial electoral returns of the early twentieth century. Consequently, the indifference of Manchester to the Empire is partially rehabilitated by Macdonagh as a potent force in imperial history. Only the

chronology of the old school is altered.

It is more difficult to classify the attitude of another historian, Bernard Semmel, as either revisionist or counter-revisionist. In a suggestive article on the Philosophic Radicals, published in 1961, he goes a long way toward bolstering the model of Gallagher and Robinson; but he also gives a boost to the image of the "Colonial Reformers" as prophets of the future and as formative influences on imperial thought.¹⁶² His intention is clearly to add to the weight of evidence concerning the fundamentally imperial outlook of the age of laissez-faire. In the process of doing this, however, he asserts that the "Philosophic Radicals", among whom he includes Durham, Wakefield, Buller, Molesworth, Bentham, and Mill, dominated the imperial thought of the so-called era of the "Manchester School". In effect, he adopts many of the old labels but reverses the relative order of contemporary importance of the groups. Thus, "the ideas of the Cobdenites conform more readily to the usual view . . . of a mid-Victorian anti-colonialism". Nevertheless, "their views did not generally prevail" and "those of the philosophical Radicals (Colonial Reformers and Benthamites) were much more in harmony with what actually happened". Not only did their constructive approach to Empire prevail in their own day; but Semmel asserts that they left a potent intellectual

legacy for the future. In his estimation, Wakefield emerges as a formative figure in imperial thought through his advocacy of the scientific development of colonies as adjuncts to the industrial system of Britain. In other words, the programme of the "Colonial Reformers" clearly anticipated the economic arguments concerning Empire later popularized by Hobson and the Marxists.

Semmel feels that his discoveries tend to deflate the arguments of Lenin and Hobson who felt that imperialism was the child of capitalism in decline, a capitalism dominated by cartels and monopolies. On the contrary, says Semmel, in the ideas of Wakefield, Durham and Mill, one can see an economic rationale for Empire emerging during the high-tide of free-trade, competitive capitalism. The concepts of this group, he argues, became part and parcel of Radical imperial thought and "brilliantly anticipated twentieth-century theories of imperialism".

Lucas, of course, would turn in his grave to hear his heroes coupled with the odious name of Hobson. Nevertheless, it is interesting to find an historian convinced of the validity of the new model employing the labels of the old, albeit in reversed order of pre-eminence. In spite of the later work of Ged Martin, Semmel has provided a new angle of approach which once again assigns a central role to the "Colonial Reformers" as a lasting force in imperial history.

Thus, at least in part, the work of the exponents of Imperial Studies is still an important feature of the historiography of the Empire-Commonwealth, both in the form of a straw-man for revisionists and as an alternative to the economic interpretations of Hobson on the one hand and the views of Robinson and Gallagher on the other. What began as an Edwardian pro-imperial polemic was transformed into the orthodoxy of imperial historiography. It is not being suggested that Lucas, Newton, and Egerton provided the only formative influence on the traditional framework of the Empire's history. Indeed, in many respects they merely put scholarly flesh on the bones of the imperial assumptions of their day. In some respects, the traditional framework of imperial history owes at least as much to the influence of Bodelsen and Schuyler. Nevertheless, the men of Imperial Studies were the first to expand broadly upon the suggestions of Seeley. In addition they gave Seeley's concepts a new twist with the injection of the notions of organic evolution, inbred racial instincts, Providential design, and optimistic fatalism. This, in turn, sets them apart as a group different from those who later employed the same model but lacked their personal sense of imperial commitment. Again, they were the first actively to promote imperial history as an academic discipline with any palpable effect. This is the true legacy of their work within the universities.

FOOTNOTES

¹The Empire Crusade admittedly dealt with elements in the imperial connection other than those emphasized by Lucas and his colleagues. Beaverbrook in fact attempted to revive the Tariff Reform campaign of Chamberlain's day. To that end he employed newspaper editorials and advertising, public rallies and so forth. Yet in spite of the obvious differences in emphasis the Crusade and the Imperial Studies campaign both depended on appeals to imperial consciousness and patriotism which fell on barren ground. For details concerning the Crusade and its failure see A. J. P. Taylor, Beaverbrook (New York, 1972), pp. 272-327.

²G. Martin, The Durham Report and British Policy: A Critical Essay (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 84-85. Martin deals extensively with Lucas' attitude to Lord Durham but does not really go beyond this to examine his fears, hopes, and assumptions in general.

