



1956

## Political and economic factors in the decline of the British empire

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS IN THE DECLINE OF  
THE BRITISH EMPIRE

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
College of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by  
Pasquale Anania  
June 1956



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The decline of British influence in world affairs is one of the more pronounced political phenomena of modern times. Over the past century key territories subject to British rule have been slipping loose from their imperial moorings at an ever more rapid rate. Those remaining subject to British authority grow progressively more belligerent.

In his search for an understanding of this eclipse of British sovereignty, the contemporary historian finds himself groping through a network of complexly interrelated social, political, economic, and psychological processes. One or another student of history has argued that specific instances or groups of these processes are the mechanisms motivating the collapse of the British hegemony. Among those more commonly cited is that group of influences intimately allied with and stimulated by the progressive maturation of voting franchise reform movements within the United Kingdom. In effect, this view argues that franchise reforms introduced radical changes in imperial attitudes in the United Kingdom and that these in turn led to long-range trends pointed at the splintering of the empire: e.g., the political decline of the landed aristocracy resulted in the creation of the Commonwealth; or,

the rise of the Labor Party carried with it a campaign successfully aimed at the deliberate discarding of imperial holdings.

It is the purpose of this study to examine this argument. Such an examination, it would seem, demands first of all a review of the more obvious factors concerned in the integration and disintegration of the British empire. This review should provide a context within which specific franchise reforms within the United Kingdom can be related to other historical events contemporary with them but more specifically related to the disintegration of Britain's imperial hegemony. It is proposed that these relationships should lead to an effective basis for assessing the relative truth or falsehood of the argument that progressive franchise reform has been one of the historical trends largely contributory to the dismemberment of the British empire.

Since the analysis to be presented is in part contingent upon a specialized understanding of the term empire, it would appear necessary to begin with a definition of this term.

## I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Empire as a generalized term. The establishment of vast political hegemonies appears to have been one of the leading political motives of Western civilization. "Empire" is a term somewhat indiscriminately applied to all such unions, but under careful scrutiny they would appear to be separable into three distinct types: 1) the land-based hegemony, or imperium, the

dominant political integration of ancient civilizations; 2) the rather unstable transitional hegemony, or "feudal empire"; and 3) the maritime hegemony, or empire, the dominant form in modern history.<sup>1</sup>

Imperium, or land-based hegemony. Imperium, as understood here, is a term accurately applied only to those agrarian absolutisms previous to the withering of Roman rule. At various stages in the imperium's growth political authority, which was absolute, rested in the hands of some type of priest-king, monarch, or emperor who was both a demi-god or deity incarnate of his state's religion and the chief priest of its usually vegetarian rites. Originally, a "nuclear core" located in some favorably situated alluvial basin had provided the agricultural foundation requisite to expansion, and this "core" had gradually expanded into an imperium by the piecemeal conquest of

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<sup>1</sup> The generalizations here involved, though they may well apply to certain phases of Oriental history, refer to Western civilization only. The Athenian and Phoenician experiments which appear to be the principal exceptions to some areas of this definition can be construed as not the dominant political forms of ancient times. Though both were the centers of apparently maritime hegemonies, neither was as successful nor as extensive as the usual historical treatise implies since neither had too successful a control of its colonies. Athens was but one of a group of petty, warring, Greek city-states whose tenuous holdings are generally lumped together as the Athenian empire. Magna Graecia, supposedly its chief colonial area, was another collection of petty, Greek city-states anything but under Athenian control. And Carthage certainly was not under the control of Tyre. It was a power in its own right and represented a threat both to Magna Graecia and rising Rome.

societies abutting its land frontiers. The primitiveness of the core's technology had conditioned this pattern of expansion, and habit combined with relatively slow technological growth led to its continuation in later imperial stages. The conquest of land neighbors was a continuous function of the core's growth, and the armies carrying out this task were agents of the state acting under deliberate orders. Loot, the procurement of slaves, and self-defense were some of the principal motives behind these conquests. Colonization, as understood in modern times, was only a limited agent of the "core's" expansion and more or less under the tutelage of the state. Several imperiums tried to expand through the establishment of maritime colonies, but their efforts do not appear to have been too successful. Their relatively primitive technology and communications so compounded the problem of ruling maritime colonies that sooner or later these colonies fell under the heel of competing imperiums adjoining their land perimeters: i.e., Asia Minor falling to the Persians, or Magna Graecia capitulating to Rome. Hence, even though the given imperium might possess a navy, the historical context of its expansion predicated that its military power must rest primarily in armies; imperium was predominantly a land power. As a given "nuclear core" expanded, it created an imperium by superimposing its own absolutistic social, political, judicial, fiscal, and other controls upon newly conquered territories. The economic foundation of its domain was basically agrarian, and its technology,

even though it might produce some monumental works, consisted principally of handicrafts and animal power. Slavery, but one impetus to the pattern of continual conquest, was the imperium's chief machinery.

Historical context at the dawn of empires. Empires such as that of the British, on the other hand, even though they possess certain traits in common with imperiums, present a rather conclusively different picture. They occur in a radically different and much later historical matrix. At the time of their appearance Western civilization was in the midst of a transition from absolutistic to representative forms of government. As an integral phase of this movement the unstable transitional hegemonies so much a part of life in the Middle Ages were withering away, and the petty principalities which composed them slowly were being combined to form modern centralized states. The now fully matured capitalistic era was well into its formative stages. Having already reached the basic patterns of industrialization, the whole civilization was heading toward the complexity, specialization, and interrelatedness of our present "age of technology." In all walks of life Western man's intellectual orientation was progressing from a monistic to a pluralistic basis for decision, a change revealed in the growth of such social, political, and judicial instruments as joint stock companies, citizen juries, voting franchises,



the separation of governmental powers, the separation of church and state, the subjection of the military to legislative controls, the establishment of parliaments, petitions of right from citizen pressure groups, nations and national citizenship, guarantees of civil rights, etc... Though many of these instruments had abortively appeared in imperiums, their appearance had been confined almost exclusively to the nuclear cores where their potential meaning was nullified by absolute executive prerogatives. Thus, the imperium presents a picture of cultural stagnation and autocratic controls while the empire suggests a picture of cultural flux and continual adaptation.

The characteristics of an empire. The introduction into the historical context at the dawn of empire of the knowledge that there were available for expropriation territories beyond the European land mass, a knowledge following logically from the "voyages of discovery," set the stage for the birth of empires. An empire is the cumulative result of the maturation of historical trends present at the time of the rise of this type of political integration acting upon the territories available for expropriation. In its expanding stages it is a rather indiscriminate composition of widely scattered lands and peoples. By maturity, however, in deference to strategic, demographic, economic, and other considerations, this distribution becomes

far more selective, even though oceans and the designs of competitors continue to present a continuous administrative problem. Except in the case of Russia, empires have been anything but a continuous land mass, and naval power has thus had to be the key military arm of their expansion. Colonization has been equally important and has in one sense been more dominant. Expansion has as often been the result of the acquisitive acts of private citizens motivated by personal interests as it has been the result of military campaigns on the part of the state; in fact, military expansion has been ineffective unless allied with or followed by colonization. Politically, all these characteristics have resulted in something of a duality in the administrative organization of the mature empire. Though representative government is typical of the mature nuclear core, the government it grants to subject territories runs the gamut from compromises about the principles of representative government to managed levels of despotism. Ultimately, such compromises in rule appear to be attributable to the interrelationships of several factors: 1) the role of colonization in the growth pattern of empires, 2) the existence of representative forms of government, 3) variations in the technological potentials of the nuclear core and subject territories, 4) variations in the technological potentials of the leading imperial competitors, 5) variations in the "balance of power" among the leading nations of the world, 6) the cost-accounting nature

of private enterprise, and 7) the indifferent application of administrative techniques rising from "racist" attitudes. Acting together these factors appear to have compromised the degree of authority that could be exercised successfully at any given time by an empire's administrative center.

Meaning of empire. Empire, then, is authority limited in various ways and dependent upon complexly interrelated influences. At best it means the prerogative or power of certain single states to command certain limited acts or courses of action on the part of other states, territories, etc. which they have conquered, colonized, or otherwise control. It is not an absolute authority. Unlike the prerogatives of imperium, it does not imply the managing state's (nuclear core's) absolute ownership and control of lands ruled in its name, even though it does exercise varying degrees of authority over any one of them. Geographically, the empire has a maritime distribution while the imperium presents a solid land mass. Both rise from different political orientations, and the material base of empire is technological as opposed to the agrarian way of life typical in the imperium. The two represent the political solutions of different historical epochs, and where the one, imperium, rose from the conquest of established civilizations or relative equals, the other, the empire, grew first of all as its nuclear core colonized primitive areas no military

match for it and later as the same nuclear core absorbed the governmental prerogatives of other civilized societies that were its technological inferiors. Granted these differences, the equation of ancient and modern political hegemonies under the term empire would seem erroneous. The two types are not alike; in fact, the only trait they appear to have in common is their inclusion under the term political hegemony. Empire is the technologically oriented and politically limited maritime hegemony of recent history, and imperium is the land-based, agrarian, political absolutism of the past.

Empire and the British hegemony. Thus viewed, empire would seem to present a more precise definition of the nature of British power than does the normal loose usage of its meaning, and it is this concept which is intended by the term empire as used in this study. This study proposes to point out that the administrative center of an empire: i.e., the United Kingdom: is primarily an administrative authority and subject to many checks upon its use of power. Some of these checks rise from those the administrative center would control. Others rise from the designs of competing administrative centers, designs which may be military, economic, psychological, etc. They derive also from limitations inherent in the technological structure and material potential of the nuclear core. The "free-

for-all" which has disrupted the last fifty years of Chinese history is one of the more obvious illustrations of these checks and balances in action. As usual in history, the final resolution of this problem took a military turn.

Observations on the foundation of British power. Primacy of political authority can be maintained only as long as one is able and willing to produce the military or police power necessary for its enforcement. In respect to her military problems, Britain has been more favored than most of her competitors. Her insularity has provided her a nearly impregnable bastion,<sup>2</sup> at least until the recent advent of the submarine and air power. Thanks to a fortuitous series of mineral deposits now approaching exhaustion, she has been able to maintain until quite recently her deliberate effort to keep her primary position among the world's foremost naval powers,<sup>3</sup> and she has been able to produce, alone or in coalition with other powers, the armies necessary for her land campaigns. Nevertheless, from the moment of its inception

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sir Halford J. Mackinder, Britain and the British Seas (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1906), ch. 1; or C. B. Fawcett, A Political Geography of the British Empire (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1933), ch. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. C. Eckel, Coal, Iron, and War (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920), chs. 1-3 for a summary of the role of mineral deposits, particularly coal, iron, lead, tin, etc., in the success of British efforts. The exhaustion of the United Kingdom's high-grade iron ore deposits (c. 1917) may yet underwrite the complete collapse of the British empire.

her imperial course has been precariously balanced and her material and military position have progressively declined. In a milieu of competing world powers, these gradual alterations in her favored position have presented her administrators with almost insurmountable problems in regard to the government of her more important holdings. Over the years her attempts to solve these problems have produced such political organizations and mechanisms as crown colonies, dominions, plebiscites, mandates, condominiums, and trusteeships, dominions being by far the most important in terms of diminishing British power and the compass of this study.

Dominion. The dominion is the result of attempts to provide stability and equilibrium to the conflicting social, political, and economic aspirations struggling for recognition in the relations between the United Kingdom and the more important, usually Caucasian controlled, segments of its empire. Though now used in somewhat distorted fashion by other world powers, the dominion is a political institution originally developed to provide a solution to problems peculiar to the expanding British empire. Initially, as in the case of Canada,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. the British North America Act in Public General Statutes, Vol. II, pp. 5 ff.: 30 Victoria c.3 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, Reprint), an act passed by Parliament in 1867. The more significant passages of this act may be found in Carl Stephenson and George F. Marcham, Sources of English Constitutional History (New York: Harper & Bros., 1937), pp. 738 ff..



it was a legal instrument representing an agreement between a colony and the United Kingdom under which both professed a common allegiance to the Crown, the colony was granted internal autonomy, and the United Kingdom reserved the right of review over the manner in which the colony conducted its international affairs. Since that time, however, all that dominion has come to mean is voluntary cooperation under a common allegiance to the Crown. This change is the end result of the recommendations of the Inter-imperial Conference of 1926<sup>5</sup> and the enactment of the Statute of Westminster (1931),<sup>6</sup> which legalized its findings. Dominion status had been expected to solve a number of administrative problems which had cropped up during the years between 1750 and 1867. These had erupted from what appears to

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<sup>5</sup> The records and recommendations of this conference will be found in their entirety in Vol. XI of the Parliamentary Papers of Great Britain for the year 1926 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1926). The most significant statement of the "Recommendations" is the last clause of Par. 1, Sec. II, "Status of Great Britain and the Dominions," which asserts that the dominions together with Great Britain "...are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Public General Acts (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1932), 22 George V, c. 4: p. 13 f. for a copy of this statute. What little discussion ensued on this issue took place in Parliament in 1930 and 1931. Cf. Parliamentary Debates (H.C. Debts.) for those years. Of particular note is the fact that this bill was passed by all dominion parliaments before being given cursory approval in the U. K. Parliament (cf. 22 George V: v. 255, pp. 2626-2627).

have been an almost inherent conflict between the basic patterns which had produced Britain's colonial expansion and contemporaneous developments elsewhere in her imperial structure, such trends as the United Kingdom's growing gamble on the technological revolution and world trade, the dawning limits of British naval power, the problem of mounting strategic costs, the gradual but foreseeable alteration of the British position in a milieu of competing world powers, and perhaps in some measure, as many authorities would have one believe, the progressive maturation of representative government and voting franchise reform.

The franchise reform as an historiographical problem.

The possible effects of the spread of voting franchise privileges in the United Kingdom upon the course of the empire would appear to have been treated in more wishful fashion than any other aspect of British history, particularly as regards the widely-held belief that franchise reform and its diffused effects profoundly influenced the imperial decline. Certain questions present themselves upon the acceptance of this view. Can it be proven, for instance, that British imperial policy was radically altered by changes in the orientations of Parliament following franchise reforms? If observable and verifiable, was this radical change so intimately allied with the vote reform movement as to preclude certain other intellectual and material agents as more contributory to imperial decay? It would seem



that if evidence were available to show that the imperial decline began before the introduction of franchise reforms, that such symptoms of imperial retreat as the dyarchical structure in colonial government existed before the introduction of voting reform in the United Kingdom; then, one would have to look elsewhere for the seeds of imperial disintegration. It is the contention of this study that such evidence does exist and can be verified, that certain observable influences combined to sow the seeds of imperial decay previous to the advent of franchise reform and that these influences stimulated a policy of imperial administration continued and developed since.

Orientation of proofs. In order properly to assess such evidence as apparently does exist, certain gross material aspects of the rise, development, and decline of British colonial power will have to be reviewed. As previously stated, this should provide a context within which franchise reforms can be sensibly related to symptoms of imperial decay and their effects assessed. This analysis will end with the confused and terrible years of World War II; for by then all major franchise reforms had been enacted and the imminent collapse of the British hegemony had been exposed.

The voting franchise: a definition. For the purposes of this study voting franchise may be defined as the legally guaranteed right to express one's voice, will, and desires

about the manner in which one is to be governed through the  
used of the elective and representative processes. Though the  
concern here will center about franchise changes in the United  
Kingdom, it is worthy of remark that all dominion bills and  
most imperial legislation subsequent to the first dominion  
bill (the North America Act of 1867) grant some type of voting  
franchise in subject lands. Such grants, however, have had  
little direct effect upon the actions of the "home" Parliament  
in other imperial matters because they are symptoms of imperial  
decay rather than causes, the end result of disintegrating in-  
fluences rather than their stimulus.

Keeping these preliminary definitions and ideas in mind,  
this survey begins.

## CHAPTER II

### GEOGRAPHY OF BRITISH EXPANSION

An empire is a geographic as well as a political entity. That of the British proves no exception to this rule. It is composed of more than one hundred member parts which are widely distributed. They are located in some of the most well-known as well as some of the more remote areas of the world. In order to establish and maintain its influence over these areas, Britain has had to develop and keep accessible broad avenues of communication with them. This is a geographic as well as a military problem.

Geographic and geopolitical factors conditioning British expansion. The influence of geography upon the expansion of England is best understood in terms of several conditioning factors: 1) the resources and geographic locations of the newly discovered lands and markets which England and her European competitors wished to expropriate, a factor which combined with geopolitical relations among these competitors conditioned the emergence of naval power as the primary weapon of international warfare; 2) the military advantages inherent in Britain's insular location; 3) the role of colonization in the development of expropriated territories; and 4) the totalized context of

Britain's relations with her imperial competitors and colonies throughout the period of her imperial reign.

