

dentologia.  
Smuts.



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Dear Mr Buxton,

I have just received your note of 31 July. I have no objection to the passages from your diary being quoted in the forthcoming book. I hope however that in reference to Wilson you will have the words "an idler" deleted, as it sounds harsh and will give unnecessary pain.

How far off that world already seems, and what gulf

P.T.O.



roll between. But the new world on the other side does not yet appear.

With very kind remembrances and regards,

Yours ever sincerely,

Wm. Smith

Smith

General Smith



EMPIRE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION  
UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH

“Thoughts on the New World”

p. 11 *Francis*

Address by

FIELD-MARSHAL

The Rt. Hon. JAN C. SMUTS,  
C.H., K.C., F.R.S., M.P.

(Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Defence  
of the Union of South Africa),

at a Meeting of the Study Committees of the Empire  
Parliamentary Association, held at the House of  
Commons, Westminster, on 25th November, 1943.

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Cranborne

(Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Leader of the  
House of Lords),

IN THE CHAIR.

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# “Thoughts on the New World”

Address by

Field-Marshal the Rt. Hon. Jan C. Smuts,  
C.H., K.C., F.R.S., M.P.

*(Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and  
Defence of the Union of South Africa),*

at a Meeting of the Study Committees of the  
Empire Parliamentary Association, held at  
the House of Commons, Westminster, on  
25th November, 1943.

A private meeting of the Study Committees of the Empire Parliamentary Association was held in a Committee Room of the House of Commons, Westminster, on 25th November, 1943, when the Rt. Hon. Viscount Cranborne (Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Leader of the House of Lords) presided, and Field-Marshal the Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts, C.H., K.C., F.R.S., M.P. (Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Defence of the Union of South Africa), delivered an Address on “Thoughts on the New World.”

**The Chairman : The Rt. Hon. Viscount Cranborne (Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Leader of the House of Lords) :** My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen : I know very well that you have all come here to hear Field-Marshal Smuts, and not me, and I intend to keep you only one very brief moment. Indeed, the position of a chairman on such an occasion as this is very largely a formal one, because the main duty of a chairman normally is to introduce the speaker, and I do not suppose there is anywhere in any part of the civilized globe where Field-Marshal Smuts would need an introduction. If you went to Peru or Chungking, or anywhere else, and uttered the words “Field-Marshal Smuts,” everybody would already know all about him. He is a world-personality in the very widest sense of the term. For me to say that we are grateful to him for coming here this afternoon, and that we welcome him very warmly, and that we are looking forward to what he has to say to us, would be, to put it mildly, an under-statement.

We are indeed looking forward immensely to the talk that he is going to give us, and we are most grateful to him for sparing the time in his busy life, to come and speak here.

We are particularly grateful, I think, because of the subject of his Address—"Thoughts on the New World." When I read the title of his Address I felt, as I expect most of you gentlemen felt, how typical it was of the Field-Marshal, how characteristic it was of the whole of his life. If there is one particular aspect of his character in which he differs from the rest of us I think it is that he never looks back. He is always looking forward. For the great majority of men there are three phases in their lives: There is the time when they are young, when they live in the future; there is the time when they are middle-aged, when they tend to live in the present; and there is old-age, when they tend to live in the past. That is always the danger in every country of the domination of the old over the young—a subject which was dealt with, I believe, by the Mover of the Address in the House of Commons yesterday afternoon. General Smuts, if I may so call him, does not belong to that standard pattern. He is perennially young. He never looks back. He is always looking forward into the future, and he is always constructively moulding the future. He combines the experience of the old with the vision of the young. That, I think, is the reason why he has played so great a part in his own country; it is the reason why he occupies so pre-eminent a position today among the leaders of the nation; and finally it is the reason why we are looking forward so immensely to what he has to tell us this afternoon.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not going to keep him from you any longer, but I am going to call upon Field-Marshal Smuts to address you.

**Field-Marshal the Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts, C.H., K.C., F.R.S., M.P. (Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Defence of the Union of South Africa):** Lord Cranborne, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen: I intend to have a general informal talk with you this afternoon. I have no set opinions; I have no dogmatic beliefs to place before you; I am going to put before you certain lines of thought which are running through my own mind. I think the times in which we live do not really permit of very rigid fixed opinions, or of any dogmatic outlook on life or on the problems before us. We are facing today probably the most

perplexing complicated human situation that has confronted the world for many generations, and anybody who thinks he has a panacea at his command to deal with these problems must either be sub-human or super-human. I simply want to suggest certain lines of thought, and you must not hold me responsible for them hereafter.