³The best discussion of Hobson's general framework of ideas and aspirations is to be found in Porter's Critics of Empire.

⁴C. P. Lucas, The British Empire: Six Lectures (London, 1920), p. 323.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Seeley, Expansion, p. 3.

⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁸Ibid., p. 12.

⁹Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 57.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 158-59.

- ¹² Ibid., p. 73.
- ¹³ Ibid., pp. 299-300.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 12.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 302.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 306.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Burroughs, "Seeley", 197, 193.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 193.
- ²⁰ Fisher, "Seeley", 184.
- ²¹ Seeley, Expansion, p. 51.
- ²² Peardon, "Seeley", 54.
- ²³ Ibid., pp. 295-296; Seeley, Expansion, p. 98.
- ²⁴ Egerton, Claims of Colonial History, p. 21; A. P. Newton, An Introduction to the Study of Colonial History (London, 1919), pp. 5-7; Lucas, "Imperial Studies", 668.
- ²⁵ Lucas, "Teaching of Imperial History", 11.
- ²⁶ Berger, Sense of Power, p. 264.
- ²⁷ Newton, Old Empire, p. vi.
- ²⁸ C. P. Lucas, Religion, Colonizing, and Trade (London, 1930), p. 1.
- ²⁹ Newton, Empire Since 1783, p. 249.
- ³⁰ Lucas, "Democratic Empire", 802.

- ³¹Spector, "Newton", 296.
- ³²Froude, West Indies, p. 320.
- ³³Ibid., p. 153.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵Egerton, Short History, p. 451.
- ³⁶Lord Milner, "Address to the R.C.I.", in Bennett, Concept, p. 360.
- ³⁷Lucas, "Meaning of Empire", 119.
- ³⁸C. P. Lucas, "The Word Empire", W.B.E.S., XI (1 February 1924), 13.
- ³⁹C. P. Lucas, "Want of Vision", C.H.R., III (1922), 344.
- ⁴⁰J. Schumpeter, Imperialism and Social Classes, trans. H. Norden (New York, 1966).
- ⁴¹Lucas, "Democratic Empire", 807.
- ⁴²Lucas, British Empire, pp. 39-40.
- ⁴³Lucas, Religion, Colonizing, and Trade.
- ⁴⁴Lucas, "Want of Vision", p. 344.
- ⁴⁵Lucas, British Empire, p. 6.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 8.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 39.
- ⁴⁸Lucas, Greater Rome, p. 29.
- ⁴⁹Newton, Old Empire, p. 23.

⁵⁰Froude, West Indies, pp. 300-320.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 319.

⁵²Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform, p. 62.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Newton, Empire Since 1783, p. 248.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 249.

⁵⁶Lucas, Greater Rome, p. 19.

⁵⁷Newton, A Hundred Years, p. 232.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹J. S. Galbraith, "The Empire Since 1783", The Historiography of the British Empire-Commonwealth, ed. R. Winks (Durham, N.C., 1968), p. 51.

⁶⁰Egerton, "Some Aspects of Teaching Imperial History", 59.

⁶¹Egerton, Short History, pp. 2-7.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Spector, "Newton", 295.

- ⁶⁹Newton, A Hundred Years, p. 25.
- ⁷⁰Spector, "Newton", 294.
- ⁷¹Newton, Introduction to Study Colonial History,
p. 7.
- ⁷²Newton, A Hundred Years, p. 26.
- ⁷³C. P. Lucas, A Historical Geography of the British Colonies, I, The Mediterranean and Eastern Colonies (Oxford, 1906).
- ⁷⁴Egerton, "Some Aspects of Teaching Imperial History", 60.
- ⁷⁵H. E. Egerton, The Origins and Growth of Greater Britain (Oxford, 1903), p. 111; Lucas, "Imperial Studies", 666.
- ⁷⁶Newton, Empire Since 1783, p. v.
- ⁷⁷Martin, Durham Report, p. 100.
- ⁷⁸For reference to this point see Lucas' British Empire, where he discusses the racial point at length.
- ⁷⁹Hence the title of the work, Religion, Colonizing, Trade.
- ⁸⁰Newton, Old Empire, p. 1.
- ⁸¹Ibid., p. 23.
- ⁸²Ibid., p. 140.
- ⁸³Newton, Empire Since 1783, p. 228.
- ⁸⁴Newton, A Hundred Years, pp. 11, 309-403.
- ⁸⁵Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. 51.

- ⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 27-37.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 37-67.
- ⁸⁸ Egerton, Short History, pp. 2-4.
- ⁸⁹ Newton, A Hundred Years, p. 144.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 157.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 232-33.
- ⁹² Ibid., p. 263.
- ⁹³ Ibid., p. 355.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 390-403.
- ⁹⁵ Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 55.
- ⁹⁶ "Egerton", D.N.B., 285.
- ⁹⁷ Lord Durham's Report, ed. with intro. by C. P. Lucas (2nd ed.; New York, 1970, first published Oxford, 1912), p. 136.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 119.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 316.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 7.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 123.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., p. 136.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 324.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 317.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 46.

¹⁰⁸For example see A. B. Keith, Imperial Unity and the Dominions and his Selected Speeches and Documents on British Colonial Policy 1763-1917 (London, 1918).

¹⁰⁹Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 48.

¹¹⁰Bodelsen, Studies; R. L. Schuyler, The Fall of the Old Colonial System (New York, 1945).

¹¹¹Martin, Durham Report, p. 1.

¹¹²Lord Tweedsmuir, "Lord Durham", C.H.R., XX (June 1939), 118.

¹¹³C. New, "The British Background of Lord Durham's Report", ibid., 134-35.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶P. Bloomfield, Edward Gibbon Wakefield: Builder of the British Commonwealth (London, 1961), cited in Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 56.

¹¹⁷C. R. Fay, Imperial Economy and its Place in the Foundation of Economic Doctrine (Oxford, 1934).

¹¹⁸Hobson, Imperialism, p. 113.

¹¹⁹O. Macdonagh, "The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade", Economic History Review, XIV (1962), 490.

¹²⁰W. K. Hancock, Country and Calling (London, 1954), p. 150.

¹²¹Ibid.

- 122 W. K. Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1937-42).
- 123 Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 51.
- 124 J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade", Economic History Review, VI (1953), pp. 1-15.
- 125 This theme is continued and fully developed in Gallagher and Robinson's Africa and the Victorians (New York, 1968).
- 126 V. T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire (London, 1952).
- 127 J. S. Galbraith, "Myths of the Little England Era", American Historical Review, LXVII (1961), 34-38.
- 128 Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 55.
- 129 W. D. Grampp, The Manchester School of Economics (Stanford, 1960), cited in Galbraith, ibid., p. 59.
- 130 R. J. Moore, "Imperialism and Free Trade Policy in India", Economic History Review, XVIII (1964-65), 135-45.
- 131 Martin, Durham Report, p. vii.
- 132 Ibid., pp. 97-99.
- 133 Ibid., p. 3.
- 134 Ibid., pp. 35-41.
- 135 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
- 136 Ibid., pp. 20-23.
- 137 J. W. Cell, British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (New Haven and London, 1920), 95.
- 138 Ibid.

- 139 Ibid.
- 140 S. R. Stemberge, "Disraeli and the Millstones", Journal of British Studies, V-VI, 122-39.
- 141 Ibid.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 D. McIntyre, The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics (London, 1967).
- 144 Gallagher and Robinson, Africa, pp. 462-463.
- 145 A. Sandison, Wheel of Empire (London, 1968), p. viii.
- 146 P. Curtin, "The British Empire and Commonwealth in Recent Historiography", American Historical Review, LXV (1959), 72.
- 147 Galbraith, "Empire Since 1783", 51.
- 148 R. Koebner and H. D. Schmidt, Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word 1840-1960 (New York, 1963); R. Koebner, Empire (New York, 1961). Bernard Porter makes much the same point in the opening chapter of his Critics of Empire. See also K. West, "Theorising about Imperialism: A Methodological Note", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, I (January 1973), 147-54.
- 149 D. K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism: An Historiographical Revision", Economic History Review, XIV (1961), 209.
- 150 Ibid., pp. 207-208.
- 151 Ibid., p. 209.
- 152 Ibid.
- 153 Stokes, Utilitarians, p. 308. See also, C. C. Eldridge, England's Mission (London, 1973).

154 E. Stokes, The Political Ideas of English Imperialism (Oxford, 1960), p. 11.

155 Faber, Vision.

156 H. A. Cairns, Prelude to Imperialism (London, 1965).

157 J. S. Galbraith, "The Turbulent Frontier as a Factor in British Expansion", Comparative Studies in Society and History, II (1959-60), 150-168.

158 Ibid.

159 D. S. Landes, "Some Thoughts on the Nature of Economic Imperialism", Journal of Economic History, XXI (1961), 496-512.