Dawn of the imperial surge. The opening of England's imperial drive begins with the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603). At that time Spain was the foremost power in Western Europe. France, Holland, and England were her chief competitors. One by one over the next two-and-one-half centuries (1558-1815), England, through a series of wars and alliances, successfully undertook the elimination of the others. The wars she fought and the peace treaties which followed provide a record of just how satisfactorily she completed this task. Spain, Holland, and France were stripped of the more important of their imperial gains.<sup>1</sup> Naval and military successes, however, are but one phase of Britain's efforts. It remained for colonization to make effective her expropriations, since the best the vaunted navy could do was bar competitors from them; it could not develop them.

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed accounts of the wars and treaties with these powers, cf. Sir John R. Seeley, Expansion of England (London: The Macmillan Co., 1883); John S. C. Bridge, From Island to Empire (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914); J. Ellis Barker, The Rise and Decline of the Netherlands (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1906); and Walter P. Hall and Robert G. Albion, A History of the British Empire (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1946).

The two arms of territorial expropriation.<sup>2</sup> Britain's military campaigns against her European rivals and her colonization were intimately allied forces and appear to have been the two chief agencies of British expansion, even though they emerged from somewhat different, sometimes coincident combinations of social forces. Until 1815, Britain's military campaigns generally appear to have been precipitated by overt acts of the Crown or its agents,<sup>3</sup> though Parliament through its control of the royal purse sooner or later found itself involved in all of them. Colonization, on the other hand, was largely the result of private initiative, providing a convenient outlet for social, demographic, and economic forces bursting their

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<sup>2</sup> The views expressed in this paragraph are interpretations of data to be found in the sources quoted immediately above or in the bibliography. In referring to Britain's campaigns against the Netherlands, for example, Barker, *op. cit.*, points out that by 1630 "...the Netherlands had become the workshop of the world, the traders of the world, and the world's colonizers and planters." (p. 143). By 1634 they "...had some 34,850 ships carrying on commerce all over the world." (p. 145). "The English observed the progress of Dutch commerce with envy." (p. 309). "The King, the Court, the mercantile interests and the people were eager to attack the Dutch, and, as there was no just cause, a cause had to be created." (p. 311). The British began plundering Dutch holdings and attacking Dutch shipping on the high seas. New Netherlands was captured and the "...Bor-desux fleet was intercepted...and 130 ships brought into England and condemned as lawful prizes." (p. 313 ff.). Seeley, *op. cit.*, points out the successful use of the same tactics against both the Spanish and the French.

<sup>3</sup> The campaigns in North America are here viewed as the reflection of struggles elsewhere.

restraints in the "home islands." Both agencies, however, in struggling toward their individual goals fused into a single force directed toward the common end of supplanting the authority of Britain's European rivals in Asia and the New World.

Constancy of military effort (1558-1815). During her initial period of expansion, 1558-1815, Britain was continually at war with other European powers. The constancy of this military effort is reflected in the following table of full-scale wars.<sup>4</sup>

In years, British wars against:	<u>Spain</u>	<u>Holland</u>	<u>France</u>
1558-1649	49	-	9
1650-1763	37	9	45
1764-1815	17	24	29
	<u>103</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>83</u>

On the surface this table suggests that during a period of 257 years (1558-1815), from the crowning of Elizabeth I to the Congress of Vienna, Britain (first England and later the United Kingdom) spent about 30% of her time involved in wars aimed at territorial, strategic, or economic gains. In this, however, the table is misleading because it does not take into account the sequential rather than simultaneous occurrence of some of

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<sup>4</sup> Condensed from the works of John S. C. Bridge, op. cit., and Quincy Wright, A Study of War, 2 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942).

these conflicts, nor does it take into consideration such belligerent circumstances as the never-ending process of imperial attrition represented by permissive piracy under "letters of marque," certain unavoidable but violent sea campaigns which erupted when marauding British fleets encountered those of other powers or vice versa, and other minor colonial skirmishes which would bring the time percentage up to something in the neighborhood of 85%.

Motives and results of continuous conflict. In general, this continuous conflict was aimed not only at the expropriation of more territories and the removal of competitors; it was aimed also at improving the quality and defensibility of the whole of the imperial structure. Surinam (Dutch Guiana), for example, a relatively worthless tropical area, was traded to the Dutch in exchange for New Netherlands which had been recaptured by the Dutch shortly after the Duke of York's celebrated raid.<sup>5</sup> This too often ignored trade can hardly be considered unimportant or an accident, for it rather conveniently gave the British uninterrupted control of the American coastline from Maine to Florida. The acquisition of Gibraltar was no accident either. Control of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. John Fiske, The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America, 2 vol. (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1900), Vol I, pp. 243-284, and Vol. II, pp. 1-5, for the course of this controversy.



Gibraltar meant strategic advantages. Though wrested from the Spanish by a combined British and Dutch fleet, it was a British garrison which occupied it, thus giving Britain control of naval and merchant traffic in the Mediterranean. The net benefits of this initial phase of expansion were: 1) the United Kingdom gained strategic control in the Atlantic Basin, the Mediterranean Basin, the Australasian Basin, and the China Seas--in other words, strategic control of the world's seas, and 2) it gained colonial control in such areas of the globe as Canada, India, Burma, and Malaya. Further, it removed Spain, France, and Holland, once and for all, as threats to British colonial expansion, though it did not remove them as threats to British power on the "continent."

Expansion and retreat. The Congress of Vienna marked the end of the great surge of the British expansionist movement. Subsequent to that time the military campaigns of the United Kingdom, except for isolated flurries in Asia and Africa, were primarily defensive and strategic, concerned with the two-fold problem of stabilizing the "continent" and defending colonial life-lines. True, the African campaigns did give Britain some strategic controls, particularly in South and East Africa, and colonization did make effective her control in Australasia and other areas; but these developments alter very little the fact that the United Kingdom has spent the major portion of its



energies from 1815 to the present time locked in a titanic strategic struggle aimed at consolidating and preserving those imperial gains already made. On the one hand the United Kingdom had continually to be concerned with stabilizing political arrangements on the "continent," while on the other it had to be concerned with the internal stability and protection of colonial holdings. This meant a defensive problem of vast proportions because it meant that Britain had to interfere in revolutions on the continent and contain as they emerged the global ambitions of Russia, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Britain had not only to anticipate these problems, she had to contain their effects else control in her colonial areas might be disrupted. The one depended upon the other and vice versa; they were part and parcel of an over-all defensive problem.<sup>6</sup>

Geographic basis of British strategy. This adoption of a defensive posture was an end result of problems inherent in the broad, indiscriminate geographic structure of the existing empire. Britain needed time to develop and consolidate colonial administration in those territories acquired previous to 1815. Naval and merchant communications had to be developed and protected. Such needs placed the empire in a primarily defensive situation. Campaigns resulting in acquisition entered after

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. B. Gooch, and J. H. B. Masterman, A Century of British Foreign Policy (London: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1917) and G. B. Gooch, A History of Modern Europe, 1878-1919 for a more complete account of these struggles.

1815: the Boer War, for example; were generally the unwanted fruit of the overt acts of private citizens; official Britain appeared desirous of avoiding them at all costs. Defense and consolidation were the official concerns. Expansion was undertaken only for strategic or economic reasons and only then under progressively more limited political instruments.

Focusing the geographic problem. Concern with defense rises principally from the distribution of the subject lands of the empire. The United Kingdom is not contiguous to the lands it administers. Lying just off the European land mass, it is separated from its subject areas by oceans, competing powers, and hostile cultures. The territories it administers, unlike the subject areas of a Rome, Persepolis, or other imperial center of the past, are exclaves,<sup>7</sup> areas far removed from and in no way abutting its national borders. This is a factor of profound strategic importance.

Comparative geographic distribution of an ancient imperium and a modern empire. The subject lands of the Roman

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<sup>7</sup> The term exclave, more properly the province of the political geographer, is here used to emphasize the element of interrupted geography and political unity. With the exception of recent Russian acquisitions, the subject land of modern empires are not even remotely in the vicinity of their administrative centers. Oceans, hostile powers, and antagonistic cultural patterns intervene between them and their administrative center, even though they are integral parts of its imperial structure.

Imperium,<sup>8</sup> for instance, were one continuous geographic mass radiating out from the imperial center at Rome. Though the Mediterranean provided one of its principal avenues of communication, this imperium could be traversed without once crossing truly alien territory or open water, both exposed areas in routes of communication and defense; they are decided strategic problems. Rome's land mass was radial and her rule uninterrupted to its perimeters. Her military and administrative supply routes were primarily land routes and her supply lines relatively short and unexposed. An enemy moving inward from her perimeter was presented with a progressively more stubborn defense. The further in he moved the more closely did he approach the thickly populated centers where greater defensive forces could be brought to bear against him and more defensive measures be taken. Obviously, Rome was predominantly a land power; hence, her naval needs were minimal and her exposed areas only at her perimeters.<sup>9</sup> The British empire,

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<sup>8</sup> Rome is here used as a prototype. What is said of Rome is in general true of most of the ancient imperiums.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Sir Halford J. Mackinder, Democratic Ideals and Reality (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1919), chs. 3 and 4 for a fuller exposition of this thesis. As Mackinder aptly observes, Roman land power outflanked the Mediterranean. Enemies were free to attack, but only on Rome's terms. Her radial mass left but one recourse for attack, moving inward from the thinly garrisoned perimeter toward the centers of production and population. The wresting of each additional inward mile cost the attacker progressively more dearly; Roman supply lines shortened while his lengthened and greater forces could be brought to bear against him. It was only after Rome had apparently disintegrated from within that she fell to the marauding designs of her enemies, the barbarians.

however, can hardly be said to be so fortunately arranged. Even the most superficial appraisal of global geography serves to render this glaringly evident. Its exposed areas lie between its tiny administrative center, the United Kingdom, and the great masses which are its subject territories.

Origins of Britain's imperial distribution. Basically, this distribution stems from two sources: 1) the fact that the United Kingdom is composed of islands, and 2) that the lands opened by the "Age of Exploration and Discovery" were accessible only by maritime routes. Britain, because it is separated from the European mainland and dependent upon the surrounding seas for much of its diet, early developed a strong naval tradition and the crafts and skills necessary for the building and maintenance of a strong naval fleet. The sea also served the British islands as a defensive bastion, protecting them from would-be conquerors on the European mainland. Not since William the Conqueror (1066 A.D.) have they been successfully invaded.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The ideas synthesized in this paragraph and several of those following are for most part adapted from the works of Sir Halford J. Mackinder, op. cit., and Britain and the British Seas (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1906, particularly chap. 1; and C. B. Fawcett, A Political Geography of the British Empire (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1933), particularly chapters 8, 9, and 10. All three works deal with geopolitical significance of Britain's unique geographic position, and all find it important. Neither Mackinder nor Fawcett, however, attach to it quite the wide significance that it is given here. Both seem to consider naval power and geographic advantage as something apart from resources and technology upon which their use is predicated.

This nearly impregnable island position is one of the greatest strengths of the early empire, but it is also, because of certain complicating factors, one of its principal weaknesses in modern times. However this may be, the dawn of Britain's imperial surge in the century following the Columbian voyages was coincident with the full emergence of naval power as the primary weapon of international warfare. Access to the newly discovered lands and defense of them was predicated upon the development of naval power. England possessed the resources requisite to this end and employed them to the optimum. The fact that her insularity outflanked the naval ambitions of the European mainland merely served to strengthen her position; her real advantage lay in her technology and resources. Technological advantage combined with insularity helped her rid the seas of the Spanish Armada (1588) and freed her of the last serious threat of invasion from the continent until modern times when she had lost much of her technological advantage.<sup>11</sup> Defeat of the Armada in the closing years of the sixteenth century, however, had left her free to employ her mushrooming naval power to the expropriation and development of the newly discovered colonial areas.

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<sup>11</sup> It is worthy of note here that, aside from this Spanish failure, not since 1066 A.D. has any continental power seriously considered the invasion of Britain and attempted to carry it out.

The British pattern of strategic geography. As Britain expanded, she developed a pattern of consistently including in the holdings she acquired such strategically valuable locations as islands, capes, and port sites for development into naval strongholds or bases. Those acquired in the West Indies, for example, served both to outflank Spanish holdings in South America and to protect English colonies in North America. Singapore, Gibraltar, and the Cape of Good Hope are other examples. The potentially weak line any given one of them might one day represent was of no importance so long as British fleets could be built to control the exposed ocean supply routes. As long as British naval power reigned supreme, there would be no threat of invasion hanging over these strongholds. Wherever the British have colonized, this defensive pattern has been followed, and it appears to have arisen from the average Britisher's awareness of the peculiarly fortuitous strategic value of his homeland's insularity.<sup>12</sup> For defense purposes, he has attempted to reproduce this advantage wherever he has expanded about the globe.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. the well-known writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan. This is one of the principal threads which holds together his rambling dissertations on the role of British sea power in modern history; i.e., The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1600-1783 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1917), pp. 29-35.



The "Achilles Heel" of British strategy. By 1781, however, the nexus of a startling weakness in the British defensive deployment appears to have lain exposed to her rivals, even though the overwhelming nature of contemporary British sea power barred any of them from taking advantage of the knowledge at that time.<sup>13</sup> The progress of the war in America had focused attention on this weakness, for it had impressed upon the world-at-large the fact that the totalized social, political, economic, industrial, and demographic potential at the immediate command of the United Kingdom could not support the logistical effort necessary to the successful conclusion of large-scale land invasions at Britain's naval perimeters, even though her "Union Jack" might lord it over the seas. This was in part a geographic problem and in part a result of the fact that Western civilization had not yet developed the resources, arts, and machinery necessary for implementing the technique of full-scale sea-borne invasions by combined military forces.<sup>14</sup> It was also in part a result

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. immediately below and pp. 26f., 102f.,

<sup>14</sup> The United States appears to be the only nation in modern history possessed of the industrial and mineral resources necessary for this kind of military development, and she arrived at its realization only fifteen short years ago.

of what can only be called Britain's happenstance practice of discouraging the development of manufacturing industries in her colonial areas. Though deliberate, this neglect of colonial industrial development appears to be one of those courses which arise from circumstance rather than malice. Mercantilism, the prevailing economic philosophy at the dawn of British expansion, encouraged the development of manufactures and finishing industries at home and the search for resources abroad. Concentration upon internal industrial development had little effect upon the empire during its formative years, but in later years it meant that the manufactures upon which British military might depend were separated from the raw resources which went into them. As the complexity of the imperial structure increased, so did the weight of this factor, particularly in military planning. Military authorities became more and more aware of the fact that any power that could successfully delay external resources from arriving at the factories in the United Kingdom would have the whole imperial structure in a defensive quandary.

Britain's awareness of her strategic weakness. British military conduct since 1781 lends substance to this argument. Only once (the abortive conflict with the U.S. in 1812) in the period from the end of the American Revolution until World I did the British, warring alone, commit to battle against civilized societies on foreign shores full-scale land armies



unless they had land bases contiguous to the areas they were invading.<sup>15</sup> At these bases British forces could build up a vast material supply before contacting an enemy. Even against relatively primitive and retarded states, the same rule was followed, e.g., the campaigns in India, South Africa, and the Sudan.