There are two dangers that face us in a situation such as ours today. One is the danger of over-simplification. In a world where the problems are so complex we may feel tempted to over-simplify and thus falsify the real character of the problems before us and miss the real solutions. The other danger is what I may call the danger of following slogans or catchwords, and so missing the real inwardness of the problems before us.

Let us look at these two dangers, which are really the same, though I wish to keep them separate for the moment. Let me refer briefly to the first danger of over-simplification. Where you are faced with a situation and problems such as we are faced with, you dare not over-simplify. In such circumstances you can only proceed towards a solution step by step in the old empirical British way, for if you begin to theorize and rationalize and simplify you are lost.

### No Peace Conference ?

I think particularly of several occasions when we have been confronted with such a situation. Take our situation at the time of the last peace. Twenty-five years ago we had before us very grave problems, but we proceeded to solve them in a few months. The Peace Conference met in January, 1919, and it dissolved in May. Within that period, by a process of side-tracking real issues and over-simplifying others, we produced the Peace Treaty, and I am sure if we were to follow the same procedure in the situation before us today in the world, or the situation which will be before us at the end of this war, we shall move to even greater disasters than we have seen in the past. When I look at the sort of problems that we shall have to deal with at the end of this war, the problems of the New Europe and the New World, I doubt whether any peace conference will be able to settle those questions in a reasonable time unless it proceeds by a process of over-simplification and falsification. I am myself doubtful whether we shall ever come to a peace conference at all at the



end of this war. It may be that we may be faced with questions so vast, so complicated, so difficult and intractable, that in the end we shall have to be satisfied with making a pretty comprehensive armistice dealing with the general military question of ending the war, and leave the rest of the problems to a long series of conferences, to a long process of working out solutions without coming to any general peace conference at all.

That is one sort of situation that I consider probable—that we may never come to a peace conference at all, and that we may have to be satisfied with a comprehensive armistice on a basis of unconditional surrender, an armistice which will open the door to a long series of investigations and researches, which may take a long number of years before finality is reached.

### Race and colour problem in the British Empire

I am also thinking, when I talk of over-simplification, of the situation which exists in our own British Empire. I do not think that either today or in the near future you could have any more complicated situation than that in our own group, quite apart from the general world situation. Take one particular problem—the problem of race and of colour, which is a root problem in our Empire. There are no doubt people who have a patent solution for that sort of problem, they have a general formula, they have a simple standard procedure for its solution. But it will not be the right one. To my mind we have there in the Empire a problem which is going to test our wisdom, our farsightedness, our statesmanship, our humanity, probably for generations before any solution can ever be reached. You can have no simple standardized solution. You can have no simple straightforward approach to a problem such as the vast diversity of race and colour, culture, and levels of civilization existing in our Empire. That is the sort of problem with which we have dealt in the past, and which will face us even more in the future. It calls for continuous experiment, for variety of treatment, and for very prolonged practical experience before any satisfactory solution can be reached.

I mention this because I know it is one of the questions on which people are thinking deeply and with which they are very much concerned nowadays. Many well-meaning

people think you can by short cuts arrive at a solution. But you will not. Simplification will not help you. Simplification will mean falsification of the real difficulty. It is only by a long process of experience and patient experiment that you can deal with situations such as these.

## Value of leadership

Take my own Continent with its problems of colour and race in West Africa, in East Africa, in South Africa. Everywhere you have great differences of culture and conditions generally, and in all these cases you can only proceed empirically, making experiments, trying to follow lines that suggest themselves as practicable and wise in the particular circumstances, and avoiding general preconceived standardized solutions.