160 Macdonagh, "Anti-Imperialism", 490.

161 Ibid., p. 500.

162 For this and all subsequent references to Semmel's ideas see his article "The Philosophic Radicals and Colonialism", Journal of Economic History, XXI (1961), 513-525. His ideas on the subject have recently been expanded in his The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism (Cambridge, 1970).

CONCLUSIONS

Sir Charles Lucas was fond of employing the term "the Imperial Studies Movement" to describe the overall efforts of the R.C.I., the V.L., and the L. of E. to promote imperial sentiment by means of education. In fact, however, no clear "movement" in this direction ever really materialized. What did emerge was a rather loose knit and at times vague campaign that was the mongrel offspring of a wide range of other developments in late-Victorian and Edwardian England.¹ Lucas' "movement" in truth was extremely diverse and was the product of a variety of motives. It could with considerable justice be described as part of the closer-union movement. In another sense it could be viewed as a by-product of the campaign for educational reform. Indeed a case could be made for demonstrating its connection with the great quest for national efficiency. But wherever the emphasis in the search for origins is placed, the fact remains that for a number of reasons a clearly defined Imperial Studies Movement never evolved. In this respect the history of the campaign for imperial education often reflected developments on the wider stage of metropolitan imperialism as a whole.

The campaign was plagued by continuing problems

involving the lack of internal co-operation, crippling debates over means, and a general want of clear-cut and decisive leadership. As noted, all of the attempts to amalgamate the R.C.I. and the two leagues came to nothing before and after the war in spite of the fact that they shared a recognized and common goal. Negotiations continually foundered because the societies could not agree on the methods whereby they each sought to inspire a public awareness of the Empire and because as individual groups they were unwilling to sink their identities in a general union. Thus in 1908 the L. of E. felt that the V.L. was ill-fitted to share in its work with overseas boards of education. At that moment the L. of E. was enjoying the most successful period in its history and was in no mood to sacrifice its individualistic pride of society in a merger with the V.L. The bitter recriminations in the press which this episode inspired soured relations between the two leagues for years to come.

The tension between the R.C.I. and the L. of E. never reached these dramatic proportions, but it nevertheless prevented close co-operation. During the war A. F. Pollard was openly critical of the R.C.I.'s filtration strategy and its tendency to focus exclusively on the university community. In opposition to the academic and elitist policy of the Institute, he called for a programme based on the

L. of E.'s by then traditional grass-roots approach to imperial education. Yet in 1919 when the R.C.I. finally did expand into the field of primary and secondary education, loud protests issued from the V.L. and Caxton Hall against this infringement on their supposed territory. But by this time the Institute was in the midst of a successful attempt at self-regeneration and completely quashed the V.L.'s proposal to join forces. Indeed Lucas went so far as to make the somewhat questionable assertion that the R.C.I. had an historic claim to leadership in the field of imperial education.

In fact, it is sometimes difficult to determine just how sincere these three bodies were in their avowed allegiance to the common goal of achieving imperial unity. The Institute, of course, freely admitted that it adopted the cause of imperial education in order to provide itself with a raison d'être capable of reviving its sagging treasury and membership. By its actions, especially in 1908, the L. of E. also seemed to place a higher priority on its own survival than it did on the achievement of imperial unity. For its part, the V.L. was never fully committed to imperial studies and was content "to support and assist" other groups whenever its limited resources allowed. But, if the L. of E.'s Report of Negotiations of 1909 can be believed, the V.L. was also quite prepared to

protect its own interests first and foremost. It will be recalled that one of the L. of E.'s objections to amalgamation in 1908 was that the V.L. had held out for virtual control over all of the key managerial and financial committees in any such union. In each case, therefore, it would seem that priority was given by these three groups first to their own individual interests, then to their different methods of approaching imperial education, and, only lastly, to a common goal.

This lack of cohesion was to be expected in a campaign which sprang from so many different sources and drew attention and support from a wide variety of individuals and interest groups. Once again it was a question of conflicting priorities. Lucas, Pollard, Egerton, and their associates were all trying to promote imperial unity by means of educational co-operation and indoctrination at home and abroad. This to them was the public purpose of the imperial studies campaign. However, the professional educators who came from throughout the United Kingdom and the Empire to the various educational conferences of the period saw the concept of imperial education from a different viewpoint. To them it was often a matter of purely professional and technical interest, a means of drawing upon the experiences of others in order to improve their own systems. In a few cases, such as that of Michael Sadler and

Henry Hadow, imperial co-operation was seen in a larger perspective and related to the quest for national efficiency. Sadler's interest in educational reform, for instance, derived almost completely from this consideration. That imperial co-operation might increase national educational efficiency was clearly perceived by Sadler and he even allowed that it might be conducive to future imperial unity. But a concern with imperial consolidation for its own sake was not one of his primary interests in life.