The strategic-logistical-tactical function of the geographic matrix: the central geographic problem of the strategic planner. The reasoning underlying this coordinated military concept appears obvious and sound. After all, by 1815 imperial administrators were confronted with the enormous problem of insuring the protection of some 80,000 miles of exposed ocean supply routes lying between manufacturing industries in the United Kingdom and the resource centers and markets in the subject territories of the empire.<sup>16</sup> In a context of competing world powers, this has never been a small problem. Britain's rivals have never quite given up. They have harrassed British authority wherever and whenever possible. They have

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<sup>15</sup> Such campaigns as that in the Crimea are here excluded. This rather puzzling conflict was undertaken in alliance with France. British planners were willing to negotiate an end to this conflict as soon as Napoleon III made obvious his waning interest, even though Sevastopol had already fallen. Britain's only gain appears to have been a delay in Russian naval development.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power, (Princeton: The University Press, 1943), ch. I and 2 for a more detailed examination of British naval strategy.

been only too aware of the United Kingdom's delicate grip upon the empire. They have been quite well aware of the logistical weakness inherent in the separation of raw resources and manufacturing industries, and they have also been aware of such other factors, yet to be considered, as the limits of naval power (a tactical weakness) and the dependence of the United Kingdom upon outside sources for the bulk of its food. As long as her major holdings have remained quiescent, Britain has found manageable the difficulties inherent in these conditions. Tractable colonial relations have left her free to deploy her naval forces so as to protect her colonial resources and fend off her rivals, but revolt in major colonies --indigenous or instigated by foreign rivals--or the invasion of a large, new territory has at times radically altered Britain's control of her strategic situation. Major segments of the fleet have had to be localized to control supply routes to a given invasion point. This has tended to expose both colonies and undeveloped claims to competitors ever hovering in the background waiting for the opportunity to pounce. Revolts have allowed Britain's colonists and rivals, or her rivals alone, to combine against her at her most vulnerable points as happened in the case of the revolt in the American colonies. The tardiness of the British fleet at Yorktown and such victories as were enjoyed by America's puny and infant naval forces were the fruits of a strategic deployment which

saw the British navy spread over Asian, Mediterranean, North Atlantic, and West Indian waters. From this tactical stalemate and from the War of 1812, Britain learned that she could use her fleet to protect her colonial developments or to fend off her competitors, but that she could not distribute it so as to successfully war with both at the same time. She observed also that the problem was doubly complicated by the size and speed of available transport, the stability of the continent, and the location of her raw resources and manufacturing industries. By 1815 Britain was well aware of the fact that neither she nor any other major power at that time possessed the resources necessary for the control of her vast domain under any other than non-belligerent circumstances unless her major colonies chose voluntarily to submit to such rule as she wished to impose.<sup>17</sup>

The compromising sea. British statesmen have at all times since the American revolt realistically appraised these conditions laid down by the geography of the vast world seas and thereby have controlled their more disrupting tendencies. The somewhat vulnerable sea life-line has contributed to British willingness to compromise intra-imperial problems and has helped along with other factors yet to be discussed

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. pp. 120-194.

to produce the present distribution of British holdings. This select distribution has not always been so; for, aside from a few strategic strongholds, no particular planning is evidenced in Britain's patterns of territorial acquisition. The majority of territories acquired appear to have been taken as a matter of expediency. Their acquisition was aimed at weakening a competitor by stripping his holdings or removing him as a commercial or strategic rival. Colonization, the real key to the development of these acquired territories, appears to have been something of an accidental development.<sup>18</sup> By 1815 the rather will-nilly character of British expansion had resulted in a loose, somewhat disorganized empire whose member parts were strewn indiscriminately over the face of the earth. Some attempts had already been made to consolidate their administration, but most of the consolidation has taken place since 1815. Units unwieldy or recalcitrant in one way or another have had to be pacified, controlled, stabilized, or cast loose. All administrative arrangements made have had to comply with the fundamental verities of the British strategic and socio-economic situation. They had also to be predicated upon certain material and cultural factors whose sum total acting upon this strategic situation to a great degree underlies both the rise and decline of British power. These material and cultural factors are the substance of the following discussion.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. pp. 44-49.

### CHAPTER III

#### SELECTED SOCIOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC, POLITICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

##### I. CRUCIAL ELEMENTS IN THE RISE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

At the outset, this study grants to the English their somewhat obvious imperial ambition, though the point at which it appeared and the degree of deliberateness involved in its appearance may be open to some question. The disputability of these matters rises largely from how one views the particular influence of several insensibly blending and interrelated historical trends. The first of these is the growth and maturation of industrialization in England. The second is the news of the Columbian discoveries. The third results from the influence of industrialization and the Columbian discoveries combined with Spanish threats to the sovereignty of the British home islands. The fourth is the effect of British naval successes against Spain and other imperial competitors. And the fifth trend rises from the particular courses and attitudes of essentially antagonistic social groups acting upon the opportunities presented or stimulated by the effects of the other four.

The growth of industrialization. The industrialization of England appears to have begun with the maturation of the

domestic system during the period of the Hundred Year's War (1347-1453). Toward the close of this period the seeds of industrialization appear to have been germinated in the birth of the factory system.<sup>1</sup> Together, these developments bred and stimulated the acceleration of the "inclosure" movements encouraged the growth of towns and cities, and introduced the first symptoms of the eventual decline of agrarian centers. Manufacturing stimulated the development of regular practices and channels of trade, solidified the money-wage system, and conditioned the emergence of mercantilism as the dominant economic philosophy. Mercantilism in turn encouraged the search for and development of new markets overseas, thus stimulating naval development.

Mercantilism, the Columbian discoveries, and the Spanish threat. Continental markets appear to have been developed first;

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<sup>1</sup> The view presented here is in agreement with that proposed by Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1934). It is Mumford's view in this definitive treatise that factory system and industrial revolution are synonymous terms and that the movement commonly referred to as the "industrial revolution" is really, more accurately speaking, a technological revolution. It is Mumford's view that industrialization began with the emergence of the factory system which introduced the use of mechanical power and the specialization of manufacturing or productive functions. Specialization of function was part and parcel of the development of timed operational production and stimulated the gradual substitution of machine work for hand labor. The technological revolution began with the mechanical inventions which increased the use of mechanical power, advanced specialization of function, and almost completely eliminated hand production.



but following their saturation, the facts of the Columbian discoveries, and the emergence and quelling of the Spanish threat, the search for new markets and resources reinforced by the emerging mercantilist philosophy was gradually channelled into the development of the new areas as both markets and sourced for raw materials.<sup>2</sup> As the age of exploration and discovery following the Columbian voyages had matured (1492-1600), English naval power had rapidly expanded in response to several stimuli: 1) the dawn of English nationalism, domestic advances in production, and the emergence with them of mercantilist yearnings; 2) Spain's jealousy toward growing English sea power and her threats to English sovereignty; and 3) the emergence at some point along the line in the quelling of the Spanish threat of official and popular desires to share in the wealth that Spain and Portugal were looting from their imperial enterprises, the first real symptom of a burgeoning imperial ambition. These factors led to the building of publicly and privately financed naval craft, the majority being individually owned and financed "privateers" to be used secretly under the Royal Seal to loot Spanish argosies the world

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. John S. C. Bridge, op. cit., Chaps. 1, 2; or John Seeley, op. cit.; or the somewhat different views in J. R. Green, A Short History of the English People (New York: Harper & Bros., 1879), pp. 251-278.

over. This program proved very effective; for, by 1588, about one century after its inauguration, it had succeeded in creating a naval force capable of crippling Spanish sea power and plundering the Spanish empire at will. The defeat of the Spanish invasion fleet, the "Invincible Armada," in 1588, not only removed the threat of invasion from English shores, but it so seriously weakened Spain's grip upon her empire that it opened up the newly discovered lands to the inroads of other powers.<sup>3</sup>

Group antagonisms and imperial ambition. It is at this point, the scramble for colonial footholds which followed the defeat of the Armada, that British imperial ambition comes to fruition, and it is precisely at this point that its real direction and meaning become lost in the aims of essentially antagonistic social groups, each striving toward its separate goals. Parliament, a somewhat non-representative body, mercantilistic in orientation, the Crown, guardian of hereditary interests and prerogatives, and the "common citizens," struggling toward pluralism in government are the groups or their foci.<sup>4</sup> Acting upon the situation left by the defeat of the

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Green, op. cit., pp. 396-421, or Ramsay Muir, A Short History of the British Commonwealth (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1935), Vol. 1, pp. 370-384, 525-541.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 38-42, for a discussion of these group roles.



Armada, their competition appears to have created certain developmental forces which had a common meeting ground in some attitude toward the development of the newly discovered lands or their resources. Each in its concentration upon the augmenting of its own particular interest in the new lands appears to form one of the interlocking and coincidentally struggling elements of a movement identifiable as a drive toward empire. In truth, it would appear that the social forces of no other nation have ever worked more assiduously toward the construction of a political hegemony, even though each might be striving toward a separate goal in the process. By the same token, it would appear, the social forces of no other nation have ever more seriously, if not blindly, set about the business of making it impossible to finish what it had set out to accomplish, the construction of a political hegemony.

Contradictions in the patterns of construction of the British empire: The statement of a problem. A sensible explanation of this contradiction leads this study into an examination of the internal pressures behind English colonial expansion, an analysis of the role of external interferences rising from diplomatic relations with competitors, a summation of the fundamental attitudes and cultural patterns of colonists (whether English nationals or absorbed by conquest or other means), and a briefing of the constantly changing material

and strategic aspects of the British colonial situation. Since certain geopolitical aspects of British acquisitions have already been discussed, the next logical step would appear to be an examination of the pressures, internal and external, and the patterns characteristic of British expansion.

## II. PRESSURES AND PATTERNS UNDERLYING COLONIZATION

Opening the colonial areas. Naval power, as already discussed, was the chief agent in opening the newly discovered areas to British colonization. Its role, however, contrary to Mahan and others,<sup>5</sup> is not to be misunderstood. Naval power, in fact, had only a limited versatility. Though it could open up the new lands to British designs, it could not develop them and could only partially protect them. To say that English interests

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<sup>5</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1600-1783 (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1917), pp. 1-10, 25-90, propounds his strategic concepts. Sailor that he is, he appears to overemphasize the value of sea power because he fails to consider that 1) the effectiveness of sea power diminishes in proportion to its localization in defense of land operations; 2) that it diminishes in proportion to just how much of its raw materials are separated from its ship-building centers; 3) that it is not the effective agent of colonization, only one of its defenses; and that 4) granted the rest, its effectiveness in strategic terms can be minimized by the designs of other powers, especially when it is already committed to some major defensive operation. The first complicated by distance, and the second, progressively more pronounced, are two of Britain's principal strategic weaknesses.

were immediately aware of this fact, however, is grossly to misrepresent the case. Awareness dawned gradually, and combined with certain other facets and facts of contemporary English life it conditioned the development of "private colonization" as the chief mechanism of British expansion.

British colonization a pattern conditioned by an historical matrix. In the assertion of claims which had followed the defeat of the Armada, England, now the overwhelming sea power, had the initial advantage, but official circles appear to have been puzzled about just what to do at this stage of expansion. Parliament appears to have been little concerned with the opportunities presented by the defeat of the Armada, while the Crown's involvement was somewhat happenstance, being stimulated by the visionary designs of private citizens. Such official policy as did come into being developed gradually. The eventual resolution of the colonial problem had been suggested previous to the defeat of the Armada. Before that time there had been Raleigh and Gilbert's two unsuccessful attempts at colonizing in the New World. Though official sanction had been given these ventures, they had been privately financed and had literally to be badgered out of an at first recalcitrant Crown. Raleigh, after all, had visions of a new and greater England founded upon private colonization, an England in which colonists would be left pretty much to governing themselves and would enjoy the same privileges as citizens in

in the home islands; in fact, as Raleigh would have it, they would enjoy far more. Obviously, this visionary dream could not have been too palatable to the absolute prerogatives of monarchy; but, since no other means could be found to establish the footholds in the New World apparently desired by the Crown, permission was reluctantly granted. Though these attempts at colonization failed, they appear to have set a precedent taken up some years later in successful inroads into the New World, and they also appear to have developed in the Crown a desire and a plan about just how the Crown could restructure its waning absolutism and authority through colonies in the Americas and elsewhere. The Crown's legal policy developed gradually. Following the first colonial failures and the defeat of the Armada there appears to have been a lull of two decades in British attempts at colonization. Both Parliament and Crown seem to have had no set policy about what could be done with British opportunities in the now open areas in Asia and the New World, but the continued insistence of private petitioners appears to have provided them with a solution they would one day regret. Based upon the precedent set by the Raleigh affair, the parade of Royal Colonial Charters began with those granted the East India Company in 1601 and the West India Company in 1607.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Richard Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, 12 vols. (Glasgow: Hakluyt Society, 1903-1905), Vol. 8, p.17 f. for a copy of the Letters Patent to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, or to Stephenson and Marcham, op. cit., p. 401 f., for a condensation of the Charter to the East India Company.

Nexus of pressures behind English colonization. A number of factors appear to have conspired to bring to pass this particular solution of the problem of what to do with the lands now available for expropriation from Spanish claim, but each is one way or another related to the aims of competing social forces or institutions in the home islands. Among the factors of greatest influence were the limited versatility of naval power, troubles between Crown and Parliament, the sources and solvency of the Royal Treasury, disruptive social forces seething under the surface of English life, and expanding industry's need for new and vaster trade outlets. Examining the points of orientation of England's three great social forces sheds some light on just how they were effective.

Factors influencing the royal view toward the development of new lands. The Crown had to take many factors into account. Naval power obviously had its limits. Though it might fend off rivals from the new areas, it would be hard put to do anything more than establish forts as colonies, forts which would put an additional burden on a nearly insolvent Royal Treasury. Naval colonies would expend monies from the treasury rather than increase its revenue. On the other hand, the particular solution offered by private petitioners might promote a substantial increase in the Royal Revenue, since the chief fount of the royal purse independent of Parliament was receipts from customs,

receipts which might be tremendously expanded under the proposed citizen-financed and controlled program of development. Royal grants could also be used to redeem certain of the royal financial obligations: e.g., the Pennsylvania grant; thereby improving the fiscal position of the Crown. Administrative positions which would arise as these areas were developed could be used to reward deserving subjects; the staffing of administrative units would open up a host of new government sinecures for distribution, particularly among the commoner sons of aristocrats or those aristocrats whose families had long since squandered the family estates. Last but not least, these lands could be used to rid England of some of its more rabid religious and political dissenters. All these advantages would bolster the tenure of the Crown and increase its effectiveness against Parliamentary inroads into its authority.

Parliament's view of colonization. Parliament's view of the opportunities inherent in colonization was one of almost complete neglect at this stage of expansion. Aside from a somewhat intermittent interest in Navigation Acts, the Puritan Interregnum excepted, Parliament preferred to let the direction of legal precedent take its course until the middle of the eighteenth century. This was probably because Parliament's paramount concern during the seventeenth century was the problem of wresting internal political control from the Crown. There



was also the not too apparent influence inherent in the fact that the interests of individual members of Parliament were pretty much identified with those of mercantile and other citizen groups involved in the expansionist movement.

Commoner vs. Crown on colonization. Ordinary citizens, however, viewed the new opportunities with a somewhat different eye. Merchant interest viewed them as a potentially vast new market and source of raw materials, even though the Crown might have its eye on customs receipts and naval strategy. Religious and political dissenters viewed them as a safe haven, while the Crown and Parliament viewed them as a place happily available for the banishment of troublesome elements. Other citizens envisioned in the new lands the possibility of a life free of many of the social, political, and economic restrictions to be found at home, though they would find that, administration being the problem it is, they had borrowed but a temporary respite. Almost all alike saw the possibility of acquiring land and property of their own, an eventuality almost impossible at home. This lure appears to have been particularly strong among those commoners who had been displaced by the enclosure of commons (as opposed to the enclosure of wastelands which appears to have displaced no one).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. the discussion in G. Talbot Griffith, Population Problems of the Age of Malthus (London: Cambridge University Press, 1926), p. 170 f., particularly the discussion of the work of Professors Slater and Gonner.

They viewed the new lands, particularly those in North America, if they could find the means to get to them, as places in which a true "son of the soil" could acquire land of his own from which to eke an honest man's living.<sup>8</sup> These and many other commoners would, if necessary, contract themselves into years of bonded servitude merely to pay their passage costs. Here the Crown was somewhat in accord with popular desires. Since it also desired the development of the new lands, if the possibility of acquiring one's own land proved a lure to the potential colonist, so be it. This the Crown viewed as

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<sup>8</sup> The true force of the enclosures and the attendant lure of free land are rather difficult to assess with any substantial accuracy, certain contradictory facts having to be taken into account. On the one hand, it is common knowledge that it was rather difficult, if not impossible, for the average commoner to acquire land once the enclosures had begun. Hall and Albion, op. cit., p. 480 ff., and Wilhelm Dibelius, England (London: Jonathan Cape) q.v. give conflicting accounts of the number of English landholders in the 17th century, but a fair estimate is that in 1688 there were 175,000 landholders in England in a population of 5,000,000. By 1784, there were 1,000,000 in a population which had mushroomed to 23,000,000. Even more surprising is the fact that in that same year, 1784, 250,000 citizens owned nine-tenths of the land, while 4,200 of that number owned half of it. Griffith, op. cit., pp. 170-179, on the other hand, shows that despite the periodic acceleration of enclosures in the period from 1450-1845 the number of families making their living from the soil continued to increase from the time the enclosures began. Only after 1845 does the agrarian base of England begin to reveal a decline in the number of families involved and a truly significant decline as the principal source of British income. These facts obviously contradict one another, so the reader will have to assess to each his own particular estimate of its importance.



certainly more to its advantage than the actions of that group it had bred by its own writs in the struggle against Spain, a lawless tribe who, bowing to adventure's "siren call," often confused their curiosity about exotic lands with the right to "freeboot."

