

4-1943

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Herbert Heaton
University of Minnesota

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Recommended Citation

Heaton, H. (1943). The Future Of The British Empire. *Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science, Vol. 11 No. 1*, 90-100.

Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/jmas/vol11/iss1/18>

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be most favorable after the war, because the favorable forces need not spend themselves in price skyrocketing as they did last time, but rather can exert their most powerful influence to an outburst in production that should permit the United States to achieve levels heretofore unknown, and levels that will keep the tax base high, therefore, the tax yield high—all to maintain unimpaired the highest integrity any debt ever had—the debt of our government.

THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

HERBERT HEATON

University of Minnesota

This subject is not of my own choosing. I was drafted, and must make three conscientious objections to the assignment. In the first place I am not a prophet. In the second, I do not regard any political institution, distribution of power, or economic system as final, but history gives no clue to indicate what the next phase in the development of an empire or of a social order is likely to be. And in the third place, I cannot do either justice or mercy to a quarter of the land surface of the world and to a quarter of its population in thirty minutes.

Let me begin by considering what is this Empire with whose future we are concerned. Some Britons would suggest it has no future because it is already a thing of the past, and has given place to, or been transformed into, the British Commonwealth of Nations. If empire means the exercise by one nation of political control over other peoples of diverse origin and culture, the new name is more accurate than the old. World War I lifted the already internally self-governing dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—to the rank of nations. The contributions they made to that war were a substantial fraction of the British Empire's total effort. They were larger still when measured in terms of the dominions' assets in human or physical resources; New Zealand lost one in every 66 of her whole population, Australia one in every 93, while our figure was one in every 2,000. They overshadowed the contributions made by many small nations; Canada for example, lost more men than Portugal put into the field. Thus at a great price the overseas dominions gained the right to be grown-up partners, associates, members of a British Commonwealth of Nations, and this title was hatched while the war was on. In addition they won recognition as nations in the world when they secured direct representation at the peace conference, signed the Treaty of Versailles, became foundation members of the League of Nations, and in three cases were given control of territory they had conquered, as "mandatory powers."

The consequences of that development of a generation ago are now clear. In the imperial conference of 1926, the position of Great Britain and of the overseas dominions was put into words. The much-quoted description reads: "They are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or foreign affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." What has autonomy meant? The answers are abundant.

The younger dominions have established their own embassies in Washington, Paris, Moscow, Chungking, and elsewhere. They have their high commissioners in each capital of the Commonwealth to serve as inter-dominion ambassadors. They have negotiated treaties with foreign governments and with each other. Diplomatic actions taken by Britain do not bind any of her associate nations unless they definitely accept them. When Britain signed the Locarno Pact in 1925, and gave her pledge to help France if she was attacked by Germany, but to go to the aid of Germany if France was the aggressor, the dominions were not committed to help Britain if the need arose, since they took no part in the negotiations. Similarly during the thirties, when so many of us were crying, "Why don't the British do something?" the British had to remember that they had no claim on support from the overseas dominions if they did intervene in Abyssinia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, or Spain.

They did not even know what the other dominions would do in September, 1939, when Britain declared war on Germany. The decision to come into the war or stay out was one to be made by each dominion. Australia and New Zealand promptly said, "Of course we are in it," and did not bother to make a formal declaration of war, but Eire, Canada, and South Africa exercised their sovereign right. The Canadian parliament deliberated, and decided well-nigh unanimously to come in. The South African parliament heard its premier recommend a policy of neutrality; it heard its deputy-premier, General Smuts, recommend a break with Germany; then it voted, and by the narrow margin of 80 to 67 it decided on war. Eire had long before announced that in the event of war she would remain neutral, and has done so. The German ambassador is still in Dublin; there has been no black-out; if a flying fortress made a forced landing in Eire its crew would be interned; the landing of American troops in Ulster was violently protested by Dublin, even though Ulster is part of the United Kingdom and not of Eire; the use of Irish harbors has been refused to the United States, though neutral Portugal granted the use of her harbors and air-bases in the Azores; and Dublin has rejected every suggestion from Washington that she sever diplomatic relations with Berlin or close her ports against the arrival of Nazi refugees. If that is not autonomy, I don't know what it is.