Again, take the other danger I have referred to—the danger of following slogans and catchwords. Today we hear a great deal of democracy. We are fighting the battle of democracy. We are fighting for freedom. Of course we are. But these words become *clichés*, they become catchwords and vague slogans, which in the end do not lead you very far. Our opponents have another set of formulas. They fight for the leadership principle, the Führer principle. With them the objective has also become a catchword, a *cliché*. It must be quite clear to anybody who thinks of the real problems that face us that you will only get to practical solutions in the end if you have a good mixture of both democracy and freedom on the one hand, and of leadership on the other. It is no use simplifying your problem and using one simple formula, and thinking that you will reach the solution in that way. Here in this country you are a great democracy, perhaps the most outstanding democracy of history; but here too we have learned what leadership means in a great emergency. Without leadership, freedom by itself will not help you. Freedom, like patriotism, is not enough.

I mention this simply as a case where you cannot blindly follow one general trend of thought alone. The world is much too complex, and the problems to be solved are much more complex. In the difficulties before us we shall want both leadership and democracy. We shall want not only freedom but also discipline. Discipline is just as essential. We shall have to bear that in mind in the days before us.

## Problem of power

I mention another case of one-sided simplification and of following one trend of thought: I remember before the last war, and during the last war, we were very much concerned with the danger of what was called the "balance of power." We wanted to get away from it because it was the old system in Europe that had led to wars before. We were determined to avoid the balance of power, and so we went in for another formula. We wanted a universal all-in system of security, a system of universality and of idealism; and we followed it in the League of Nations. We recognized equality, we brought all the nations together, and in the end there was a very large number of them. In that way we thought we would avoid the problem of the balance of power, but we fell into the opposite danger. This war has taught us not only that idealism is not enough, and that universality is not the solution for our security problem, but it has also taught us that we cannot get away from the problem of power.

That is where this greatest war in history had its origin. We have found that all our idealism, all our high aspirations for a better world and a better human society, stand no ghost of a chance unless we reckon with this fundamental factor, and we keep power well in our minds when we search for the solution of the problem of security. The question of power remains fundamental, and it is, I think, the great lesson of this war. Peace unbacked by power remains a dream.

Therefore, looking at the situation that faces us in the near future, I would say that in arranging for a new world organization for security, as we shall have to do, we shall have to provide not only for freedom and democracy, which are essential, but we shall also have to provide for leadership and for power. If we leave the future security of the world merely to loose arrangements and to aspirations for a peaceful world, we shall be lost.

## Trinity of Nations

We shall have to attend to the lesson we have learned, and see to it that in the new organization to preserve peace for the future, we give a proper place to leadership and to power. To my mind that can be done much more effectively than in the Covenant of the League of Nations, by

giving a proper place to the three great Powers that are now at the head of our United Nations.

Great Britain, the United States and Russia now form the trinity at the head of the United Nations fighting the cause of humanity. And as it is in war, so will it have to be in peace. We shall have to see to it that in the new international organization the leadership remains in the hands of this great trinity of Powers. These three Powers must retain the leadership in war and in peace, and be responsible in the first instance for the maintenance of security and for the preservation of world peace. And this primary responsibility will not be affected by any duties resting on the rest of the United Nations.

I think it was largely because in the League of Nations as constituted after the last war we did not recognize the importance of leadership and power that everything went wrong in the end. What was everybody's business in the end proved to be nobody's business. Each one looked to the other to take the lead, and the aggressors got away with it. Leadership had not been firmly settled by the Constitution of that organization, and it all went to pieces in the general hesitation and confusion. And that is why we are fighting this war now. To my mind we shall have to see to it that in the new organization there is leadership and there is power, both in their proper place and exercising their proper function among the United Nations.

### The League Covenant

Apart from this flaw, I should say, judging from my own reading of events, that there was nothing much amiss with the League of Nations in other respects. It was a well thought-out scheme, and it worked well, and for the first ten years of the League it was a surprising success. Until aggression and the question of power turned up, the League of Nations functioned very well indeed. It looked after matters of social welfare, health, labour, and other social activities of mankind, in a way which could not be bettered, and from that point of view the League system remains, on the whole, a good and proper one to continue in the future. But when it comes to questions of world peace, security and aggression, for which we did not make sufficient provision, we shall have to revise the Covenant on the lines I have suggested.