The seeds of empire. No more motley a group of social forces was ever more eager to act upon the possibilities inherent in a global situation. Each was eager and desirous to develop in a manner of its own choosing certain of the new lands or commercial possibilities and resources. Force and direction was needed to weld them together, else they should endlessly work at cross-purposes. This force and direction, though not too readily discernible, appears to have originated from citizen groups guided by the Crown and was finally commandeered by Parliament. It was the Crown that worked out the charter system which gave direction to the growing internal drive for expansion and unintentionally laid down one of the bases of future legalistic and revolutionary conflict. It was also the Crown that reserved to itself--apparently deliberately!--certain prerogatives that would sooner or later lead to attempts to centralize the political administration of colonial areas and thus form a world empire. Here the Crown was apparently quite successfully attempting to use the energies of others to accomplish its own purposes: the fending-off of Parliamentary inroads and the bolstering of its fiscal position. The

Crown's control of the charter system is the focal point of the imperial ambition which burst upon the world of the seventeenth century.

Constructing a political hegemony. Once given direction imperial ambition held full sway, but regardless of which direction it took it was the Royal Seal which directed it, implemented it, and gave it legal status. The direction might be military conflict or piracy aimed at checking the expansion of other powers. It might be the chartering of a particular trading group which desired to gain exclusive control of a given market area. Or it might likely be the desire of a given social group to gain exclusive control of land for colonizing purposes. Regardless of what direction it was, the group concerned was without authority to act until chartered by Royal Writ. The Royal Seal was used in all cases both to focus and satisfy the desires of England's three great socio-political forces: Crown, Parliament, and the common citizen or citizen-trader-colonist. Though the point of view of each group might stem from different premises, each converged at the common goal of imperial expansion because each needed the fruits of expansion to accomplish its particular ends. Only the Crown was aware of the fact that it had preempted the authority to direct the impatient imperial forces, but as awareness grew the citizen groups involved tended to coalesce into a single force

because they built up a desire to keep governmental interference, whether from Crown or Parliament, at a minimum. This development, however, is somewhat ahead of the story. The real point at issue here is the fact that it was the Crown which had worked out the most effective and satisfactory solution to be found to negate the conflicts inherent in the drives of the several imperial forces. The use of "letters of marque," grants, and charters which defined the rights, duties, and privileges of the expansionist forces in question were quite without precedent for the purposes they were used until the Crown preempted and developed such uses. Royal England may have envisioned in such an assumption of authority the possibility of escaping Parliamentary encroachments upon its power through the creation of a political hegemony remote from Parliamentary control, an hegemony which might provide both monies and power for its own use. That such a purpose failed of accomplishment is of little moment, for the fact still remains that it was the Crown which gave direction to the conflicting desires for expansion. The Crown's probable purpose in encouraging imperial expansion served only to complicate and make well nigh impossible the establishment of a centralized colonial authority once Parliament had begun to strip it of all semblance of power.

### III. PATTERNS OF ENGLISH EXPANSION (1500-1867)

Patterns of expansion. Once given authority under the Royal Seal the forces of English expansion developed several techniques or patterns of growth, though military power was an integral mechanism of all of them. One pattern involved exploration followed by a simultaneous process of colonization and neutralization or decimation of natives when found. Natives were contained by a combination of military force and the individual efforts of trader-colonist groups, the greater part of the military effort more often coming from the latter. British North America is the principal example of this pattern, though French intrigue with the Indians periodically complicated its operation. The next pattern involved an initial phase of military conquest which wrested from other powers localities they had already carried through the exploration-colonization-neutralization phase. Areas so conquered were then subjected to administrative controls which were a combination of already established procedures and regulations desired by British conquerors to encourage colonization by British citizens and traders. French, Spanish, and Dutch holdings in North America, particularly New York and Canada, are good illustrations of this technique. Another technique involved infiltration by trading groups. Infiltration was

generally followed by a period of intrigue against already existing native governments and trading groups representing other European powers. A combination of mercenaries hired by the trading companies, some plain adventurers, and occasional segments of His Majesty's forces then carried out piecemeal acts of conquest against the native rulers. The conquered ruler was generally allowed to keep his position and titles, or someone, a native, was substituted in his place and an administrative group made up of officials hired by the trading company was set up to rule the area through the "prince," an indirect control. The prince was left pretty much to rule his subjects as he chose so long as he no longer interfered with the prerogatives desired by the trading company. India and the early infiltration of the Straits Settlements are obvious examples of this pattern. Still another technique involved the conquest of strategic locations, either by conquering the natives or wresting them from the control of some other European power, and following this conquest with the establishment of a military government. Gibraltar<sup>9</sup> and other

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<sup>9</sup> Though Gibraltar is not really an island, but a part of the Iberian Peninsula, it is for strategic purposes considered an island because it has almost all of the advantages of insularity. It is, however, connected to the Iberian land mass by an extremely narrow isthmus.

and other strategic islands or capes are good examples of this pattern. A final technique involved infiltration by traders, particularly in island locations, followed by conquest in the name of the Crown, followed by little interruption in the native government, the existing ruler merely taking on the additional burden of ruling his subjects in the name of the Crown and thereby insuring protection of the traders. The Tonga Islands and others exemplify this pattern which differs, but not too greatly, from its relative technique used in the case of India.<sup>10</sup>

Roles of government and citizens in the early patterns of British expansion. Throughout all these patterns certain roles and elements are evident. In every case, though in varying combinations, Crown, Parliament, and citizenry, social forces whose existence would one day prove antagonistic to the administration of an empire, worked together toward the common goal of expansion. Expansion and colonization generally deprived natives of lands which at a later date might "morally be considered their property; but, since Britain possessed the military power, particularly the naval strength, requisite to their acquisition, the question in the early years of the empire

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. C. E. Carrington, The British Overseas (Cambridge: The University Press, 1950) which is something of an exposition of this thesis on techniques of British expansion.

was of little importance. Naval power could not really develop these lands, and such land power as was needed was as often supplied by private initiative as by established governmental forces. Though the Royal Seal was the key to all action, development of the new territories was largely the fruit of the efforts of private citizen groups and so was the establishment of territorial defenses. Except for the passage of the Navigation Acts, Parliament was left pretty much out of this stage of development.

#### IV. EMPIRE AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEM

Focusing an administrative problem. As territories continued to be absorbed, certain new elements were introduced into the British expansionist movement and an administrative problem was created. The heart of the problem lay in the types of territories absorbed, the manner, state, and sequence in which they were absorbed, and the degree and manner of their assimilation desired by the Crown, Parliament, and citizenry. This was no small administrative problem, and it had to be solved as the territories were being acquired and developed.

Origins of expanding British holdings. A brief look at some of the types of territories gained provides some idea of the enormity of this administrative problem and the mechanisms used in attempts to solve it. North American colonies, for



instance represented several social traditions in the British historical picture and various types of legal instruments carrying the Royal Seal. Other North American territories wrested from the control of competing European powers represented somewhat different cultures and institutions quite alien to those of the British. New York, Dutch in origin, presented the problem of alien allegiance and such unfamiliar social traditions as the patroon system. Canada, particularly Quebec, presented the problem of an "unpopular" religion, Roman Catholicism, and a certainly alien tradition of civil law based on the Roman Corpus. In the East the conduct of trading companies had been such that some effort had to be made to satisfy their desires while still satisfying those of the government. All these factors had to be brought into some compromise amenable to the functions of the established socio-political and economic institutions of the United Kingdom, else administration of them would end in horrible confusion. In other words, all these acquisitions and developments had to be brought to heel under some centralized administrative agency.

Effect of happenstance origin of colonization. This was a problem which had developed step by step. Originally, largely because it could see no better means to protect its own particular interests and make effective its claim to territories then available for expropriation from an humbled Spain, Royal



England had acceded to the requests of private petitioners in regard to the development of the new lands and contemplated channels of trade. Parliament almost totally ignored this phase of development except to pass Navigation Acts which were aimed more at encouraging continued naval development at home and satisfying mercantilist and industrial interests than they were at encouraging infant developments in the colonies. In following their separate courses, however, both had stumbled into sanctioning the construction of a political hegemony without really being aware of the ramifications of their actions. The generosity of charters granted potential colonizers and traders bears mute testimony in this regard,<sup>11</sup> and so do subsequent attempts of both Parliament and Crown to abrogate certain of the charter rights in their efforts to superimpose a centralized administrative control on colonies already established and those being acquired.<sup>12</sup>

Growing awareness of an administrative problem: mechanisms developed in the administration of British holdings

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hakluyt, op. cit., Vol. 8, for a view of some of these charters and patents.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 39-46, 62 f., 65-72, et seq. Cf. also H. L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 3 Vols. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904-1907), Vol. 3, for an exposition of the etiology of attempts to abrogate these charters. Osgood, however, does not take quite the view given here. He believes the attempts were relatively successful.

(1500-1867). Even by the time of the Restoration (1660) the limited expansion England had undergone had created in government circles an awareness of a growing administrative problem. A committee of the Privy Council was organized to administer colonial holdings, mostly those in North America. By 1695 this committee had given way to the newly created Board of Trade and Plantations, mercantilistic in orientation, whose object was to unify the administration of established and expanding colonial holdings. The eighteenth century saw the creation, abolishment, and re-creation of a Colonial Office and Secretaryship. The same century (1784) saw the establishment of a separate Board of Control for India. Revolt in America served to break up the Board of Trade and led, in 1801, to the final establishment of a full-blown Colonial Office, still separate from the administration of India, and later, in 1925, to be separated from the administration of dominions, which had since been developed. Their administration, to be discussed later, was given for the most part to a Dominions Office created by an act of Parliament. The India Office Act of 1858 superseded the earlier established Board of Control for India and was somewhat modified in 1919. In general, these were the principal departments created in attempts to unify administration and establish consistent controls throughout British holdings.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 94-118.

Parliament's role in the establishment of unified colonial administration. A number of reasons may be advanced for the order of development and the courses of action followed by these departments. The first of these would be that Parliament neglected the administration of British holdings, aside from the Puritan Interregnum, until 1695, a short while after it had stripped the Crown of most of its authority. Until 1695 the Privy Council of the Crown, mercantilistic in orientation and absolutistic, was the chief fount of colonial administration, a condition of authority which pretty much gave substance to the Crown's subsequent claim to rule and dominion over the colonies. Even after 1695 Parliament appeared little concerned with the administration and assimilation of colonies until the period just preceding the American Revolt. Administration of the colonies was left exclusively in the hands of a Colonial Secretary buried somewhere on Downing Street and all but ignored by Parliament. A second reason would be the example of the American Revolution which pointed out to British administrators and the world-at-large the "Achilles heel" of British military might and to other colonials the antagonisms inherent in the structure of British rule. In regard to this latter point, the Americans had demonstrated to the whole empire the fact that the Crown and Parliament could be maneuvered into positions so

totally at odds as to render them almost ineffective.<sup>14</sup> A third reason, one most singularly British, would be the legalistic foundation of British expansion, a practice initiated by the Crown but inherent in preceding internal developments which had resolved some of the differences between Crown and citizenry.

Internal influences behind legalistic implementation of British expansion. In an over-all view, this study can present but brief accounting for the legalistic element in British expansion. The impetus behind the legal instrumentation of colonies specifically British in origin appears obvious enough, but the nature, even the very existence, of the type of decree or legislation setting the rule over areas wrested from other powers, native or European, is a matter of somewhat more complexity and obscurity. Taking first things first, several traditions and influences combined to produce the agreements and laws setting the rule over specifically British colonies. The most obvious to any student of British history is the strong common-law tradition of the English people, a tradition often referred to as "an irrational reverence for the law." Its influence is particularly evident in the active struggle over civil rights coincident with England's imperial beginnings. The struggles between common-law courts and the Crown, Parliament

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. infra, p. 63 f., particularly Note 18.

and the Crown, and citizens and Parliament over such proceedings as those of the Star Chamber and Court of the North, James I's (1603-1625) attempts to legislate by proclamation, and the social forces behind and the results of the Interregnum certainly did not pass without their influence. Another influence is to be found in the already mentioned imperial acts of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), acts whose very existence indicate the Crown's desire to steer clear of Parliamentary pitfalls and establish the primacy of its own authority in subsequent colonial developments. These acts also exhibit the traditional distrust between commoner and aristocrat, reflect the social changes accompanying Elizabeth's reign, and set a tradition which, since it had not seen fit to contest it, Parliament would one day find unpalatable. Elizabeth's chartering under the Royal Seal of Raleigh's unsuccessful attempt at colonizing in the New World and the exclusive charter she granted the East India Company (31 December 1600) quite evidently set the precedent in law. From that time forward, Parliament failing to enter exceptions to its authority, it was the Crown or its agents which must be petitioned if one wished to trade in or develop the new lands. As matters stood, Elizabeth's acts implied that all British acquisitions, whether legal (by right of exploration and discovery) or extra-legal (warfare and peace treaty) were the claim or property of the Crown and to be dispensed with as the Crown

saw fit.<sup>15</sup> It would be some time before Parliament would enter exceptions to this claim.<sup>16</sup>

Influences behind legal instrumentation of captured holdings. Accounting for the pacification of conquered European developments in the new lands, however, presents a somewhat different problem and sends one into a maze of complexly inter-related forces--social, political, economic, psychological, and strategic--constantly in the process of modifying and altering their highly unstable relationships. In each specific case a good accounting can be given, though no two colonial governments are in any sense identical. The one thing all have in common is that they represent the particular resolution of a three-way struggle between Crown, Parliament, and citizenry (English and absorbed) over the prerogatives of rule to be allowed each in a milieu of competing world social, political, and economic powers that wished to contest English authority in general. Rule developed for New York, for example, compromised the privileges desired by Dutch nationals, asserted the primacy of the Crown, and largely and deliberately improved

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Richard Hakluyt, op. cit., Vol. 8. Parliament's failure to contest the royal prerogatives implied in Letters Patent and Charters is a legal admission of this claim.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 61 f., et seq.



the British strategic situation in North America. The Quebec Act (1774), taking another example, though maneuvered by the Crown was largely the result of both the Crown's and Parliament's desire to mollify French Catholics and neutralize Canada in event of further disturbances in the Thirteen Colonies. It also stands out, though the Crown hardly expected this, as one of Parliament's earliest successes in wresting political control of colonial affairs from the grasp of the Crown. The North America Act (1867), on the other hand, resulted from a combination of the following factors: 1) memories of lessons learned from failure to quell the American Revolt or succeed in the War of 1812; 2) a change in the economic orientation of the British people who had given up mercantilism in favor of laissez faire capitalism; 3) the resulting changes this alteration of economic orientation had instituted in the House of Commons and its citizen makeup; 4) changes in the British strategic picture; 5) a desire on the part of the "new" Parliament to reduce the burdensome costs of administering an empire which apparently did not bring to Britain the benefits of empire (in this they may have been mistaken); and 6) a desire to maintain and augment the economic and social arrangements already established between Canada and the United Kingdom, arrangements continually being disrupted by flurries of civil disorder. The act of Parliament (1784) setting up the Board of Control for India is a still different example. It served



both to placate the interests of a trading company possessing duly chartered rights and to avoid a staggering military problem possibly beyond Britain's capabilities. The India Act (1858) merely served to improve Parliament's authority in the same arrangements.<sup>17</sup>

The Crown as the symbol of authority. Through all these changes there threads one of the outstanding facts of British colonial expansion, the acceptance of the principle that all territories acquired by exploration, colonization, conquest, or combinations of all three were to be claimed in the name of the Crown and in the formative years of the empire developed for the most part by private citizen groups acting under specific legal instruments carrying the Imperial Seal. This practice of claiming and developing new holdings under the aegis of the Crown has never been discarded by the British, even though actual administrative power in the colonies fully passes into the hands of Parliament subsequent to the American Revolt. Allegiance of colonials is always to the Crown, symbol of authority, even though the Crown has little legal or political control over any of them.

Problems raised by the role of legal instrumentation. Legal instruments have always served to define the rights of

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 141-145.