Autonomy is only one side of the Commonwealth currency. If you examine Canadian coins, you will find King George's head on one side, and an elk, beaver, or maple leaf on the other. On the Australian currency there is the king's head and a kangaroo or a couple of ostriches, or some other representative of the antipodean flora or fauna. And so on, throughout the Commonwealth, except in Eire, where one side has a picture of an ancient Irish harp as backing for pictures of pigs or poultry. The use of the royal head symbolizes the crown as the constitutional link—the only one—between the parts of the Commonwealth, but it is not the head of the Emperor of the Commonwealth. George VI is Emperor of India, but not of the Empire. There is no such office, no imperial constitution, legislature, executive, judicature, tariff, tax system, defense system, or even membership dues. There are six dominions; each uses the same person to serve as its king; and in each the king observes the same rules, acting on the advice of his ministers, who in turn are responsible to the parliament of their dominion. The Canadian parliament instructed its ministers to advise George VI of Canada to declare that Canada was at war with Germany—and did so about a week after George had been advised by his British ministers to declare that the United Kingdom was at war with Germany. This is all that "united by a common allegiance to the Crown" means in terms of constitutional forms and powers, but symbols still mean a lot more than that to most of us, and a common king is as good as any other symbol that the wits or emotions of mankind have yet been able to devise.

The reality behind the symbol is the "free association" of the six Commonwealth nations—or the five, if we leave Eire out for many purposes. It is interesting to note how Canadian, South African, and Australasian students see the Commonwealth. Professor Trotter, a Canadian, speaks of it as "a free and voluntary partnership or association of nations." Dean Bailey of the Melbourne Law School says it is "an association or organization for common action of a group of communities historically linked by settlement or conquest with Britain." General Smuts, the South African statesman who fought the British so brilliantly in the South African War of 1899–1902, describes it as "a group of sovereign states, working together, living together in peace and in war under a system that has stood the greatest strain to which any nation can be subjected." The Canadian Prime Minister described the working rules of this partnership, association, or group as "close consultation, close cooperation, and effective coordination of policies."

There is no time to spare for giving many examples of this consultation, cooperation, and coordination. The consultation nowadays can be very close and even continuous. The high commissioners get together in each capital, the coming of the intercontinental telephone allows the prime ministers to ring each other up

whenever they wish, while trans-oceanic flying enables two or even all of them to get together in conference at short notice. Cooperation and coordination have been marked, especially in times of crisis. In 1932, for example, when international trade had collapsed under the burden of the depression, of our heightened tariff, and of quotas or exchange controls, the dominions gathered in Ottawa and worked out tariff agreements which aimed at preserving and stimulating the flow of goods between themselves.

When war drew near, five of them cooperated in establishing a Commonwealth Air Training Plan in order to get good flyers in abundance and in quick time. Canada undertook the administration of this scheme, and if you have seen young men walking 'round the Twin Cities wearing the R.A.F. blue uniforms, but with "Great Britain," "Canada," "Australia," "South Africa," or "New Zealand" on their shoulders, you may have gained an inkling of the scope of the training plan.

Since 1939 cooperation and coordination have been many-sided, with each dominion doing the job for which it was best fitted. Britain bought all Australia's wool-clip in order to strengthen that dominion's financial position. Australia swung her primary production and manufacturing industries into line to supply many of the needs of the Near East and India. Canada did likewise, and when the British supply of dollars required for buying Canadian produce ran out, Canada made a free unconditional gift of a billion dollars worth of supplies in 1942, with more to follow. In short the Commonwealth was a pioneer version of the United Nations.

A moment ago I quoted some descriptions of the Commonwealth made by inhabitants of the younger dominions: An Englishman, or rather a Welshman, remembering something these others had overlooked, said the Commonwealth is "an association of free states with a tail of dependent states." At the top of that tail is India, which in less than a century—and really in the last quarter of a century, since 1919—has advanced to complete self-government in the eleven British Indian provinces. In addition Indians sit in eleven of the fifteen seats around the Viceroy's central executive council table, hold nearly all the high civil service positions, occupy nearly all the public health, engineering, and judicial posts, and do all the provincial administrative jobs. Indians fill the provincial legislatures, and control the Indian ministers in them; they occupy the overwhelming majority of the seats in the central legislature as well.

Lower down the tail we encounter about fifty other parts of the dependent empire. Ceylon, Bermuda, and Southern Rhodesia are now near to full self-government; the others are further away, but are moving up. Most of this dependent empire is under British control, but some of it is under that of the other dominions. Canada, for example, rules the arctic far north, which is now becoming im-

portant because of air routes. South Africa holds the mandate over ex-German Southwest Africa. Australia was given Papua in New Guinea in 1906, and then received a mandate over German New Guinea, which she had captured in 1914. New Zealand has one or two Pacific islands which she held before 1914 or received as mandates. Hence these four junior dominions have little empires of their own, and we might well talk of a British Commonwealth of Empires.