Just one word more about the League of Nations, and I pass on to other subjects. I think one other flaw or weakness in the League organization after the last war was the fact that we did not pay sufficient attention, or indeed any particular attention to the economic question. The Covenant much too exclusively followed political lines. We looked too much to political solutions. We have learned our lesson there, too. Just as we have learned our lesson that power is fundamental in the international order, so we have learned our lesson that unless the new organization which we are going to erect after this war attends efficiently and well to the economic conditions among mankind, we shall again get into the troubles which ruined world recovery after the last war; and I hope that our new organization will have its economic activities as properly defined and regulated as its political activities.

### “Europe is changing”

I think that so far you will be inclined to agree with me. I now come to much more explosive things, for which I hope you will not hold me responsible hereafter. I am suggesting some new lines of thought. We have moved into a strange world, a world such as has not been seen for hundreds of years, perhaps not for a thousand years. Europe is completely changing. The old Europe which we have known, into which we were born, and in which we have taken our vital interest as our Mother-Continent, has gone. The map is being rolled up and a new map is unrolling before us. We shall have to do a great deal of fundamental thinking, and scrapping of old points of view, before we find our way through that new Continent which now opens up before us.

Just look for a moment at what is happening, and what will be the state of affairs at the end of this war. In Europe three of the Great Powers will have disappeared. That will be quite a unique development. We have never seen such a situation in the modern history of this Continent. Three of the five Great Powers in Europe will have disappeared. France has gone, and if ever she returns it will be a hard and a long upward pull for her to emerge again. A nation that has once been overtaken by a catastrophe such as she has suffered, reaching to the foundations of her nationhood, will not easily resume her old place again. We may talk about her as a Great Power, but talking will not help her much. We are

dealing with one of the greatest and most far-reaching catastrophes in history, the like of which I have not read of. The upward climb will be a bitter and a long one. France has gone, and will be gone in our day, and perhaps for many a day. Italy has completely disappeared, and may never be a Great Power again. Germany will disappear. Germany at the end of this war will have disappeared, perhaps never to emerge again in the old form. The old Bismarckian Germany may perhaps never rise again. Nobody knows. The Germans are a great people, with great qualities, and Germany is inherently a great country, but after the smash that will follow this war Germany will be written off the slate in Europe for long, long years and after that a new world may have arisen.

### Russia the "new Colossus"

We are therefore left with Great Britain and with Russia. Russia is the new Colossus in Europe—the new Colossus that bestrides this Continent. When we consider all that has happened to Russia within the last 25 years, and we see Russia's inexplicable and phenomenal rise, we can only call it one of the great phenomena in history. It is the sort of thing to which there is no parallel in history, but it has come about. These are questions of power which I say we should not neglect. Russia is the new Colossus on the European continent. What the after effects of that will be nobody can say. We can but recognize that this is a new fact to reckon with, and we must reckon with it coldly and objectively. With the others down and out, and herself the mistress of the Continent, her power will not only be great on that account, but it will be still greater because the Japanese Empire will also have gone the way of all flesh, and therefore any check or balance that might have arisen in the East will have disappeared. You will have Russia in a position which no country has ever occupied in the history of Europe.

Then you will have this country of Great Britain, with a glory and an honour and a prestige such as perhaps no nation has ever enjoyed in history; recognized as possessing a greatness of soul that has entered into the very substance of world history. But from a material economic point of view she will be a poor country. She has put in her all. This country has held nothing back. There is nothing left in the till. She has put her body and soul and everything into it to win the

battle of mankind. She will have won it, but she will come out of it poor in substance.

The British Empire and the British Commonwealth remain as one of the greatest things of the world and of history, and nothing can touch that fact. But you must remember that the Empire and the Commonwealth are mostly extra-European. Those are the overflows of this great British system to other continents. The purely European position of Great Britain will be one of enormous prestige and respect, and will carry enormous weight, but she will be poor.

### Relations with the United States

Then outside Europe you have the United States, the other great World Power. You will therefore have these three Great Powers: Russia the Colossus of Europe, Great Britain with her feet in all continents, but crippled materially here in Europe; and the United States of America with enormous assets, with wealth and resources and potentialities of power beyond measure. The question is how you are going to deal with that world situation. I am just painting before you the picture of the new world that we shall have to face, which will be something quite unlike what we have had to deal with for a century, or indeed for centuries.