Crown, Parliament, and colonial developers, whether English or the absorbed nationals of other powers. Parliament's failure to challenge the claims implicit in early royal grants and charters until much too late appears to have laid the seeds of a tradition which effectively preserved the tenure of the Crown and endlessly confused future attempts at creating an imperial administration once its need had become apparent to all and sundry. In fact, early Parliamentary behavior promoted a situation which, as it matured, allowed dissatisfied colonials to use a "defeated" Crown as a club with which to smash existing administrative relationships between the government at home and those in specific colonies. Parliament's lack of challenge, it is true, may have stemmed from the fact that the Crown was, at the opening of the imperial drive, still a considerably forceful authority, but the fact nevertheless remains that its failure to enter exceptions to the implied significance of the Royal Seal appears to have laid one of the more important cornerstones of future colonial struggles for self-determination. In fact, much of the conflict over the prerogatives of various governmental institutions which has preceded Britain's loss of control over many of its holdings, particularly those of Caucasian origin, has been of a legalistic nature and appears to have been rooted in the shadowy definition of the roles of Crown and Parliament in colonial affairs. Colonials, particularly those in Caucasian areas, were continually proposing

differing interpretations of both the substantive and adjective legal aspects of grants, charters, proprietorships, and the civil and legal status of colonial subjects under the British Constitution.<sup>18</sup> One need but look to the events which transpired in the Thirteen Colonies, the Ionian Islands, and Canada to observe the precedent setting examples and to observe that imperially-minded England was eventually willing to settle for whatever prerogatives it could impose and enforce at any given time. By the time of the Union of South Africa Act

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noted here that the British Constitution is not a single document, but rather a long tradition of organic common law, a tradition subjected to continuous modification in efforts to keep its concepts abreast of the particular socio-historical milieu in which any given accumulation of it operates. As such it is a very flexible instrument. It should also carefully be noted that wherever Britain has found areas in which to expand its nationals have migrated to them, carrying with them such aspects of home culture and traditions as they respected, particularly an abiding regard for home laws and their rights under them and an abiding regard for the rights contained in the charters implementing their colonizing efforts. Is it any wonder then that the basis of subsequent struggles between colonials and the home government should often be rooted in the interpretation of legal issues doubly complicated by factors of chronology? On the one hand, recalcitrant colonials, professing allegiance to a "shackled Crown," would claim all rights traditionally held or recently acquired by home citizens; yet, with considerable effrontery they would deny Parliament the same authority over them that it had over home citizens. On the other hand, it is no wonder that both Parliament and Crown would do their best to limit colonials to their own interpretations of the exactitudes and contexts of the original legal instruments and subsequent edicts and laws of Crown and Parliament aimed at the establishment of centralized imperial controls. This kind of legal dispute has often preceded or accompanied open rebellion

(1909) this willingness to compromise is altogether obvious. The act is a very limited political instrument and is the beginning of Britain's usage of progressively more limited political instruments in the establishment of colonial controls over newly dominated areas.

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<sup>18</sup> in British colonies, particularly in the case of the American Revolt. As Professor S. E. Morrison, By Land and By Sea (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 219-233, particularly p. 221 f., indicates, the views of the dissatisfied elements in the American colonies appear to reflect resolved and continuing struggles between the three protagonists at home: Parliament, Crown, and ordinary citizenry. He observes that Thomas Jefferson, well aware of the fact that Parliament had shorn the Royal House of its political prerogatives, submits his "A Summary View of the Rights of British America," q.v., to George III (1760-1820) whom he addresses as "Chief Magistrate of the British Empire." He observes also that this paper denies absolutely the right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies which are "bound to the mother country only by and through the Crown." The net effect of this argument, which amounts to dominion status when combined with the "Novanglus" papers q.v. of Samuel Adams, was to use the powerless Crown as a club with which to gain concessions from Parliament, placing Parliament and Crown in attitudes from which neither could make concessions without flatly admitting the other's political supremacy in colonial affairs. Parliament's prevailing philosophy, despite the fact that it was being maneuvered by the Crown, was predicated upon the establishment of imperial controls under its own banner, and so was that of the Crown, which claimed prior rights. This meant the subjugation of British nationals to restrictions they would tolerate neither in the home milieu nor in that created by charter guarantees and colonial precedents. All future British colonials appear to have profited by the ensuing War in which Parliamentary and Royal forces were bested partly because of a strategic weakness, partly because of hopeless divisions within Parliament, and partly because of the bitterly divided purposes of Crown and Parliament.

V. EARLY FAILURE IN ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH A  
UNIFIED AND PERMANENT IMPERIAL ORDER

Origin of the failure to establish a unified imperial order. Osgood's<sup>19</sup> unparalleled study of the first two centuries of the North American development studies the first pronounced example of England's failure to establish a unified imperial order. It comprehensively examines the complexion of British expansion in that area and records the etiology of the complete failure of Britain's attempts to superimpose a unified imperial order or administration upon the rather divergent, but sometimes similar systems its own governmental writs had instituted in the Thirteen Colonies. Both Crown and Parliament wanted a unified empire ruled by itself alone; but each had to be willing to settle for what they could get. There is little need here to take up a lengthy survey of the process whereby imperial desires were compromised, but certain facts involved are germane to subsequent discussions.

Source of royal failure to establish imperial controls.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century (Vol. 3 of Imperial Beginnings. 3 vols; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904-1907); Vols. 1 and 3 of The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century. 4 vols. (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1924).

Largely as a result of Parliamentary neglect and a tradition of royal origin, British colonial administration was in the hands of the Crown until the latter half of the eighteenth century. During that period, as Osgood would have it,<sup>20</sup> the Crown had to some degree reasonably succeeded in superimposing upon about half its American colonies a mercantilistic royal administration in place of the earlier charter guarantees. These royal governments, however, because Parliament was of little help, were precariously established and authority constantly fluctuated between Crown and inhabitants. For example, the Dominion of New England established by efforts of the Crown collapsed following the Boston uprising of 1689 and the old colonial governments were pretty much restored. In fact, Massachusetts was given a new charter of rights (1691), even though it accepted a royal governor of limited power and a secretary for royal appointments along with that charter. Rhode Island and Connecticut escaped with their corporate charters intact. New Jersey continually struggled back to its proprietary government after short bouts under royal reign. Pennsylvania went through the same process (1692-1694). Nowhere was the Crown entirely suc-

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. H. L. Osgood, op. cit., and particularly his essay, "The Classification of Colonial Governments in America," to be found in the American Historical Association Annual Reports, 1895 (Washington: The Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 617-627.



cessful in establishing unified imperial rule. All through the period from 1660-1760 Crown and colonists were at loggerheads over prerogatives of rule. The Crown was powerless without help from Parliament, and Parliament was in no mood to help, being concerned principally with wresting internal political control from the Crown.<sup>21</sup>

Parliament's failure to establish imperial controls.

Parliament itself appears to have fared little better in the matter of establishing unified imperial rule, being for the most part concerned with controlling trade and manufactures through the Navigation Acts during the period when the Crown held full sway. Even then, when it did get into the act in earnest, the policy of the administrators charged with enforcing its regulations was pretty much one of "salutary neglect," since most were unenforceable because they entailed the employment of naval forces far greater than England possessed and some, particularly those aimed at curbing the development of manufactures in the colonies, were rather short-sighted since the colonies were not yet ready or able to undertake such developments and such enforcement as they were given would later lead to a strategic problem of staggering proportions. For the most part these regulations which stemmed from the dying mercantilist

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. H. L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, Vol. 3.



philosophy were soon considered undesirable, but such as did have their effects so retarded the development of manufactures that they later led to the previously mentioned strategic problem, the separation of raw materials and industries. Be that as it may, by the time Parliament had succeeded in wresting internal political control from the Crown (1680-1760), it appears to have been too late for it to do anything about the successful establishment of unified imperial controls over existing Caucasian units, though it might have succeeded had it started earlier and presented a different economic attitude. Parliament later had some success in bringing under regulation some of the non-Caucasian colonial units, but success varied from unit to unit, being dependent upon a host of variable factors.<sup>22</sup> Generally speaking, Parliament had an uphill battle which has finally in our own century brought it to the brink of complete failure. Though Parliament struggled mightily, the Crown until the latter half of the nineteenth century was hardly willing to be of any help to it in the imperial struggle, preferring to play off Parliament against the colonies in an attempt to preserve its own waning prerogatives. In the early years of Parliamentary interest in colonial development, the net result of this situation was the American Revolt, a lesson in strategic politics which Parliament appears never to have for-

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. infra pp. 103-115, 196-200.

gotten. From that time forward, depending upon the particular set of circumstances, Parliament would placate the Caucasian units of the empire while concentrating its imperial efforts on those non-Caucasian in origin; they would wrest control of these areas from the Crown and managing business groups only to have them finally slip gradually into self-determination or into the orbits of hostile powers as the British strategic, economic, social, and political picture changed relative to that of competing world powers.

Colonists' role in Britain's failure to establish unified imperial controls. There is also the colonists' side of this matter. Probably the most overlooked point in this regard as far as Caucasian units are concerned is that these colonies were developing cultures and traditions quite alien to those in the homeland, even though their governments might be English in origin. Such social forces as the "libertarian" tradition and the very isolation of these colonies from the problems foremost at home supported the growth of a psychology essentially belligerent to the exercise of controls emanating from external sources. Such forces bred also a jealous regard for the preservation of civil rights and carried with them the memories of their dissenting origins. Some colonies had been founded primarily as havens safe from persecution at home. Others had been founded by corporate interests who would hardly wish to

surrender control of the trade and profits for which they had been founded, even though they might trade some measure of their autonomy in return for British naval protection and rights as home citizens. As far as concerns those Caucasian colonies extant prior to the American Revolt, these factors combined with the foreign origin of some of them, an origin which looked forward to sharing in the privileges of government given to some other British holdings, tended to mesh into the creation of communities of interest and cultures as different as they were geographically separate from that in the homeland.<sup>23</sup> Often these Caucasian developments, particularly in the East, would take on a good deal of the coloration and attitudes of the cultures they had absorbed politically. As for the natives themselves, in these Eastern and still later African and other cultures, they would slowly begin to use the successful struggles of the Caucasian units as arguments in defense of their own claims to self-determination, though, as will be discussed later,<sup>24</sup> this eventuality is more complicated than simple argument.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. H. L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, Vols. 1 and 2; and The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century, Vols. 2 and 4.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 103-115, 196-250.

Imperium or empire: A problem of definition. The fact that the attitudes of these three groups stemmed from different aims and premises is perhaps the fulcrum of the whole early imperial problem. As matters stood, the behavior of all three apparently stemmed from essentially antagonistic political attitudes. The Crown, aping historical monarchs in general and the Spanish in particular, seems to have been bent upon the establishment of an imperium consistent with the absolutistic attitudes of monarchy, even though it did make concessions in order to get colonial development started. Its attempts to abrogate its own charters and grants and its attitudes and decrees concerning government in both the Thirteen Colonies and the East amply attest to this fact. On the other hand, Parliament's role appears to have been a confused one, undoubtedly reflecting the attitudes and conflicts inherent in its royalist-libertarian makeup. Parliament seems to have wanted to legislate imperium, a contradiction in procedure which could lead only to confusion because it forced Parliament to tread a tight-rope between relative despotism in colonial policy and the relative radicalism evident in its attempts to establish political democracy at home. Its behavior in passing the five so-called "Intolerable Acts" contrasted with its vacillation in the face of the American Revolt lends credence to this view. Parliament was here caught in its own contradictory procedures. Colonials also pre-

sented mixed attitudes developed from several sources, but most eventually tended toward the same goal, self-determination. Though perhaps the largest segment of colonials reflected royalist attitudes, the more vociferous elements among them reflected both the struggle of the common citizenry at home in the direction of democracy and the drift of Western civilization toward political pluralism. Geographic detachment from the homeland and indigenous influences in the colonies themselves tended to drive colonist away from the acceptance of direction from the homeland where administrative attitudes reflected a lack of understanding of both the cultures growing up in the colonies and the problems, aims, and interests peculiar to them. The majority of these attitudes were not particularly amenable to manipulation by either Parliament or Crown in view of their attitudes, a conflict of viewpoints which could only lead to trouble and did.

The compromise of empire: The British maritime hegemony. From the viewpoints of the Crown, the Royalist segment of Parliament, and imperium, those British colonies prior to the American Revolt which were Caucasian in origin had been left to their own devices much too long. Had Crown and Parliament joined together to subject them to the prerogatives of imperium from the moments of their origins, the final resolution of British expansion might have been a different story; an imperium,

though this point is highly speculative without regard to strategic, economic, and other historical considerations, might well have been established. As events transpired, this was not the case. Imperial rule had to be superimposed upon systems already in operation. Not only was this true of the American scene, but it was true of other colonial developments as well. The turning point in British efforts to establish an imperium appears to have been the American Revolt. From that time forward in history, Britain has found herself in a continual struggle to maintain such prerogatives of rule as she has been able to impose and enforce on even her most primitive areas. The best she has been able to achieve is a very transient empire, a maritime hegemony. This is because she has had to fend off one rival after another, one potential revolt after the other. She has had to try to minimize such changes in her strategic or industrial potential as have altered her relative power position. By 1932 she appears to have been ready to concede that this might be a well-nigh impossible task. The Statute of Westminster admitted frankly that she could no longer attempt to force the issue with her Caucasian colonies and suggested to the watchful that it was only a matter of time before she would give in on the issues of rule over her non-Caucasian units. The etiology of this admission and the accelerated dismemberment of the empire are the substance of the following discussion.



## VI. THE AMERICAN REVOLT AS THE BEGINNING OF IMPERIAL RETREAT

Recapitulation of historical matrix. In general, the turning point in British efforts to establish imperial rule may be seen in the forces represented in the American Revolt, even though their effects might not be openly evident until joined by the forces of several other disrupting elements appearing in the events of the following century. Earlier (1642-1660) the Puritan Revolt had signalled the rise of pressure groups in English government and with them began the attempts to substitute the pluralism of individual franchise for the monism of monarchy. Mercantilism was introduced as the dominant philosophy of colonial administration, and the seeds of capitalism were germinated in internal affairs. The "Glorious Revolution" (1688) pretty well finished the internal prerogatives of monarchy but left still unresolved the question of its authority in colonial affairs. Eighteenth century British history is pretty much the story of the development of these social forces combined with a global strategic struggle with France. The revolt of the "Thirteen Colonies" is a part and parcel of this context which not only forced the resolution of some of its problems but contributed materially to its success.

Immediate significance of the American Revolt. The



immediate significance of the American Revolt lay in several areas: economic, strategic, and political. First, it signalled the turning point in the struggle between the waning forces of mercantilism and those of rising capitalism (free enterprise), which began its assumption of the dominant role. Along with capitalism came the rise of the "sterling block," and a system of balanced money exchange in colonial and international trade. Balanced trade on at least a quid pro quo basis became an important economic goal. Notes on unfavorable trade balances were redeemed in gold. Second, it battered into the consciousness of the average British administrator an awareness of the exploitable antagonisms inherent in mixtures of imperial rule and representative government. In such a situation imperial rule would generally have to be superimposed on existing structures by force and revolt thus always threatened. Third, the cultural climate of the revolt displayed from another viewpoint the "antagonism to imperialism" inherent in the legal origins of many British colonies, particularly those peopled by migrants from home who were potentially the technological equals of homeland forces. These antagonisms were exploitable because of the conflict between Crown and Parliament over prerogatives of rule both at home and in the colonies. Fourth, the actual military conflict involved in the revolt unintentionally exposed to the rest of the European world a basic strategic weakness in the British military armor, though--taking into consideration the

strength of the British navy--it is readily observable that other European powers were even more vulnerable at this point if functioning alone, but not necessarily so if functioning in combinations. Nevertheless, the course of the revolt revealed the fact that Britain's over-all logistical potential was not sufficiently developed to handle the problem of land warfare at her naval perimeters against people of the same cultural background; i.e., Caucasians; particularly, when British land forces were up against such problems as exposed supply routes, raw resources separated by these same supply routes from manufacturing centers, unfamiliar terrain, unfamiliar battle tactics,<sup>25</sup> and the interfering designs of competing powers. The likelihood of this latter point is revealed by the fact that only once since the American Revolt, the War of 1812, have the British been caught in this strategic trap by their own volition.<sup>26</sup> It is worthy of remark in passing that in both these cases, the American Revolt and the War of 1812, it was commitments against France elsewhere that apparently rendered ineffective British efforts against the American colonies.

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<sup>25</sup> Guerilla tactics were at that time unfamiliar to the average British commander or soldier of the line. Britain, however, seems to have profited by them, since they were later used against Napoleon's forces in Spain. They are typical of the accounts given of Wellington's tactics in that area.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 153-194, where this point is considered in considerably more detail.