Metaphors and parables are dangerous devices, but perhaps I can sum up this description of the Commonwealth in one. Let me try baseball. The dominions have gone all the way 'round and have crossed the home plate to home rule. India is on third base. Some of the other players are on second or first, while other parts, such as Nigeria with its 20,000,000 natives, are out on the practice field learning to substitute tax systems, budgets, public works departments, schools, hospitals, experimental and demonstration farms, judicial procedures, roads, tractors, and fertilizers for the slave-raiding, inter-tribal war, witch-doctoring, head-hunting, cannibalism, soothsaying and soil-scratching which used to be their form of sport.

If a more serious simile is desired, I might suggest that of a species, except that I know no science. Let me risk it, and say that the Empire which took shape in that great age of trans-oceanic empire-building which followed the discovery of America and of the all-sea route from Europe to the Indian Ocean, was a species which proved able to modify and adapt itself in an environment that was subject to far-reaching change.

At least that simile is better than the one which was popular a hundred years ago. In those days men used to say that an empire was like an apple tree. The apples would certainly fall off when they were ripe. But the British people's ability to adapt their own form of parliamentary government to democratic ideas and to transplant it overseas prevented the apples from falling off. Or there was the family metaphor, which said that children rebelled, left home, and disowned their parents when they felt strong enough to do so. Evidently this does not necessarily happen if the youngsters discover that they are free to leave home and disown the old people. Even Eire, which became self-governing in 1922 and has since declared herself a republic and taken a number of steps to emphasize her independence, has never declared that she is quitting the Commonwealth. When the question is no longer "Can I go out?" but "Where do I go?" it may seem better to remain a partner in a big show than a lonely little nation out on one's own and in danger of being swallowed up by some new empire-builder.

The future of the Commonwealth depends on the strength of the ties which keep a group of free nations together. Some of them are historical, and history has a way of creating conditions and tradi-

tions which—for good or ill—are tenacious. The British are where they are over the face of the earth for just the same reason that we are here. The men who founded the East India Company from which British India grew were also the founders and financiers of Virginia and the Pilgrim Fathers and Massachusetts Bay. The parallel between their overseas movement and our overland westward movement is too close to allow us safely to throw stones. The hand of history is not a dead hand. It decided that India should be British rather than French or Portuguese or Dutch or Russian; that Canada, having ceased to be French, should eventually become Canadian rather than American; that Australasia was to be British (rather than French) in sovereignty and population, and radically democratic in character; and that the ocean routes which bound a maritime empire together must be made secure by the possession of strategic naval bases and ports of call.

Some of the ties are economic. In their growth the colonies were far more dependent on Britain than she was on them. Their immigrants and their capital were drawn chiefly or entirely from the mother country, and they found their chief market for their foodstuffs and raw materials in the crowded industrial populations of the British Isles. On the other hand the British were not nearly so dependent on the overseas empire; the world was their market and supplier of the things they needed, and of that world the colonies were only a part—perhaps a third. Hence they pursued a cosmopolitan policy of free trade with all countries and continents.

Today these conditions are changed, but not entirely. The rise of other great industrial powers created a demand for dominion raw materials and gave Britain rivals in supplying the dominions with manufactured goods. Canada is an outstanding case; for at least a generation she has sold more to us and bought far more from us than to or from Britain. Similarly she has drawn far more of her capital in recent years from New York than from London. In addition the development of her own manufactures has reduced her dependence on British factories. Yet Canada can find little or no market in the United States for her prairie wheat or other foodstuffs, and there is no other large market for them except the British.

In the other dominions the dependence on Britain as market and as source of supply is far greater; Eire sells over 90 per cent of her exports there, New Zealand over 80 per cent, and Australia over 50 per cent; and these three get 40 to 60 per cent of their imports from her. They have drawn increasingly on the United States and other industrial countries for their supplies, and under the stress of war have expanded their industrial plants greatly. In addition Britain has had to sell many of her overseas holdings of stocks and bonds to pay for war supplies. The interest and profit from these used to be spent in buying food and raw material; or to put it another way,

the debtor dominions used to service their debt by exporting staple products to the creditor. In the future Britain will not be able to buy them with dividend checks or bond coupons. She will therefore have to buy by exporting her manufactured goods, her shipping, and by commercial, insurance, and banking services. She estimates that her exports must increase by 50 per cent if she is to buy abroad what she used to buy. Either the dominions and other countries must buy more from her or she will have to reduce greatly the purchases she makes from them; and if she has to do the latter every dominion, as well as every foreign country which used to sell her great quantities of butter (e.g., Denmark) or of cotton (e.g., the United States) will have a hard time finding other markets for its produce. If Britain is too poor to buy, the whole Commonwealth will feel the impoverishing effect; and so will nearly every foreign country, large or small.