Many people look to a union or closer union between the United States of America and Great Britain, with her Commonwealth and Empire, as the new path to be followed in the future, in this world which I am describing as facing us. I myself am doubtful about that. I attach the greatest importance to Anglo-American collaboration for the future. To my mind it is, beyond all doubt, one of the great hopes of mankind. But I do not think that, as what I might call a political axis, it will do. It would be a one-sided affair. If you were to pit the British Commonwealth plus the United States against the rest of the world, it would be a very lop-sided world. You would stir up opposition and rouse other lions in the path. You would stir up international strife and enmity which might lead to still more colossal struggles for world power than we have seen in our day. I do not see human welfare, peace, security along those lines.

So we come back to where we started, namely the trinity. We shall not act wisely in looking to an Anglo-American union or axis as the solution for the future. We shall have to stick

to the trinity that I have referred to. I think we must make up our minds to that as the solution for the present and the near foreseeable future.

### Union with smaller Democracies

But then I am troubled with this thought—and this is the explosive stuff I am coming to. In that trinity you will have two partners of immense power and resources—Russia and America. And you will have this island, the heart of the Empire and of the Commonwealth, weak in her European resources in comparison with the vast resources of the other two. An unequal partnership, I am afraid. The idea has repeatedly floated before my mind, and I am just mentioning it here as something to consider and to ponder—whether Great Britain should not strengthen her European position, apart from her position as the centre of this great Empire and Commonwealth outside Europe, by working closely together with those smaller Democracies in Western Europe which are of our way of thinking, which are entirely with us in their outlook and their way of life, and in all their ideals, and which in many ways are of the same political and spiritual substance as ourselves. Should there not be closer union between us?

Should we not cease as Great Britain to be an island? Should we not work intimately together with these small Democracies in Western Europe which by themselves may be lost, as they are lost today, and as they may be lost again? They have learned their lesson, they have been taught by the experience of this war when centuries of argument would not have convinced them. Neutrality is obsolete, is dead. They have learned the lesson that, standing by themselves on the Continent, dominated by one or other Great Power, as will be the future position, they are lost. Surely they must feel that their place is with this member of the trinity. Their way of life is with Great Britain, their outlook and their future is with Great Britain and the next world-wide British system.

We have evolved a system in the Commonwealth which opens the door for developments of this kind. Today in the Commonwealth we have 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 nations could be subjected. They are all sovereign States, they retain all the attributes and functions and symbols of sovereignty. Other neighbouring nations, therefore, living the same way of life,



and with the same outlook, can with perfect safety say: "That is our group; why are we not there? With full retention and maintenance of our sovereign status, we choose that grand company for our future in this dangerous world."

It is naturally a question for these States of Western Europe to settle themselves. It is for them to say whether in the world as they have learned to know it, as history has proved it to be, it is safe for them to continue in the old paths of isolation and neutrality, or whether they should not help themselves by helping to create out of closer union with Great Britain a great European State, great not only in its world-wide ramifications, great not only as an Empire and a Commonwealth stretching over all the continents, but great as a power on this Continent, an equal partner with the other Colossi in the leadership of the Nations.

### Stabilizing factor

I think this trinity will be the stabilizing factor, the wall of power behind which the freedoms and the democracies of the world can be built up again. It will be the protecting wall. But I should like to have that trinity a trinity of equals. I should like to see all three of them equal in power and influence and in every respect. I should not like to see an unequal partnership.

I call this very explosive stuff, but we are living in an explosive world. I want you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to bear in mind that we are living in a world where we are forced to fundamental thinking and to a fundamental revision of old concepts. The old world that we knew has gone, and it will not return. To my mind, it is a question whether those who think alike and feel alike, whose interests and whose safety rest on the same broad human political basis should not be together in building up that splendid trinity to which we look forward for the future leadership.

So much for Europe, and I am saying nothing about America and Asia. It is all very speculative, and I am saying nothing dogmatic, but I am sure we shall have to do a great deal of fundamental thinking. I shall not be surprised to find that not only in this country but elsewhere outside this island, and especially in Western Europe, many thoughtful people are thinking in the same direction. They have learned much in this, the bitterest experience of their lives and the lives

of their countries, and their minds are probably following some such line of thought as that to which I am giving expression.