Results of the American Revolt. Failure at quelling the American Revolt appears to have instituted a permanent trend in British colonial affairs, dividing colonial units into two general categories: one, those colonized, peopled, and managed by Caucasians (who may or may not have neutralized or decimated native populations); and two, those peopled by non-Caucasians but managed by Caucasians alone or combinations of Caucasian and native rule. Deferential treatment has been afforded Caucasian colonies ever since the American debacle, while that offered non-Caucasian units has varied considerably, degrees of subjugation or control being dependent upon variable factors. Both groups have been administered through the use of the dyarchical principle of colonial rule which emerged following the revolution.<sup>27</sup> The rise of the dyarchy was signalled by the Irish Appeals Act (1783) and the Canadian Constitution Act (1791), and its application, to be considered later on,<sup>28</sup> varied as applied to either Caucasian or non-Caucasian holdings. Before going into the application of dyarchy, however, certain post-

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<sup>27</sup> In general, dyarchy is joint rule. As regards British colonial policies, it is that principle whereby colonies were allowed varying degrees of internal autonomy in exchange for the homeland's control of their external affairs. The greatest variation in the application of this principle is evidenced in the non-Caucasian colonies, that in the Caucasian units being quite uniform.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 133-201.

revolutionary trends concerned with its development had best be considered first. These undergird the British decline.

# VII. SIGNIFICANT TRENDS: POST-REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD TO WORLD WAR II

Materially related and material trends. The problems focused by the American Revolt were further complicated and intensified by several trends appearing in the following century. During this period there arose a growing, but perhaps mistaken, awareness on the part of British administrators, whose economic orientations suffered through rapid changed, of the staggering and mounting costs of imperial rule. This was merely intensified by the constantly changing complexion of British economic fortunes. In the first half of the nineteenth century (1800-1850), largely because of a fortuitous series of mineral deposits and an initial advantage in the "Technological Revolution," Britain enjoyed an unrivalled economic position despite periodic economic depressions. Economic advantage also gave her political advantage, since it made her better able to handle the cost of defeating competitors either in trade or on the field of battle. The end of the American Civil War, however, saw Britain enter a period when her economic and political position relative

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. infra, p. 96 for a discussion of this possibility and compare this with the statistical data, pp. 156-167.

to the balance of power among her European and Asian competitors would be constantly in flux and gradually deteriorate. Largely as the result of discoveries of mineral deposits in non-British areas and the increasing pace and influence of the technological revolution, several powers--among them the United States, Germany, and Japan--began making rapid inroads into Britain's favored economic position. By 1900 the United States and Germany had pretty well overtaken her industrial might, and Germany, Russia, and Japan were posing a constant threat to her political position. The advent of such technological advances as the submarine and aircraft coupled with the separation of raw resources from manufacturing centers has intensified this threat, rendering the empire ever more vulnerable. Along with this growing threat Britain has dropped from first among the world powers to a lesser economic and political position. Economic production in the United States, Germany, and Russia, outstrips that in the United Kingdom. In military and political power, it is likely that Britain would rank no higher than fourth behind the United States, Russia, and China. Concomitant with these changes, there has developed two gradually worsening trends. On the one hand, the rapid and progressive change in the geographic distribution of populations in the British empire has worked against the British, particularly the percentage of the whole represented by the small population of the home islands. On the other, the food and raw material

supply problems have gradually worsened, picking up their tempo of deterioration following the historic gamble on free trade, subsequent losses of markets to competitors, and the advent of threatening technological advances such as the submarine. The food supply problem has been further complicated by the course of British investments abroad. Recent wars have pretty well decimated them.

Effectiveness of these trends. Admittedly, the effectiveness of any given one of these trends has varied from time to time, depending upon its relationship to other factors and the support it may have received from various complicating influences. Within the compass of this study there can be presented but a brief survey of the effects of these trends, but such elements as are considered should serve to indicate, explain, or substantiate the views presented concerning modes of rule developed by British administrators and their willingness to compromise.

Abstract of the food and agricultural problem (1770-date).  
To begin with, coincident with the American Revolt, several startling modifications were introduced into the workings of the mother country. One was the average citizen's growing awareness of the changes in the relationship to his government and livelihood of the positions of hereditary aristocrat and



merchant. This is reflected both in Smith's<sup>30</sup> classic study of private enterprise (1776) and in the gradual rise of the economists (1776-date). Another was the beginning, with Watt's improvement of the steam engine, of the United Kingdom's total gamble on the forces and machinery of the technological revolution.<sup>31</sup> The net effect of the first, the rise of the entrepreneur, was gradually to raise to political eminence in the House of Commons individuals whose eyes were as much upon what amounts to the ancestor of cost-accounting, particularly accounting the costs of imperial government, as they were on anything else. Along with them came the "little Englanders." The net effect of the second, the gamble on the forces of the "so-called Industrial Revolution," was three-fold: 1) a stimulation of the birth rate, 2) acceleration in the development of urban centers concomitant with a progressive, though relative, decline in rural areas, and 3) a growing dependence upon outside sources

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations.

<sup>31</sup> Watt's improvement of the steam engine resulted not so much in an industrial revolution as in a technological revolution. England had already reached basic industrialization. Factories were in existence, as were machines, but Watt introduced mechanical power as a replacement for water power, treadles, etc.. This led to technological improvements such as vastly different and more mobile machinery and a further substitution of machine power for hand power and hand operations.



for the bulk of staple foods compounded later by a similar dependence upon outside sources for the bulk of raw materials.

The staggering food problem. The rapid decline of rural areas combined with explosive birth-rates in the expanding urban areas soon bred a complete reliance upon foreign food sources; in fact, "...in food supplies, she [the United Kingdom] ceased to be self-supporting about 1830...".<sup>32</sup> The intensification of the enclosure movements in the latter half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries combined with the rising birth rate had stimulated agricultural production and increased somewhat the domestic production of food, but this success was limited and had little retarding effect upon food imports because it failed to meet the rising demand for food created by the concentrated explosion of the birth rate in the urban centers.<sup>33</sup> Although agriculture is still far and

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<sup>32</sup> E. H. Carr, The Twenty Year's Crisis, 1919-1939 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1940), Chap. 8, p. 213.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. infra, p. 83, Note 37. Note that it is the relative position of the rural areas which has declined. Food production has been increased to an optimum, but it has never been able to overtake the rise in birth rate of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, even though the population of the United Kingdom is now relatively stable. The loss of foreign investments in the last half century has sharply focused this problem in the mind of the average Britisher. It has seriously threatened his food supplies, at times reducing them to little better than subsistence levels.

away the single greatest domestic employer, its relative economic and demographic positions have declined. For the most part, this is because the absolute number of urban births has been far greater than that in rural areas and because industry,<sup>34</sup> since 1845, despite periodic economic depressions, has absorbed most of the labor potential represented by the population increase, there being an absolute limit to the number that even an intensified agriculture could absorb. Recent years find but 7 per cent of the home population directly involved in domestic agriculture,<sup>35</sup> as compared with 75 per cent in 1750<sup>36</sup> and 22 per cent in 1850.<sup>37</sup> Fifty per cent of the British food supply is now imported.

Food and economic geography. These alterations in the complexion of the economic geography of the United Kingdom have

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Griffith, op. cit., pp. 170-179.

<sup>35</sup> J. Russell Smith, and M. Ogden Phillips, Industrial and Commercial Geography, 3rd ed. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1946), p. 425.

<sup>36</sup> Hall and Albion, op. cit., p. 479. This figure appears to be somewhat high. Cf. and compare with Griffith, op. cit., Chap. VII, particularly pp. 170-179.

<sup>37</sup> This figure represents a projection from tables and materials to be found in Griffith, op. cit., Chap. VII, pp. 170-179, and may be in error as much as 4 per cent on the positive side; the percentage could be as little as 18 per cent. Griffith also notes, p. 176, that the enclosures did accomplish their purpose for the short period of the American War, but this has little effect upon long range trend of progressive food deficiency.

had a progressively more telling effect upon its relations with the member parts of its empire and with the world-at-large. They have certainly conditioned much of Britain's behavior toward her colonial holdings, past and present, and have had much to do with the pattern of British investments abroad. As the food problem has grown more acute, more and more British capital has flowed into areas from which Britain can buy food. The most recent example is the African experiment, but for almost a century and a half--at least until the world-wide depression of the late 1920s--the British bread basket has been her present and former colonial holdings, particularly the United States and those Caucasian areas now enjoying dominion status.<sup>38</sup> Millions of pounds of investment capital flowed into these areas. Earnings from them were used to purchase food and raw materials. That capital flowing into the non-Caucasian holdings of the empire was aimed principally at the development of the raw materials necessary for the continued prosperity of the home industries.

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<sup>38</sup> This statement and those following in the next section represent an interpretation of information to be found in those Statistical Abstracts of the United Kingdom (London: H. M. Stationery Office, C. 1821? - date) available at this time. One of the more notable revelations of these abstracts is that in moments of economic disturbance, the United Kingdom has turned her trade inward upon the member parts of her empire. This is particularly noticeable in the trade tables to be found infra, pp. 162-165. The food factor also helps account for effectiveness in British affairs of groups as the Anti-Corn Law League and others.

Patterns and purposes of British investments. The pattern of British investments appears to have been anything but a haphazard affair, at least not since the opening of the nineteenth century. British investments since that time appear to have had a three-fold purpose. First, they were aimed at the acquisition of raw materials needed to keep home industries in motion. Second, they were aimed at earning monies in areas possessing surplus foods for export. Third, they were aimed at controlling the transport facilities so vital to the continued flow of these goods. The potential food surpluses of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in large measure account for the amount of British capital invested in those areas and the nature of the investments themselves. Since 1830 Britain has desperately needed increased food supplies to keep pace with her exploding population. The "industrial-technological revolution" was well into its maturing phases before British planners became fully cognizant of its implications. By this time (1840-1860) the information compiled in the Statistical Abstracts was beginning to reveal a fearful dilemma to British planners. Population shifts were well under way, technology was maturing, agriculture had seriously lagged behind population growth, material resources were showing a relative decline in yield, and the United Kingdom was being forced to commit itself to further industrialization and dependence upon world trade. There was no other way to feed an expanding

population which had long since outgrown the capacity of available food producing facilities, nor was there any other way to keep functioning smoothly an economy whose raw resources in their relationship to available markets and production facilities were declining in productivity. Is it any wonder, then, that Britain would undertake her historic gamble on world trade? What else could she do? Only in a free market could she hope to obtain needed foods and offset her other material deficiencies. High tariff policies had to be discarded and were.<sup>39</sup>

Effect of economic geography on colonial governments.

There seems little doubt that awareness of these problems has conditioned and colored the differing types of rule which Britain has established over given units of the empire. These governments are neither noble nor ignoble but have the virtue of being eminently practical solutions of existing problems, problems related not only to the United Kingdom itself but to the whole empire and the political economy of the world in general.

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<sup>39</sup> In this regard it is interesting to note for comparative purposes the growing sentiment toward lower tariff policies in the traditionally high tariff United States. This sentiment has, with periodic lapses, been growing stronger over the past thirty years. One can expect that it will continue to do so as America exhausts her primary mineral resources, though she may be more fortunate than Britain in that she should not have the same food problem.

## VIII. GEOPOLITICS AND COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

Political economy, strategic politics, and colonial administration. For the British administrator the political economy of the world in general has never been a small problem, nor has the problem of maintaining political controls over colonies once they have been established. In the case of non-Caucasian holdings, both the resources they contained and the technological inferiority undergirding their military weakness have always presented a lure for the potential aggressor. These resources might provide the potential aggressor with an opening wedge into Britain's control of the "lion's share" of the world market and place in his own hands control of an economic or industrial asset in which he was deficient. British administrators have also had to take into account the fact that largely because of cultural traditions and potential technological equality Caucasian holdings have been fertile soil for the activities of revolutionaries. Disputed interpretations of constitutional matters supported by the British administrator's hesitance about facing a conflict that could weaken Britain's delicately balanced strategic grip have more than once laid the foundation for internal machination and revolt in these Caucasian units, as evidenced in the case of the Thirteen Colonies and Canada. There was the further problem of protecting the home economy and thereby Britain's strategic strength by protecting the investments home citizens had made



in colonies, foreign trade, and foreign lands, a problem almost hopelessly complicated in the case of colonial holdings by matters of profit and loss and their relationships to potential strategic advantages or difficulties. All these problems were further complicated by the potential designs of hostile powers. Foreign instigation or intervention in areas of British influence or control has presented British administrators with more than one problem in their efforts to maintain the unstable prerogatives of empire. Together with the previously-mentioned internal course of the United Kingdom itself, these factors served to create a single problem in terms of imperial rule.

Vulnerability and colonial compromise. Vulnerability to foreign assault, for instance, has certainly conditioned Britain's treatment of her non-Caucasian holdings as much as has the matter of protection of her own nationals or their investments. They are but two facets of the same problem, the protection of the mother country's paramount interests by continuing the existence of the colonial relationship because the continued articulation of the home economy is in some vital way dependent upon it. Carrington's analysis of the progress of British rule in Southeast Asia presents numerous examples in

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. C. E. Carrington, The British Overseas (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1950), particularly the "Arguments" which begin each division of this study.



point. Originally, British interests entered this area in order to take advantage of the "luxury trade," to supplant Dutch and French interests as well as those of Portugal and Spain, and to obtain strategic advantages which insured protection of the luxury trade. British capital and management followed. Economic development took place and trade relations were established. A segment of the British economy became dependent upon these arrangements. To move out after such growth had transpired would have been foolhardy in the extreme, since it would have left the area at the mercy of foreign invaders and might well disrupt the precariously balanced British economy and strategic power which by the last quarter of the nineteenth century was almost totally dependent upon the rubber, tin, oils, tea, etc. derived from investments in these areas. After all, the British had no guarantee that their economic arrangements would persist once they had voluntarily relinquished political management of a given area. Since 1830 Britain has been absolutely dependent upon trade for food supplies, and since about 1880 she has become more and more dependent upon outside resources for the basic operation of her economy until now she almost totally dependent upon them. Political control of non-Caucasian colonies has been one of the principal guarantees of the acquisition of these necessities.

Abstract of British Economic interests in Southeast Asia.

British economic interests in Southeast Asia (and throughout non-Caucasian holdings for that matter) reflect economic changes in the United Kingdom. In general, they have reflected two trends: 1) the continuation of the traditions of the luxury trade, and 2) the gradually growing dependence of the United Kingdom upon outside resources and food, the latter trend being by far the more important today. Initially, as already mentioned, British economic interests, prompted by the profits obtainable from the spice and tea trade, had entered the luxury trade in Southeast Asia. Next came the development of the opium trade and the introduction of rubber cultivation. Profit was the principal lure at this stage, and its motivation is reflected in the conduct of British administrative interests in the area at the time. As often as not, colonies were acquired to control the trade or rubber planting, though because of a strategic element in all territorial preemptions these colonies were often saddled with the costs of their own protection through the exaction of "sums of tribute" from native interests.<sup>41</sup> Rubber cultivation, however, though originally prompted by luxury interests brought with it a new concern for administrative planners. The transplanting of rubber trees first discovered in

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. C. E. Carrington, op.cit., pp. 254 f., 402-405, 416 f., et seq.