The third tie is that of defense. Through the period of their growth the colonies had no need to worry about defense, because the British navy was so strong that no other power was in a position to launch an attack on them or on any other part of the world. The colonies could therefore go their own way, increase their self-governing powers, emphasize their growing independence and nationality, and do it all without spending more than a few cents a head on defense. In an age of safety you can afford to be as centrifugal as you like, and build up a lot of small nations. When the safety goes the lot of those who have self-determined themselves into independence becomes very hazardous. Self-government for the Philippines might have been a safe policy in 1900, or earlier; but once Japan became a great power in the Western Pacific, self-government might mean suicide. Similarly self-government for India might in the 19th century have meant handing the peninsula over to be taken by Russia, and in the 20th century to be taken by Japan or other possible possessors of large appetites.

Even in the piping peace of last century, fear of external danger was not quite unknown. Fear of an attack by us pushed the Canadian provinces into federation in the sixties, and the appearance of the Germans in the south-west Pacific helped to pull the six states together into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1900.

The British Commonwealth has never assumed that it could defend itself against any conceivable combination of powers, but only that it could take care of the seas and make a substantial contribution in men, money, and materials to its allies on land. That strategy was severely strained in World War I when one ally (Russia) fell out, when France lost much of her industrial area, and when the submarine proved so menacing. It was even more so when France fell in 1940, when Italy came in, and when for twelve grim months the British Commonwealth stood solitary but solid. The epic of that "Year Alone," with its defiance of the *Luftwaffe*, its

defence of North Africa, and its puncturing of Mussolini's empire, well justified Mr. Churchill's assertion that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasted for a thousand years, "men will still say 'This was their finest hour.'" No one can say what might eventually have happened if Hitler had confined his efforts to the western front and had left Russia alone; and it is also impossible to say what might have happened if in such a situation Japan had joined its European Axis partners and had declared war on the Commonwealth but had left us alone. I don't think, however, that anyone will be accused of being an alarmist for feeling that an Axis concentration on the Commonwealth would have been irresistible.

The conclusion of these two world war experiences is inescapable. The British Commonwealth needs friends and allies, or better still must be part of a world peace organization. In that respect it is not alone, for no large power that we can conceive can do without friends and allies or fail to be safer in a world organized for peace. We certainly could not stand alone against all the rest of mankind. We have shown our realistic sense of that by our entry into the first World War and by the policy we were pursuing prior to Pearl Harbor as well as since. I think it is equally certain that Russia is in the same position, but since my concern here is with the British, let me stick to their problems.

In the first place Britain will emerge from this war greatly weakened in many of the ways in which she was strong. Her foreign trade has shrunk by at least half, and will be hard to recover, as may be her shipping business. She has lost most of her overseas investments, and the income from them. She will probably be a debtor country rather than a creditor; already India has had such an excess of sales to her that the whole Indian debt on British investments has been wiped out, and in addition Britain is now in debt to India to the tune of \$4,000,000,000. So also with Canada, Australia, Argentina, and of course there is our own lend-lease creditor position. Finally, before the war Britain's population was reaching the stationary level, was becoming middle aged, and seemed doomed to decline in the decades ahead—not a unique prospect, but an uncomfortable one.

In the second place, the dominions in the Pacific are not large enough to defend themselves unaided, and if Britain is engrossed in a life and death struggle in Europe, she cannot give very much help east of Suez. The aid has to come from us, and our own interests impel us to give it; for whatever we may feel or think about the Commonwealth we could not be very comfortable if either Germany or an Asiatic power controlled the west-central and south-west Pacific. It may be that the Australasian dominions will step up their efforts to increase immigration and development, so that within a generation their population may grow from its present 8,500,000 to perhaps twice that figure. If they can do that they will

be less vulnerable, but still not strong enough to deal unaided with a first class power if it determined to annex them.