## The British Commonwealth and Empire

Let me say a few words about the Commonwealth and Empire, because after all we remain a very great world community. It is not only the spiritual power which we command as no other group on Earth commands. It is not only that we possess that strength of soul, that inner freedom which is greater than all the freedoms of the Atlantic Charter, but we are also a very powerful group, scattered though we are over the world. And we must look to our own inner strength, our inner coherence, our system, our set-up and pattern, to see that it is on safe lines for the future.

What is the present set-up in our group? We are an Empire and a Commonwealth. We are a dual system. In that dual system we follow two different principles. In the Commonwealth we follow to the limit the principle of decentralization. In the Commonwealth this group of ours has become wholly decentralized as sovereign States. The members of the group maintain the unbreakable spiritual bonds which are stronger than steel, but in all matters of government and their internal and external concerns they are sovereign States.

In the Colonial Empire, on the other hand, we follow quite a different principle. We follow the opposite principle of centralization. And the centralization is focussed in this country, in London. The question that arises in my own mind, looking at the situation objectively, is whether such a situation can endure. To have the Empire centralized and the Commonwealth decentralized, to have the two groups developed on two different lines, raises grave questions for the future. Is this quality in our group safe? Should we not give very grave thought to this dualism in our system?

I hope you will forgive my doubts, Mr. Chairman, but I do not speak critically here. I am not a critic of the Empire. I am just thinking objectively, and giving expression to my concern. I am not out to criticize. But I know as a fact that wherever I have gone in the Colonial Empire I have found criticism of this situation. Your own British people outside this island, living in Crown Colonies, are very critical and

restive under this system which is centralized in London. It is not the nature of the beast, you know. The Britisher resents being run by others and from a distance. The question is whether there should not be an approach between the two systems so as to eliminate gradually this dualism and have a closer approach between the two, and bring Empire and Commonwealth closer together.

Following that line of thought it has seemed to me that our colonial system consists of too many units. If there is to be decentralization you will have to decentralize from the Colonial Office in London, and give administrative powers of all sorts, and all degrees, sometimes to very small units, or to some still in a very primitive stage of development, and that might be a risky thing to do.

Our colonial system consists of a very large number of units in all stages of development, and if there is to be decentralization and devolution of power and authority, it becomes, in my opinion, necessary to simplify the system, to tidy it up, to group smaller units, and, in many cases, to do away with units which have simply arisen as an accident by historic haphazard. They should never have existed as separate units, and in many cases their boundaries are quite indefensible. You know how this great show has grown up historically, by bits of history here and there, without any planning, and, of course, inevitably so. But the time has come, or the time may be coming now, when it is necessary to tidy up the show, to reduce the number of independent colonial units, to abolish a number of these separate administrations scattered pell-mell over the Colonial Empire, and to reduce the consequent expenditure which is a burden on the local peoples, many of them very poor, undeveloped and with very small resources. It is a heavy burden on them, and their slender resources might be devoted to better purpose than carrying on a heavy administrative machine, perhaps beyond their capacity.

As I say, it is a question whether we should not abolish a number of units, and group others, and so tidy up the show. Then in such a case you can decentralize, and you can safely give larger powers and greater authority to those larger groups that you will thus create. Where it might be unsafe and unwise to give larger authority to a number of small units, it might be safe and wise, and the proper course, to give

authority and to decentralize administrative power in the case of larger units grouped under a better arrangement.

### “ Regional Arrangements ”

I do not wish to go into details, but the case I know best is my own African continent, which contains a large number of British Colonies and Territories. There it seems to me quite a feasible proposition to group the British Colonies and Territories into definite groups. You have West Africa, you have East Africa, and you have Southern Africa. It is quite possible to group those Colonies into larger units, each under a Governor-General, and abolish not a few of them that need not continue to enjoy a separate existence. In that way you will overcome the difficulty of the highly centralized system centring in London, which is irksome to the local people, is perhaps not serving their highest interests and their best development, and gives outsiders the occasion to blaspheme and to call the Colonial Empire an Imperialist concern, run in the economic interests of this country.