Across the globe Sir Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto throughout most of this period, looked with favour upon the imperial educational campaign, employed much the same language as its London organizers, and yet had quite different priorities in mind. As the head of one of Canada's leading institutions of higher learning, Falconer was keenly interested in assuring the future development of Canadian universities in the face of stiff competition from their American counterparts.² Therefore, he encouraged Canadian co-operation with British schemes to set up an exchange programme for graduate students and at the Imperial Education Conferences and Congresses of the Universities of the Empire of the period he spoke in glowing terms of the benefits of imperial co-operation in education.³ However, Falconer's real concern was not the prospect of furthering imperial unity but the immediate cultural threat

which the drain of her promising graduates to American and German universities posed to Canada.⁴ In order to counteract this trend he proposed channelling Canadian students not only to England but to both of Canada's mothercountries. Consequently, at the same time that he was urging imperial co-operation in graduate education, Falconer was making similar overtures to the French Government.⁵ Falconer's priorities were distinctly Canadian and not really in keeping with the designs of the R.C.I. or the leagues. The same divergence of interests has already been noted in the wide discrepancies between the agenda proposed by the L. of E. and the South African delegation to the first Imperial Education Conference. For their part the English local educational authorities tended to view imperial co-operation as little more than a veiled threat to their own vested interests and they seem to have participated in general conferences largely with a view to keeping a wary eye on a potentially dangerous situation.

Mixed motives also played a part in the inner councils of the imperial educational campaign. It is likely, for instance, that Pollard was drawn to the History Section of the L. of E. not only because he was genuinely interested in the cause of imperial unity but also because he saw it as an extension of his work with the Historical Association. In other words he undoubtedly viewed it as yet another

opportunity to advance the cause of history as a scholarly discipline by helping to popularize one particular field of study -- imperial history. For his part A. P. Newton was probably attracted to the R.C.I.'s Imperial Studies Committee because it afforded him the opportunity of furthering his own career as well as serving a cause in which he devoutly believed. In fact it was primarily because of the leading role he had played on this committee that Newton was offered the post of first Rhodes Professor of Imperial History in 1919. Similarly the imperial studies campaign allowed Lucas and Egerton to pursue their two chief interests in life -- imperial history and the achievement of imperial unity.

There is no reason to question the sincerity of these men when they proclaimed their devotion to the cause of imperial consolidation. Indeed their basic argument was that unity depended on the fostering of imperial history. Nevertheless at times the leaders of the R.C.I. in particular seemed to place far more emphasis on the academic side of their ventures than on the matter of conveying their message to the public at large. In this respect they were eminently successful as their continuing influence on the growth of imperial historiography would seem to attest. But the public side of their projects seems to have been neglected at times by these conservatives and, as a group, rather shy academics.

Many of these people were experiencing mixed reactions to their changing environment which may have contributed to this apparent lack of focus. Lucas, Egerton, and Pollard, in particular, were all deeply alarmed by the rapid rise of the working classes in an increasingly democratic age. They were also convinced that this tide could not be reversed and that an effort would have to be made to persuade the workers to accept the traditional institutions of British life, especially the Empire. Yet in spite of this conviction only Pollard seems to have been willing to bring his case directly to the public through propaganda. On the other hand, Lucas, Newton, and Egerton shrank from what they considered to be "German methods" of social indoctrination and preferred to preach in the rarified atmosphere of comfortable university lecture halls.⁶

The truth was that the majority of the principal figures in the campaign were temperamentally unsuited to perform the task which they tried to define for themselves. Lucas, as mentioned, was a stickler for gentlemanly form and was the prime mover in the successful effort to edge the supposedly tasteless Garrison out of the R.C.I.'s lecture programme. Newton made it clear from the start that he would have nothing to do with a scheme based on a popular approach. Egerton, perhaps taking his cue from Seeley, had a profound distaste for popular history. Above

all else he was a scholar who insisted that historical discussions be conducted in a dignified fashion with proper respect for the sources.⁷ As a lecturer Egerton freely admitted his acute nervousness, a flaw which he never overcame.⁸