In the third place, Canada's dual position as a member of the Commonwealth and as a part of the Americas has been emphasized by the events of the last generation. She has no desire to leave the Commonwealth, and no desire to throw her lot in politically with the United States. She *might* have sheltered behind the latest version of the Monroe Doctrine and played little part in the present war; but that possibility was not given a moment's thought by her leaders, and she shouldered her full share of the obligations of Commonwealth partnership. Some of us were a bit annoyed in 1939 at this manifestation of her connection with the world outside; but it should be noted that the British counterparts of those "some of us" often get annoyed at Canada's insistence in her North Americanism. Canada is in the Commonwealth and Canada has a big neighbor to her south. Those are the two basic facts of her consciousness. Consequently, like Australia and New Zealand, she is now fully aware of our existence and our importance to her, to the Commonwealth, and to the world. I think we have become a lot more aware of her importance to us, and this is a healthy situation all round.

One question remains. What of the future of India in the Commonwealth; or even what of the future of India? Seven out of every ten citizens of the Commonwealth live there, and if they left it they would greatly reduce it in size, population, and prestige. What happens in India in the years ahead is up to the Indian people themselves. Up to date the introduction of self-government by instalments has not met any insuperable obstacles. True, Gandhi and his Congress party have accused the British of offering too little too late. To this the British have replied that the Congress wanted too much too quickly. The achievement so far has been in the field of provincial government. Indian legislatures now control the law-making in each province, Indian ministers administer the laws and the provincial civil service is virtually all Indian. This is a remarkable achievement, and has been possible because it encountered no serious impediment. The next step—the federation of the whole peninsula—has, however, failed to bridge the chasms which divide Indian society. The first is that which separates the self-governing provinces of British India from the six hundred native states which are still ruled by princes, rajahs, nabobs, and so forth. The second is the racial and religious chasm: on one side stand about 90,000,000 Moslems, on the other side are 300,000,000 Hindus; the dislike is mutual, ineradicable, and intense. The third is the caste system, with its watertight compartments, and at its base 60,000,000 outcasts, untouchables, "depressed classes." Add to these divisions the lack of even three or four popular tongues, the wide range of social habits, and the absence of inter-marriage be-

tween races or classes, and the task of creating *E pluribus unum* becomes gigantic. Two efforts have failed. A federal constitution drafted in 1935 was rejected by all the sections, races, classes, and religions. In 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps, socialist, internationalist, and anti-imperialist was sent to India to see if he could bring unity. His mission was twofold. The leaders of the Indian parties were invited to enter the Viceroy's executive council and take over every department and post except that of commander-in-chief. They were asked to be ready, as soon as the war was over, to gather in a constitutional convention and work out an accepted plan for an Indian Union. This plan London pledged itself to accept, even if it provided, not for dominion status within the Commonwealth, but for self-government outside the Commonwealth. With the Japs on the frontier, the Indian parties still could not sink their differences enough to accept either invitation. The nearer the hour of their liberation drew, the more they were at sixes and sevens; and even India's deepest sympathizers have to confess their belief that civil war would have broken out the minute the people of India were left free of British rule and restraint.

The future of the Indian, one-fifth of the human race, is unpredictable. Will the British stay there until Indians resolve their differences? If and when they do resolve them and create an Indian Union, will the union endure, or will it go to pieces when put to the strain of racial, religious, and social differences? If it works, will it secede from the Commonwealth? No one can answer these questions. India now has many new assets of strength that she lacked a generation ago. Three million volunteers have been trained in the army—twice as many men as the whole membership of the Congress party. They have learned to handle trucks, tanks, planes, big guns and little ones. Industry has gone ahead by leaps and bounds both before and since 1939. The country is rich, or at least some people in it have become rich through industry and the war. Britain owes India four billion dollars, and the amount will be larger before the war ends. Does one disown a debtor? If the British go out, does anybody else come in? At any rate, watch India in the years ahead. She *may* become what we have so optimistically assumed that China is destined to become—a great power.

For the rest of the Commonwealth, its future is wrapped up in that of the world at large. If we can achieve a settlement which has a chance to endure, and can restore international trade on some basis of sanity and health, the political future of the British Commonwealth need not worry anyone. Certainly the Commonwealth can contribute much to that peace and security, for its lands are in every continent and its trade routes on every ocean. If no real world security can be secured, then the British Commonwealth, like ourselves, will have to weigh its policy in terms of a balance of forces in which international anarchy can be restrained only by interna-