As you will solve this problem of centralization in the Colonial Empire you will also solve another equally important problem. And this brings me to the Commonwealth. In many of these cases of colonial reorganization where there will be new and larger colonial groups under a Governor-General, you will find that it is quite possible to bring these new groups closer to a neighbouring Dominion, and thereby interest the Dominion in the colonial group. In this way, instead of the Dominions being a show apart, so to say, having little or nothing to do with the Empire, and taking very little interest in it, these regional Dominions will become sharers and partners in the Empire. You will tighten up your whole show ; you will create fresh links between the Empire and the Commonwealth, and create a new interest and life in the system as a whole. You will create better co-operation, and you will bring to bear on the problems of these colonial groups the experience and resources and leadership of the local Dominions, too. In this way you will tighten up your whole system, and instead of being two separate systems, the one decentralized and looking after its own affairs, and the other centralized and centred in London, you will have a much more logical co-operative and statesmanlike arrangement. Perhaps I am now over-simplifying here, but I simply put this picture before you as it has developed in my mind, the picture of a larger more co-operative world community. The time is com-

ing when the colonial system will have to be simplified and tightened up, and to a large extent decentralized, and when the Dominions will have to be called in to play their part also in the new set-up.

### Suggested Conferences

Not only great Britain and not only London, but the Dominions also should, by loose consultative arrangement, have a hand in this new colonial pattern, and the Dominions should also bring their resources and their experience to bear in the development of the Colonies. I think the suggestion is very well worth considering. Perhaps the new link could best be introduced by means of a system of regional conferences, which would include both the local Dominion and the regional colonial group of the area concerned. Perhaps to begin with nothing more is needed than merely an organized system of conferences between them, where they could meet and exchange ideas, and by means of which they could settle common policies, discuss common interests, and in that way link up the Dominions and the Colonies with the Mother-Country in a common more fruitful co-operation.

These, in broad outline, are our future arrangements as I see them. Not only for our own future but also for the future of the world do I want to see our group strengthened and co-ordinated and elements of risk and of danger removed from its path. I want to see it launched forth after this war on the new paths of history with a better prospect of co-operation and collaboration among all its parts. I want a common pride to develop on the basis of better co-operation and understanding. I want the Dominions to take both interest and pride in the Colonies within their sphere, and in that way to create, in our great world-wide Commonwealth, a new *esprit de corps*, a common patriotism, and a larger human outlook.

### British example

Mr. Chairman, these are some of the explosive thoughts that I have taken the liberty to mention here this afternoon. This is a very good and proper occasion for ventilating such ideas. I am speaking to very responsible men. I am speaking to an audience whom I greatly respect and honour. I am speaking to men who are responsible for what is probably the largest human community that has ever existed in this world.

I see that we are moving to a point in history when there will be great changes in the world, when the new world situation will call for changes among all the nations such as they have never faced before, and I have asked myself whether this is not the time for us, too, to look into our own household a bit. It has done wonderfully well in this war. It has done very well both in peace and in war, but not least in this war. It has done miracles, and I want those miracles to continue. I want us on the future paths of history to have a fair clean run, because I think we mean a great deal to the world. I think this world needs our British system. I think we, in our group, play a part which is essential and vital to the future of mankind, and whatever we can do to put our own house in order, to remove anomalies, to remove the sources of internal friction or of misunderstanding, is a service not only to our group but to mankind at large, and must have its effect on the rest of the world. Surely people all over the world will look to this group of peoples comprising one-fourth of the human race, and see how they guide their destinies in peace and war along human lines of mutual helpfulness. Surely such a spectacle must have a far-reaching influence for good. I look upon this Empire and Commonwealth as the best missionary enterprise that has been launched for a thousand years. This is a mission to mankind of good will, good government and human co-operation, a mission of freedom and human helpfulness in the perils that beset our human lot.

Where we are helping ourselves in ways such as I have mentioned, putting our house in order on lines I have suggested, or on similar lines, we shall not only be serving our own cause and strengthening ourselves internally, but we shall be making our contribution to human destiny, and to the promotion of those ideals for which our young men are fighting and bleeding and dying today. I think we shall be serving that greater human cause which we all have at heart, and for which we are prepared to make such sacrifices in our day.

I utter no dogmatic conclusions, I have no set ideas, I am simply giving you the lines of thought that run in my mind when I survey the new situation facing us in the world. I want us not only to think about the other countries who are today labouring in dire trouble all over the world, but also to pay some attention to our own show, which I think also requires a little looking after, and especially at a time like this, when a new world is in the making.