In short, all of these men consistently avoided contact with popular audiences in spite of their self-imposed and loudly proclaimed mission of trying to inspire national sympathy for the Empire. Instead they chose to follow the circuitous route of permeation. In so doing they revealed themselves as rugged individualists of the old sort, out of place in a rapidly changing world. This was especially so in the case of Lucas, Egerton, and Newton. They seemed to live in a comfortable sort of isolation and had a tendency to view the world about them too exclusively from the narrow vantage point of the campaign they fostered. Their intense, quasi-religious devotion to the Empire and their preoccupation with the immediate problems encountered in promoting the study of imperial history caused them to lose sight of or to misinterpret many of the most significant developments in contemporary England and her dominions overseas.

In the first place they all assumed that the closer union movement had failed partly because of an over-emphasis on constitutional as opposed to sentimental ties and partly

because Englishmen did not share in the colonists' supposed fervour for unity. The logical solution to this problem, in their minds, was to rekindle the imperial spirit, especially at home. They were aware of the growth of dominion nationalism but felt that it would be satisfied once Britain decided to forego her claims to formal political control. The key, in their opinion, was to put an end to "constitution-mongering", as Pollard termed it, and to stress the sense of family ties which they assumed to be so strong overseas. In this regard they seriously underestimated both the force and nature of dominion nationalism. Britain had, in fact, so long refrained from pressing her constitutional authority over the dominions that the inhabitants of Canada, South Africa, and to a lesser extent Australia and New Zealand, had become accustomed to a large measure of isolation and individual freedom of action. As Carl Berger has recently noted, even Canadian imperialists at the turn of the century were inclined to consider the national aspirations of Canada first and the claims of Empire second.⁹ In her novel The Imperialist (1904) Sara Jeannette Duncan described how difficult it was even in English Canada for the supposed reserves of imperial sentiment to override local or national considerations.¹⁰

Moreover, the leaders of the imperial studies campaign completely misread the imperial significance of the

First World War. Lucas, as noted, maintained that separatism in the dominions would lose rather than gain ground as a result of their common efforts and shared sacrifices in France. He and Newton continued to believe this long after hostilities had ceased. But the South African leader, Jan Christian Smuts, and the Canadian, W. L. Mackenzie King, knew differently. In the post-war period dominion nationalism, confirmed and strengthened by the war and by participation in the League of Nations, was quickly intensified and registered its greatest victory in the Statute of Westminster of 1931. Lucas and his associates never clearly understood that resistance to "constitution-mongering" and the growth of distinct national priorities and identities in the dominions went hand in hand. In simpler terms they tried to mount a campaign on a distinction between the two which did not exist in the minds of their contemporaries overseas.

On the domestic front the leaders of the campaign also misjudged the reasons for working class indifference and hostility toward the Empire. Like Lucas they assumed that this apathy and at times antagonism was the result of working class gullibility. The workers, it was said, had been duped by the misguided foes of Empire who sought to exploit the masses' ignorance of imperial affairs. For his part Lucas assumed that, as Gladstone had said, "the spirit of Empire is innate in every Englishman". Imperialism,

therefore, was not a class doctrine but a national creed, not a ruling class conspiracy but a universal racial instinct. Thus, to Lucas, contemporary working class denials of the imperial credo were temporary aberrations, the products of ignorance which could be dispelled by education. He and his associates were somewhat disappointed to see the workers so often distracted from the path of racial instinct by their rather mundane concern with pounds, shillings, and pence. But as a group the leaders of the campaign were convinced that all that was required to redirect the workers' attention along more "natural" channels was a good education and a good example. It never seems to have occurred to them that the day-to-day struggle for existence had bred a separate sense of identity in the working classes. In the absence of any form of effective social security the workers had long been used to fending for themselves and had developed an inner dynamic of their own. In short they no longer relied on middle class guidance in the search for values and goals. But Lucas and his colleagues, in their desire to deflate the arguments of class, came very close to denying altogether the historical evolution of a stratified society. To them it was all a matter of wrong thinking rather than of economic, social, and historical reality.

Politically active imperialists such as Chamberlain, Rosebery, and Milner knew or thought that they knew better.