Brazil from that area to London and thence, step by step, from London to India, to Ceylon, and to the Federated Malay States involved British interests, private and public, in considerable expense and was prompted more by the value of rubber as a luxury item than that it was by the future industrial uses to which it might be put.<sup>42</sup> Rubber cultivation was started on lands lying idle and was financed mainly by British capital. As rubber grew in industrial importance, so did the value of British administrative control of the areas in which it was cultivated. It was at this point, c. 1870, that the demands of technological and industrial developments coupled with the relative inadequacy of home resources began to assert its dominant influence upon British policies in Southeast Asia. Economic interest was by this time a definite strategic interest. It was also a definite demographic interest because of the food supply problem. Continued trade meant adequate food supplies and the raw materials necessary for industrial production. Granted these matters, the imposition of free trade upon India which followed was a logical step,<sup>43</sup> and so was Britain's entrance into tin-mining in Malaya.<sup>44</sup> Each move was a strategic

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Smith and Phillips, op. cit., pp. 168-178, for the development of the rubber industry and rubber planting.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Carrington, op. cit., pp. 928-940, for the development of British economic interests in India.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Smith and Phillips, op. cit., pp. 214 ff., for the development of British mining interests in Southeast Asia.

and economic necessity. For example, as Cornish tin mines fell behind industrial demands, British interest in existing Malayan tin deposits began to quicken. Until 1892, tin-mining in that area was almost exclusively in the hands of the Chinese, though the British had some interest in a few companies. By 1892, however, British interests began to see a real necessity for the use and control, if possible, for greatly expanded tin supplies. In that year the first exclusively British company began tin-mining in the Malayan peninsula.<sup>45</sup> This was far from control of mining operations in that area, but the British had the keys to eventual control: money and special machinery. The easily worked deposits were beginning to decline in productivity, world wide demands for tin were increasing, and the British had the machinery and know-how necessary for working the vast remaining deposits. As these deposits declined in productivity, British control of the machinery necessary for working the remainder became the real means of British control. By 1920, the British had acquired control of 36 per cent of the total of the Malayan output which was twenty-five per cent of the world supply.<sup>46</sup> By 1939, combined with Dutch and French interests, they had through various purchases gained control of sixty-nine

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<sup>45</sup> Smith and Phillips, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

per cent of the Malayan output.<sup>47</sup> Now, they control it almost exclusively, but it amounts only to about eight per cent of the world supply, enough for British needs and little more. The British appear deliberately to have set out to gain this control because they had to. Only through political and economic control of resources could they guarantee the continued articulation of the home economy.

Raw materials and their effects upon the administration of non-Caucasian colonies. The story of tin and rubber is in microcosm the key to an understanding of the persistence of British controls in non-Caucasian areas. In miniature these two resources represent the whole food and raw materials quandary in which Britain finds itself. Ever more persistently Britain has been made aware of the fact that she has to maintain some type of control over these areas else her whole precariously articulated economy is in danger. It is the only way she can guarantee the continued flow of resources and food to home industries. The need for some type of colonial control to guarantee a vital resource coupled with her strategic quandary is the reason she has been willing to settle in the past half-

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. It may be of note that ninety per cent of the world's supply of tin presently comes from British and Dutch controlled companies on the Dutch-held islands of Banka, Singkep, and Billiton in the Malayan Archipelago, an area strategically controlled by Singapore.

century for progressively more limited controls over newly dominated areas. The "League" mandates are a case in point. Britain needed these mandates to protect one resource or another or for strategic purposes. Control of these resources is the vital key to her national existence and, as shall be discussed further on,<sup>48</sup> the reason for the myriad range of governmental instruments setting the rule over non-Caucasian colonies.

Caucasian colonies, economic "futures," and colonial administration. The development of rule over Caucasian colonies, on the other hand, presents an initially different picture, but it ends in the same morass of food inadequacies, raw material deficiencies, and strategic problems. Looking back to the period between the American Revolt and the North America Act, it is readily observable that only a few of the Caucasian colonies, the smallest, paid, though all appear to have been potentially useful. Larger units such as North America and Australasia did not pay and would not pay for some time, but all appear to have been viewed by administrators and investors as potential breadbaskets and sources for raw materials: in fact, potential resources in many of them was the reason for their founding. They were not yet developed industrially, and existing economic arrangements appear to have discouraged

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 156-172 et seq.

any serious efforts in this direction. As metallic and other resources were discovered and developed, the path of quickest profit and least resistance appeared to have been to ship the raw materials to the ready homeland market for processing, the most obvious course in the existing economic structure. And just as expedient and obvious a course was followed by the home capital flowing into these areas for investment. Investment capital was channelled into agricultural development, mining, and transport, three areas in the existing economy in which profit was all but guaranteed by existing and growing home demands. Though it might be argued that the principals concerned--administrators, investors, and colonists--were unaware of these matters, the existence of the Statistical Abstracts would indicate the contrary. The continuous and purposeful modification of these compilations suggest rather a mature awareness both of the course of the British economy and a realistic appraisal of the value of colonies to the continuation of that economy. They suggest also that British administrators were well aware of the existing and potential weaknesses in the fabric of controls they and their predecessors had woven over the Caucasian colonies. Administrators appear to have been aware of the fact that, though they were not yet developed industrially, the Caucasian areas were at the same cultural level as the homeland and potentially its technological equals. They were certainly aware of the fact that, granting existing strategic con-



ditions, one of the largest of the early Caucasian units, the Thirteen Colonies, had with foreign aid proved a military match for expeditions sent from the homeland and freed itself of all controls. The affair of the Thirteen Colonies and the troubles in Canada also served to point out the fact that because of cultural patterns similar to those in the homeland the Caucasian units were always sitting on the thin edge of revolt over constitutional matters, further increasing the costs of governing them and thereby decreasing the real benefits derived from them. Caucasian units frankly had little desire to share in the costs of their own defense, at least not without constitutional guarantees, and they seemed equally reluctant to assume this burden even with such guarantees. The conflicts inherent in this colonial situation gradually developed into a raging controversy at home as to just what could be done to solve them.

The anti-empire view. On the one hand were the groups totally opposed to empire, the chief and most vociferous of which was the "little Englanders."<sup>49</sup> They somewhat short-

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. one of the "little Englander's" principal spokesmen, John Stuart Mill, Dissertations and Discussions (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1867), Vol. III, pp. 160 f., 179-205, for his views. One of the more interesting facets of the "little Englander's" views is that their staunchest support seems to have come from the landed aristocracy rather than the liberals, suggesting that their views were more amenable to dying mercantilism rather than nascent capitalism.

sightedly pointed out the fact that the administration of Caucasian holdings appeared to be a losing proposition in terms of trade returns, even though these areas were still under development. From this apparent loss factor they argued that the financial burden entailed in the defense of these areas was somewhat pointless. Further, they added fuel to the heated disputes about demands for self-determination in Caucasian areas.

The empire-maritime hegemony view. On the other hand were the groups composed of administrators and investors. The more canny of the administrators (unless one can believe that the information available in the Statistical Abstracts was unused and meant nothing) could foresee the day--the food problem was looming large--when these areas would not only bring financial returns and be self-paying, but the day when they would be the salvation of the home economy. By 1849 the maturing situation of resource dependency had forced a study of the situation in Canada (the Durham Report, 1839), the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), and the repeal of the Navigation Acts (1849), all aimed at insuring the stability of colonial government and the continued flow of necessities to the homeland. Investor sentiment was demanding relief from what it considered inequitable costs, but along with administrative interests it could foresee the day when despite a "virtual autarky in several industrial

products,"<sup>50</sup> the United Kingdom would look to these areas both for the bulk of her food supplies and the bulk of her raw materials. Both were already encouraging further investment on the basis of this belief. In other words, they, administrators and investors alike, could see the need for continued control of these areas, but they also wished relief from what they considered to be conditions under which they burdened themselves with an inequitable share of the costs involved. Colonial clamor had to be satisfied in the interests of governmental stability, but not at the expense of making the particular colonial unit vulnerable to lurking foreign assault. The United Kingdom wanted to be rid of strategic costs, but it still needed the assurance of the trade relations so vital to its national existence. Stable civil conditions in colonial areas could be the only real assurance of these trade relations, and they would be better assured if the homeland could have some control over their direction.

Howe and responsible government: The maturation of the legislative dyarchy in the North America Act. The compromise worked out to solve the Caucasian problem was, as Howe<sup>51</sup> would

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. E. H. Carr, op. cit., Chap. 8, for a discussion of these factors in their historical context.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. in regard to this compromise, hereafter referred to as the legislative dyarchy, the Durham Report (1839), sections of which may be found in Stephenson and Marcham, op. cit., pp. 776 ff., or the entire report which may be found in the British Parliamentary Papers, 1839, No. 3 (London: H.M. Stationer's Office, Reprint). In regard to Howe, cf. his celebrated and influential letter to Lord John Russell noted immediately below, Note 51.

have it, "eminently British." It was the compromise of granting the particular Caucasian unit a large measure of internal autonomy in exchange for the United Kingdom's control of the particular colony's foreign affairs, diplomatic and economic. As Howe stated the matter in the case of Canada,<sup>52</sup> responsible government, "...the remedy pointed out, while it possesses the merits of being eminently British--making them so responsible--is the only cure for those [Canada's] evils short of errant quackery, the only secure foundation upon which the power of the crown can be established on this continent [or in other colonies, Ed.] so as to defy internal machination and foreign assault." (Italics, Ed.) Thus administered, Caucasian colonies could be saddled with the costs of their own internal administration and part of the costs of their defense, and homeland administrators could review decisions inimical to British interests and prevent such foreign agreements as would conflict with the over-all stability of the imperial structure. The legislative dyarchy created by the North America Act (1867)<sup>53</sup> is the

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. letter written from Halifax by Joseph Howe, Prominent citizen of Nova Scotia, Britain's Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, from which this quotation is taken. This letter may be found in Stephenson and Marcham, op. cit., p. 779.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, II, 5 f.: 30 Victoriae c. 3 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, n.d.). Other acts mentioned may be found in their appropriate locations in the same source.

first mature example of this compromise, which had begun with the Irish Appeals Act (1783).<sup>54</sup> Article III of this act explicitly locates executive authority in the queen (by this time, 1867, a captive of Parliament) in its opening statement: "The executive government and authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the queen." Article IV, on the other hand, creates the legislature and lays the cornerstone of internal autonomy, though its last paragraph asserts the right of royal review and veto, review and veto functioning through the governor general, queen, and Privy Council. Article VI specifically enumerates the legislative rights reserved to the colonies while implying the paramount authority of Britain in external affairs. This same pattern of government and division of power, the legislative dyarchy, was later followed in the cases of Australia and New Zealand (1900), the Union of South Africa (1909), and the Dominion of India (1946), though India, largely because of Britain's imperial quandary following World Wars I and II, was given a wider matter of choice.

Legislative dyarchy as a solution to the problem of the administration of Caucasian colonies. This creation of the dominion, or the establishment of the legislative dyarchy to handle internal administration in colonies of Caucasian origin, it can be seen, had the virtue of being able to satisfy everyone

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. infra, p. 133 f.

from the "little Englanders" and the newly-risen "private-enterprisers" to the Canadians themselves. After all, it did satisfy the "little Englanders" on the question of self-determination. It did satisfy the Canadians, for the time being, on the question of constitutional guarantees. It quieted the nascent forces of private enterprise in Parliament on the matter of the costs of imperial government, since Britain would be free of the costs of putting down revolts and be relieved of a goodly share of the costs of strategic defense in North America. Military planners were also made much happier since it relieved them of the problem of localizing naval forces and left them free to distribute them for the protection of the trade routes so essential to British welfare. The principles of this compromise also served, incidentally, to deliver the coup de grace to mercantilist forces in the British government, though they did not alter one jot an essentially mercantilistic factor, the food and raw materials problem, in British government.

Potential failure of the legislative dyarchy. The dyarchy however, was not a complete success. Had it satisfied all the forces in conflict, there seems little doubt that Britain would still be the world's foremost political and military power. The distribution of the power potential inherent in this union of colonies and homeland would have been well-nigh invincible. The United Kingdom would have been the heart of a lasting global



hegemony. Unfortunately, the administration structured by the legislative dyarchy could not bring this eventuality to fruition because the developing historical picture would leave the United Kingdom too vulnerable. Though Canada and other areas would enjoy the protection afforded British subjects, it would only be a matter of time until they were sufficiently developed to chafe under restrictions both in government and upon the course their economic development was to take. This would and did lead to demands for complete autonomy. Changes in the United Kingdom's over-all economic picture led to a number of imperial conferences in which the United Kingdom frankly wooed increased trade relations with the member units of the empire. The rise of Germany, Russia, and Japan as military powers led to a corresponding decline in Britain favored military position: in fact, partially because of Britain inability to demand military help from her colonies, Germany in World Wars I and II blatantly exposed to the world-at-large the point at which the military might of the United Kingdom was most vulnerable, the matter of food and raw material imports. In both cases, had it not been for the timely interference of the United States, Britain might well have gone down to defeat; the British empire certainly would have been dismembered. World War I also served to decimate British investments in North America, thus tremendously weakening the United Kingdom's normal economic position.



Possibility of an empire parliament. There is also another side to the matter. At any time until 1880 under the legislative dyarchy, the United Kingdom might have gambled on the first truly international government, an empire parliament, and won out by persuading the Caucasian units of the wisdom of this end. Beyond 1880--certainly after World War I--she had reached the realm of no return. The combination of pressures upon the imperial structure building up after the North America Act reached a culmination in 1931 with the Statute of Westminster.<sup>55</sup> Under the dictates of this statute the United Kingdom voluntarily relinquished all claim to governmental prerogatives over her Caucasian units, with the exception of India, and including the non-Caucasian unit of Papua, a dominion administered jointly with Australia.

Modes of rule among non-Caucasian colonials. This somewhat deferential treatment afforded Caucasian units since the American Revolt may be contrasted with that offered non-Caucasian colonies. Colonial governments among non-Caucasian colonies have varied considerably, degrees of subjugation or control being dependent

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Stephenson and Marcham, op. cit., pp. 839-841, or the Public General Acts of the United Kingdom, 1932, p. 13 f.: 22 George V, c. 4, the most significant provision of this act being the statement "...that no law hereafter made by the parliament of the United Kingdom [sic] shall extend to any of the said dominions as part of the law of that dominion otherwise than at the request and with the consent of that dominion...". The dominions referred to are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Irish Free State, and Newfoundland.

upon variable factors, but the essential principle behind them all was that of an administrative dyarchy. Wherever practicable or forced, internal rule was placed in the hands of the natives, but British administrators exercised a great deal of control over these affairs even then. As always, they exercised full control over external affairs.

Desirability of non-Caucasian holdings. To begin with, in dealing with its non-Caucasians, the United Kingdom was dealing with groups inferior to its own nationals in material culture, especially in the tools and techniques of warfare. These peoples--Burmese, Malaysians, Africans, Amerindians, Pacific Islanders, etc.--were no military match for the British, at least not by themselves. None of these groups possessed weapons equal to those of their European overlords who were not about to supply them in any serious quantities. Almost all of them, China being the exception,<sup>56</sup> lacked a sufficient differential in population with which to offset material deficiencies. Their desirability as colonies was predicated on their possession of either a strategic location or material resource desired by the British.

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<sup>56</sup> India might here be considered a non-Caucasian unit, but for the purposes of this study it is in the end, as anthropologists classify its people, Caucasian. In recent years it has finally received the treatment afforded Caucasian units.

Conditions contributing to variations in rule among the non-Caucasian colonies. Had the above conditions alone obtained, the end result might have been the complete subjugation of all non-Caucasian colonies. As things worked out, they did not. Certain "natural" checks appear to have operated to minimize the total effectiveness of military and other disadvantages. First was the limit to the number of individuals who at any specific time could be spared from the home population to provide colonial administrators without endangering the efficiency and security of the home government. Public education could produce only a limited number of trained administrators, able though they might be.<sup>57</sup> A second check was of a military nature, there being rather definite demographic, financial, and industrial limits to the number and size of armies which the British could at any given time commit to the support of colonial expansion or protection without, again, endangering home security or the stability and success of the colonial movement itself. This is one of the basic reasons that trader-colonists often had to go it alone in the establishment of governmental controls over

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Ramsay Muir, How Britain is Governed (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1935). One of the principal theses of this work is that public education in Britain has had a pronounced effect upon colonial administration. Muir contends that public education in the United Kingdom is the key to the Colonial Office's policies and thereby the key to British colonial compromises.

non-Caucasian peoples and one of the reasons for the common use of mercenaries, such as Sepoys, financed by private rather than governmental interests. Another limit was the disruptive forces latent in the imperialistic designs of competing powers. These functioned as serious checks, particularly after the advent of nationalism in non-Caucasian areas because, if British rule became too arbitrary, the attractiveness to native groups of revolutionary enterprises financed by Britain's imperial rivals would increase by leaps and bounds. Russo-British relations in the Khyber Pass area would be an examples of this check in operation. Still another check was the sheer cost of putting down rebellion, the cost often being out of all proportion to the benefits derived from the enterprise to be preserved. A further check arose from the tendency of many natives to adopt the cultural patterns of their British overlords, a tendency aided in no small measure by missionary enterprises. The early behavior of Gandhi and the recent behavior of Krishna Menon are cases in point. The adoption of British culture in their cases and many others generally carried with it a corresponding demand for governmental privileges commensurate with this cultural pattern in the United Kingdom. Another check arose from the machinations of various boards of control which were not too eager to surrender to the dictates of Parliament colonial prerogatives which they had won largely as a result of their

own efforts.<sup>58</sup> What might be considered a final, perhaps the most important check, stemmed from the need of the United Kingdom's need for the raw materials and food provided by these colonies. Continuous warfare or civil strife would upset this flow of necessities and thereby seriously impair home living standards and, more important, the British geo-political potential.