## VOTE OF THANKS

**The Chairman :** Ladies and Gentlemen : I had intended to ask Field-Marshal Smuts whether he would answer any questions, but I think it would be inappropriate. After the profound and thought-provoking speech which he has delivered to us, I think, probably, the most remarkable that most of us have ever heard, we shall all of us want to think it over. After all, we live nowadays in a rationed world, and I do not want us to suffer from indigestion, and we have quite as much mental pabulum as we can absorb at the present moment. I think, therefore, it would be your wish that I should now call upon Lord Woolton to propose a Vote of Thanks.

**The Rt. Hon. Lord Woolton, C.H. (Minister of Reconstruction) :** Mr. Chairman, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen : In November, 1938, I ventured in Pretoria to tell Field-Marshal Smuts, the then Minister of Justice of the Union of South Africa—speaking as I did in the glorious position of having no responsibility for what I said—that we in this country regarded him as the outstanding statesman of the Empire ; and how right I was in that ! We have listened to-day not only to the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, but we have listened, as I learned a few days ago, to the Chairman of the Reconstruction Committee of South Africa. I would like to say to you, Field-Marshal, that that is much too narrow a field for a man of your eminence. We in this country look to you with admiration and with affection. We look to you to preserve your good health and your abounding youthfulness of vision, in order that you may help us in the difficult problems that lie ahead of us. We are very grateful to you for the speech that you have delivered to us to-day.

**The Chairman :** I will call upon the First Lord of the Admiralty to second the Vote of Thanks.

**The Rt. Hon. A. V. Alexander, C.H., M.P. (First Lord of the Admiralty) :** Lord Cranborne, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen : I must confess at once that I have a good deal in common with the majority of those who have listened to the Field-Marshal in that I think we must all have been very much moved. I felt much moved. I was reminded in the middle of his speech of a lesson that came to me when I was a youth reading Emerson's Essays, in which Emerson said : " What is the most difficult task in the world ? To think. I would put myself in the attitude to look in the eye an abstract truth

and I cannot. I flinch and withdraw on this side and on that. I seem to know what he meant who said: No man can see God and live." It is surely a tremendous lesson to all of us who have to undertake the responsibility of government, legislation and administration, to have put before us, by a statesman who has so led in the affairs of the world and the Commonwealth, the courage, at his age, to think and express thoughts that many of us, if we are honest with ourselves, would say we are like Emerson and would shrink from expressing. He has given us certain "explosive" thoughts, as he calls them, but they contain the fundamentals of the problems that we have to do our part, in what of life remains to us to do it in, to solve. I think that he has given us that lead to-day largely because—although it was said by the Chairman that the Field-Marshal always has the forward look—he can stand before us at his age with a great record, with no turning to the right or to the left from those early great inspirations he had; and he is able to say, as perhaps all of us are not able to say, that he has never forsaken the pursuit of the truth which he set himself to follow. We are indeed profoundly grateful to you, Field-Marshal, as every member of the Government is daily grateful to you for your work, your loyalty, and your constant advice.

*(The Motion was carried with acclamation and loud cheers,  
and the proceedings terminated.)*



and I cannot. I think and scribble on this side and on that. I seem to know what he meant who said: No man can see both sides. It is surely a wonderful lesson to all of us who have undertaken the responsibility of government. I am sure that the administration to have put before us by a man who has so far in the trials of the world and the (unpleasant) the courage at his age to think and express thoughts that many of us, if we are honest with ourselves, would say we are far behind and would shrink from expressing. He has given us a "positive" thought, as he calls them, but they contain the fundamental of the problems that we have to be our part, in what of life remains to us to do in this respect. I think that he has given us that lead to-day largely because—although it was said by the Christian that the field should always be the forward look—he can stand before us at his age with a great record, with no turning to the right or to the left from those early great inspirations he had; and he is able to say, as perhaps all of us are not able to say, that he has never forsaken the pursuit of the truth which he set himself to follow. We are indeed profoundly grateful to you, Field Marshal, as every member of the Government is daily grateful to you for your work, your loyalty, and your constant advice.

(The Motion was carried with acclamation and loud cheers, and the proceedings terminated.)