Having been forced to deal directly with the pragmatic concerns of the new electorate they were convinced that the workers would demand basic and large-scale social reform as the price of their allegiance to the old order.¹¹ In addition, many of these men saw social reform as a prerequisite of national efficiency in the contest of nations.¹² However, of the personalities at the core of the imperial studies campaign only Sidney Low, the journalist, appears to have grasped this point. "When", he wrote,

a man has breakfasted inadequately and is not sure whether he will dine, you can't expect him to rise to Imperial heights. We must make a man of him before we can render him a real citizen. That's the great work of the immediate future. The two things must go together -- social regeneration and Imperial concentration.¹³

Yet if the approach of Rosebery and Chamberlain was more pragmatic than that of Lucas and his colleagues, at least one historian has questioned whether even that was viable. Henry Pelling, a leading student of British labour history, has pointed out that, whatever the Roseberys or Milners might have said, imperialism "as an intellectual theory was essentially a matter for the middle class, or at any rate for those who were sufficiently well educated to read comparatively abstract books".¹⁴ Music hall imperialism might, he says, have entertained the workers but it left no distinct and lasting impression on them; rather it appealed to their simple longing for adventure in any form.¹⁵

Indeed Pelling has argued that working class apathy toward the Empire was part of a long tradition of fundamental distrust of the old society on the part of people who were basically cynical about the imperialists' promises of social reform.¹⁶

If the new electors were unsympathetic to the bread and butter imperialism of Chamberlain, what chance did Lucas and his associates have of persuading them with the abstract concepts of organic imperialism and an Empire of sentiment, especially when those concepts were only aired in the narrow surroundings of the universities? The early popular approach of the L. of E. and Garrison may have been strategically more sound but even this appears to have made little or no lasting impression on working class consciousness. In the long run the assumption that there was a large and latent reserve of instinctual sympathy for the Empire proved false. No doubt Lucas and his associates would not have understood how quickly Britain could cast off her imperial holdings after 1947 without experiencing any obvious qualms or mass soul-searching.¹⁷ In fact some historians have recently concluded that imperialism was the aberration and apathy toward Empire the norm of British life.¹⁸ The fate of the campaign for imperial education would seem to confirm this point.

In another sense the history of the "Imperial

Studies Movement" illustrates the growth of a continuing malaise which crippled the whole of late Victorian and Edwardian metropolitan imperialism. Conflicting priorities, debates over means, the diffusion of effort, and a lack of strong leadership, these were not characteristics peculiar to the imperial studies campaign. Instead they ran deeply throughout the imperial movement as a whole at the turn of the century. As a group the majority of late Victorian and Edwardian imperialists looked forward to the achievement of imperial consolidation. This desire was a thread that ran through most imperial thought at that time. Thus a common goal was clearly perceived. But agreement ended there as incessant quarrels broke out over how best to translate that wish into reality. Like the "Imperial Studies Movement" the closer-union movement was no "movement" at all but a vague collection of groups and individuals pursuing the same general goal along very different and often conflicting paths.

For example, both Chamberlain and Rosebery devoted themselves to the cause of consolidating the Empire but their disagreements over the means of achieving that unification led them into open political hostility during the Tariff Reform campaign. As a politician Chamberlain's base of support was in the industrial Midlands which were feeling the pinch of foreign competition and calling for a protective

imperial tariff. Rosebery, on the other hand, had close ties with the financial interests in the City of London who had yet to feel the influence of foreign pressure and therefore clung to the doctrines of free trade under which they had prospered for almost a century. The upshot was that these two powerful leaders ranged themselves on opposite sides during the Tariff Reform controversy and aggravated the dissension which had been growing in imperial circles ever since the I.F.L. had collapsed in the nineties. The energies that might have been employed in a concerted effort to sponsor imperial unity were continually dissipated in internecine conflicts on the metropolitan scene. Thus, free trader did battle with protectionist, the exponents of political federation quarrelled with the champions of informal co-operation, and there were constant arguments about the virtues of direct as opposed to indirect rule of the dependencies.

But the fragmentation of imperial opinion was not restricted to pragmatic considerations. As it emerged from the late nineteenth century imperial theory was also vague and ill-defined. Dilke had offered a concept of Empire based on loose political bonds and accentuated racial ties. Froude had done little to illuminate the nature and purpose of the Empire but had merely used it as a vehicle for expressing his personal misgivings about

contemporary industrial society. On the other hand, Seeley had condemned the sentimentalism of Froude and Dilke and had developed a politically oriented theory of imperial growth. By 1900 none of these concepts had gained a clear ascendancy over the others, as the thought of Lucas and his colleagues illustrated. There was, in short, no clear-cut imperial idea capable of serving as a rallying point in the quest for unity.

Altogether Edwardian imperialism suffered from a want of intellectual and political leadership. The result was confusion and a dispersion of effort. This in part accounts for the tremendous variety of small private associations which sprang up to promote an endless number of imperial causes. In the midst of this confused scene there was little opportunity for a concerted closer-union "movement" to develop. Accordingly it was usual for active men like George Parkin to belong to a host of different private societies and campaigns at once. This meant that in the long run there was very little in the way of concentrated imperial effort on the London scene. Lord Milner seems to have realized this when, during the war, he rejected Low's proposal to re-establish the Imperial Federation League and instead called for the construction of a true political party with imperial unity as its aim.

In part, at least, the leaders of the R.C.I. and the leagues, like so many others, thought that they had a formula

for clearing up this situation. Indeed they did offer something relatively new in the continuing debates over how best to go about unifying the Empire. The idea that informal, sentimental bonds might endure long after political ties had failed was not particularly novel. It had been a part of imperial thought since Burke's day. What Lucas, Egerton, and their colleagues did, however, was to try to show how the forces of culture, racial instinct, and sympathy could be harnessed in practical terms. They professed to be returning to a proper emphasis on the first principles of imperial life in an effort to provide a focal point in the drive toward imperial consolidation. Yet among themselves they too fell victim to the malaise already described.

As a practical programme to win the hearts of the electors for the Empire the campaign enjoyed little tangible success. But as a scheme bent upon promoting imperial history as a scholarly discipline it seems to have been more fortunate. In intellectual terms it represented a minor theme in its own day but in the broad sweep of imperial history it can be seen as something of a bridge linking the imperial ideas of Burke and Gladstone with the Commonwealth ideal of the twentieth century. This is not to claim that Lucas and his colleagues were far-seeing prophets. Their ideas were the products of contemporary

circumstances and elaborations on past schools of thought. The tendency to emphasize the historical, emotional, and cultural bonds of Empire did not begin with the imperial studies campaign nor did it end with it. Moreover, the leaders of the R.C.I. and the leagues still looked forward to an eventual political union of the Empire after the groundwork of sentiment had been laid. In this they were mistaken. But their vision of the future was not entirely unreasonable or inaccurate. After all who can argue that anything but a vague sentimental bond has served to hold the Commonwealth together in our own day?

FOOTNOTES

¹The terminology requires some explanation at this point. The word "movement" seems to imply the existence of recognized organizational bonds or at least a clearly defined notion of ends and means. Imperial Studies do not seem to fit into this definition. Therefore the more nebulous term "campaign" will be employed to describe the general efforts of the R.C.I., the V.L., and the L. of E. from 1901 to 1924.

²This attitude emerges quite clearly in his private papers, particularly in his correspondence concerning the Universities Bureau of the British Empire. For example consult a report by Falconer and R. D. Roberts of McGill on the annual conference of Canadian universities of 1911, 21 July 1911, Falconer Papers, box 16, 254. See also, Report of Canadian Universities Conference 1916, *ibid.*, box 45, 506.

³Falconer to Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, 6 March 1917, Box 45.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Report from the Committee on Graduate Work in Canada to the Conference of Universities of the Dominion of Canada 1917, *ibid.*, 502.

⁶H. E. Egerton, "Message", W.B.E.S., III (8 February 1924), 17.

⁷"Mr. H. E. Egerton: Pioneer Historian of the Empire", The Times (23 May 1927), p. 19.

⁸Ibid. (26 May 1927), p. 18.

⁹This indeed is the major theme of Berger's Sense of Power.

¹⁰S. J. Duncan, The Imperialist (2nd ed.; Toronto, 1971).

¹¹Simmel, Imperialism and Social Reform. The author discusses the assumptions of these imperialistic politicians and others who attempted to strike a bargain with the Edwardian working classes.

¹²Searle, National Efficiency.

¹³S. Low to T. Leah, 2 July 1909, letter cited in Chapman-Huston, Lost Historian, pp. 227-28.

¹⁴Pelling, Popular Politics, pp. 82, 88. In more specific terms Richard Price in his An Imperial War (London, 1972), has studied working class response to the South African war and reached much the same conclusion as Pelling.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷This particular phenomenon has attracted the attention of Richard Faber in his The Vision and the Need (London, 1966), p. 11.

¹⁸M. Beloff, Britain's Liberal Empire, II, Imperial Sunset (London, 1969), 19.

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