Sacerdotalism and nationalism. Counterbalancing the play of these forces were both sacerdotalism and nationalism, particularly in the Near East and Asia. In the early years of British rule, the net effect of sacerdotalism was to make non-Caucasian colonials more docile. After all, these people were accustomed to following the dictates of divine rulers who, in their turn, were submitting to the dictates of British administrators. The net effect of nationalism, the curse of later imperial years, was, on the other hand, to unify and intensify all over the world native struggles against colonialism and to produce continuous periods of civil disturbance among native peoples. Recent African troubles and the conduct of peoples in the Near East and Southeast Asia are two of its more startling effects.

Plight of native colonials: An impetus to nationalism.

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<sup>58</sup> The actions of the East India Company would be the supreme example. Cf. Infra, p. 141 f., under the discussion of the India Office Act (1858).

Part of the emotional fuel behind nationalistic movements among non-Caucasian colonials appears to have risen from the treatment they have received at British hands. Treated in an indifferent "racist" fashion until the advent nationalism in the closing years of the nineteenth century, these colonials had been paid their meagre wages and pretty much ignored. As long as they remained docile, worked for their wages, and left the European compounds alone, they were left to their own devices. Except for a few public health programs and periodic famine relief, British administrators, until the period when the rumbles of nationalism could no longer be ignored, had done little in the way of improving the lot or advancing the cultural level of the natives, though missionary groups had done much in this regard. Official policy had generally been a case of "let sleeping dogs lie."

The administrative dyarchy among non-Caucasian colonials.

There appears little reason to condemn British administrators for this policy which, in the end, fed the flames of nationalism. Aside from the fact that such a policy left them free to deploy Britain's strategic forces in the troubled European area, the truth would appear to be that native rulers were as much if not more responsible than the British for the persistence of primitive conditions. Colonial administrators early learned among non-Caucasians that the most practical and cheapest method of maintaining stable civil conditions in which to do business, their



primary concern, was to leave the giving of directions, as much as possible, to native rulers who were guided from behind the scenes by these same administrators. For the purposes of this study, this system in its various ramifications is referred to as the administrative dyarchy. This is to be distinguished from the legislative dyarchy in that administrators kept a firm hand in internal administration though they hid it whenever possible. For obvious reasons already considered, this was the cheapest and most practical form of rule which British administrators could devise. It utilized the cultural institutions of these native peoples to keep civil order and in later imperial years proved an effective delaying tactic in the matter of demands for the removal of British controls.

Nationalism as a factor in British colonial government.

The chief force behind the demands for the removal of British controls in non-Caucasian areas has come from the emotions of nationalism. Nationalism, harking back to former cultural glories as its well-spring, has fallen upon the idealistic, though perhaps sentimental, economic views of various political theorists: men such as Locke, Rousseau, Proudhon, Engels, Marx, and the "Fabians:" to produce the unifying anti-colonial cry, "exploitation," in non-Caucasian areas. Non-Caucasians have latched upon the views of these theorists as justifications for their demands for autonomy and the removal of British



controls.<sup>59</sup> Economic nationalism has proven a potent disruptive force which has more than once compelled British administrators to make administrative compromises they would rather have done without. Civil disturbances disrupt industry and trade, and as the nineteenth century progressed trade became a more and more vital issue with British planners, and so did the flow of raw materials from colonial areas, flows which might halt to a trickle during periods of civil disturbance. This possibility appears to have been very effective in compromising British rule in non-Caucasian as well as Caucasian areas.

The demographic-strategic factor. Another factor which helped compromise British rule in colonial areas was the growing population differential between the United Kingdom and subject territories, particularly those differentials represented by the enormous populations of non-Caucasian areas. For example, assuming that the British colonial population was zero in 1606 and that of England 4,000,000, the lopsided growth of populations throughout the empire produced some interesting results. By 1800 the population of the United Kingdom had grown to about 25,000,000 while that of the mushrooming empire had exploded to

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946) for one of the pioneer studies in this area. Kohn, however, does not place quite the emphasis upon the economic aspects of nationalism that this study does.

one-quarter billion. By 1900 the United Kingdom had grown to 40,000,000 while the empire encompassed some one-half billion souls, unless commitments in the China area include the stabilizing of that population which would run the colonial population close to one billion. Adding European stabilization to this differential, it is readily observable why British administrators were so willing to compromise in the matter of imperial rule in order to stabilize the flow of goods so necessary to the United Kingdom's survival and to free the United Kingdom of colonial troubles in event of disturbances in the status quo among the civilized nations of Eurasia. Serious civil disturbances occurring simultaneously in both Europe and Asia, as later events were to prove, would have forced the Britain's vaunted two-ocean navy into a dangerously thin strategic deployment.

Troubled Europe: The fulcrum of a strategic problem.

The problem of stabilizing Europe has had the most profound influence upon the compromising of rule over non-Caucasians. For the best part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the deployment of British strategic forces has been concentrated in the European area. This deployment appears to have resulted from a belief on the part of British strategists, quite logical in the circumstances, that the key to continued British colonial control lay in the maintenance of the status quo or balance of

power in Europe, at least until the rise of the Japanese navy in our own century. As strategic potential was distributed in the European area, Britain had by far the upper hand; and, taking into consideration her two-ocean navy, she appears to have expended considerable effort to protect it. Any sign of disturbances in the distribution of power in Europe would bring British forces into the "thick of it." From the Polish partitions through the revolutions in the Mediterranean area, from the French Revolution through the "year of revolutions" (1848), from Laibach and Troppau to the Franco-Prussian War, Europe had to be stabilized by the threat of British power. This meant the concentration of the major part of British naval strength in the European area where sat Britain's technological rivals, those most capable of waging successful war against her, and it also meant that Britain could not afford to have to divide this strategic power between major troubles in Europe and Asia at the same time. This strategic difficulty also helps account for British acceptance of innumerable strategic protectorates following World War I, particularly for the fact that Britain was asserting its predominant interest under extremely limited political instruments. She had to protect her vulnerable areas and keep her life-lines open, but she could not afford the expense of making protectorates colonies.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Harold and Margaret Sprout, Foundations of National Power (Princeton: The University Press, 1945), pp. 163-183, for the changing character of the British strategic picture and its central problems.

And this strategic stalemate also helps account for the Hood, Prince of Wales, and other British naval disasters during the early years of World War II. Had it not again been for the timely interference of the United States, Britain's strategic quandary might have broken the back of the British empire.

Administrative results of the interplay of these pertinent influences upon British rule over non-Caucasians. The end administrative result arising from the interplay of these social, political, strategic, economic, and other forces was and is a strange series of compromise governments among non-Caucasian units of the empire. They run the gamut from the almost complete subjugation of the Crown colonies to the rather broadened, but not complete internal autonomy of some of the island and Afro-Asian colonies. The effectiveness of the administrative dyarchy varies from colony to colony and is now often maintained merely as an effective delaying tactic to insure the continued flow of necessities to the British homeland. In general, the administrative dyarchy functioned through the following governmental instruments:

- I. Self-Governing Quasi-Dominions: i.e., Southern Rhodesia is a self-governing territory whose external affairs are directed by the government of the United Kingdom which also has some control in matters directly affecting the government managed by the native population.

- II. Condominiums: areas such as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan jointly administered by the U.K. and other sovereign states. Though no longer applying to the Sudan, this pattern fits for the New Hebrides.
- III. Burma: a type well advanced on the road to internal self-government. Domestic affairs, with certain reservations, are in the hands of quasi-appointive administrators directly responsible to an elected legislature. (Burma is now free. Ed.)
- IV. Colonies: represent a wide range of governmental forms exhibiting various phases of the administrative dyarchy. They range from Crown colonies administered by a governor alone (Hong Kong) up to administration by a governor who has the assistance of a nominated Executive Council and legislative body elected by the people (Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Basutoland, Malaya, Ceylon, etc.).
- V. Protectorates; states possessing internal sovereignty, the members of which are "British protected persons," but not British subjects. North Borneo, Uganda, and the protectorates in Somaliland and Central Africa would be examples falling in this category.
- VI. Mandated Territories: territories administered by either the United Kingdom or one of the self-governing dominions under a mandate from the League of Nations. Palestine, Mesopotamia, New Guinea, and Western Samoa would be examples in this group, though the mandates now stem from the United Nations.
- VII. British India: \* has a central government consisting of a Viceroy, an Executive Council, a Council of State, and a legislative assembly. In each province there is an elected legislature enjoying almost complete self-government in provincial affairs, but in certain provincial and larger matters the Viceroy is the final word, he being responsible to the Parliament of the United Kingdom and the Crown.

Indian States: \* ruled by hereditary princes who have treaty relations with the Crown and who exercise their authority under the suzerainty of the King-Emperor and his representatives.

- \* Note: India is here treated as a non-Caucasian colony, though it will later be treated as a Caucasian unit. Cf. infra, pp. 179-184, for India's transition from administrative to legislative dyarchy.

Quite obviously, in many of the above cases, native peoples have been left pretty much in charge of internal government while British administration has remained simply to protect British interests, internal and external. These compromises under the administrative dyarchy appear to have arisen from the interplay of the principal concerns of British administrators contending with the syndrome of forces previously discussed, their concerns being the maintenance of stable civil conditions within the given colony in order to promote trade and the flow of raw materials, the checking of the possible designs of competing powers, and the stabilization of Eurasia at the same time. In some areas, British forces have been garrisoned as much to act as a strategic check upon the ambitions of competitors as they have been to act as a check upon the natives, though there is a definite element of the latter in all cases. All along the line, however, British administrators, as the compilation of governments shows, have been forced into compromises.

The British maritime hegemony. What the British have developed, then, according to the preliminary definition given of political hegemonies, is an empire rather than an imperium.



Only in rare instances does Britain exercise authority even remotely approaching absolute prerogatives, and in almost all cases her controls are in various stages of disintegration. Britain has developed a rapidly disintegrating political hegemony on a maritime basis in which rule, as much as is practicable or forced, as shall be discussed further on, is divided between the United Kingdom and the subject area. Some measure of internal self-government has been given to most of the non-Caucasian units because conditions forced this concession upon British administrators, though Britain has retained varying degrees of control over their external or strategic affairs. In the case of Caucasian units, the United Kingdom really has no control at all, conditions having forced her into a plea for voluntary cooperation between herself and the erstwhile colonies enjoying dominion status.

How this rapidly accelerating disintegration came about, and just what effect franchise changes in the United Kingdom had upon it, the crux of this study's special problem, is the substance of the remaining discussion.



## CHAPTER IV

### FRANCHISE REFORM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

At the opening of the nineteenth century, the government of the United Kingdom was organized along the lines of a constitutional monarchy. The Crown, however, had no real political authority, the extremely limited extent of its prerogatives having been settled by the agreements terminating the "Glorious Revolution." Actual governmental authority rested in the hands of a rather non-representative Parliament composed of two deliberative houses, Lords and Commons. Seats in Lords were hereditary, residing either in a family title or church office. Seats in Commons, on the other hand, were subject to the ballot of an extremely limited electorate because the voting franchises which controlled them rested in parcels of land granted representation by the writs of former Lancastrian, Plantagenet, and Tudor monarchs and were continued in this privilege by custom. Deliberations in Commons were conducted by the recently developed "party cabinet" system of operation, while those in Lords were conducted on the basis of precepts contained in long-accepted customs and practices. Under this system very few citizens, about one in forty-five, had the right to vote. Property was the basis of the voting franchise, and, as earlier remarked, there were very few landholders in the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. supra, p. 41, Note 8.

Clamor for reform. As the nineteenth century opened a great clamor for the reform of this sytem rose up in the United Kingdom. The basis of this and subsequent cries for continued reform are quite well known to any student of British history, and, because they are of little use for the purposes of this study, they shall be almost totally ignored. Rather, the concern here will center upon the changes wrought in the make-up of Commons as these reforms progressed. Lords will be left out of the picture because, for the most part, until 1911, this body was unaffected by the course of franchise reform, seats in this body never having been subject to election.

Focus of the attack upon the existing governmental system.

Because seats in Lords were hereditary, perhaps for more than any other reason, the cry for the reform of the existing structure centered its attack upon the seats in the House of Commons. The ends desired by those clamoring for reform were an extension of franchise privileges to more citizens and redistribution of the seats in Commons on both a geographic and demographic basis.<sup>2</sup> Those clamoring the loudest and backing the rest were the rising group of industrialists who were without voice in government and

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Indexes for Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (H. C. Debs.) for the year 1831, particularly the "Petition of Merthyr Tidvill," Vol. 2, p. 206 f., or the discussion of "Old Sarum" in Vol. 2, pp. 1061-1089.

who wished to make an inroad into the hereditary aristocracy's stranglehold upon government. By 1831 their clamor could not be ignored, so Commons took up the subject of reform in the electorate.

Reform Bill of 1832 and its significances. The first successful reform of the electorate and inroad into the power of the hereditary aristocracy was the Franchise Reform Bill,<sup>2</sup> really the franchise reform bills, of 1832. The passage of this bill appeared to accomplish several things. First, it apparently destroyed once and for all the landed aristocracy's semi-feudal monopoly of the British government and made the first successful inroad into mercantilist principles in government. Second, it made wealth as well as property a basis for voting enfranchisement.<sup>3</sup> Third, while newly enfranchising many citizens, it disfranchised many others; but the former were by far the larger group. One citizen in thirty now had the right to vote, which for the most part served to give franchise privileges to the industrialists. Laborers, because few could afford homes whose rental value reached an annual average of ten pounds, were still without the vote, and so were women.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. listing of Committee Reports listed in the Indexes of Vols. 4 and 7, Parliamentary Debates (Third Series: H. C. Debs) for the gradual introduction of this change into the reform platform.

"Scot and lot" citizens were pretty well disfranchised as were many of the artisans, about ten per cent of the latter group being left with the right to vote. Many "rotten boroughs" were destroyed and their seats redistributed, thus making for a more representative geographic distribution of the seats in Commons. The principal evil of this bill lay in the fact that it lacked the secret ballot which had been asked for. Lack of such a safeguard left a good deal of the voting open to coercion, particularly in the old and new county franchises where wealthy landholders could coerce the lesser property holders, or "leaseholders," a group which before the bill had in some counties outweighed the power of the gentry. On the other hand, the newly arrived industrialists also found the same advantage, though inherently an evil, accessible; so its effectiveness was somewhat lessened. On the whole, the end result of the bill was some realignment in political power among the social classes of the United Kingdom. The middle class received a substantial increase in representation, and the upper middle, or industrialist, group was elevated to a position about equal to that of the aristocracy. Commons received recognition as the House which would eventually dominate the British Parliament and government. In other words, this reform, which almost wholly internal in origin, was a typically British measure; almost every group received a sliver of the cake, but no one group was permitted to gorge itself upon it.

Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.<sup>4</sup> The Reform Bill of 1832 was closely followed by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, a law which introduced some reform into the administration of boroughs, giving the general public a little more voice in their administration and thereby further augmenting the position of the nascent industrialist group. More important franchise reforms simmered beneath the surface.

Chartism. The first overt symptom of the determination behind this simmering was the explosion on to the British political scene of a sometimes reckless movement known as Chartism, given consideration here because it represents two important facets of future political reform: 1) it represented the demand for franchise privileges on the part of that vast group, laborers and ordinary citizens, who had been ignored by the reforms of 1832; and 2) the fact that five of the six points in its platform are the sum and substance of subsequent major franchise reforms. Chartism, though it ultimately petered out as a political movement and failed directly to implement the reforms it sought, was effective in other areas too. In combination with Anti-Corn Law League it helped bring about the

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Statutes of the United Kingdom, LXXV, 389f: 5-6 William IV, c. 76.

repeal of both the Corn Laws (1846) and the Navigation Acts (1849), thus cutting into the financial power represented in the agricultural wealth of the landed aristocracy and delivering a serious blow to the forces of mercantilism. The "Peoples Charter" is their principal contribution to the British franchise reform movement, even though it remained for other political groups to bring its ideas to pass. The six points of this charter are:<sup>5</sup> 1) the institution of universal manhood suffrage for both men and women (women had not been enfranchised by the reform of 1832); 2) the adoption of the secret, or Australian, ballot; 3) the creation of equal electoral districts; 4) the elimination of property qualifications for membership in Parliament; 5) the institution of salary payments for members of Commons; and 6) the institution of annual elections, the only measure which has not been adopted in some fashion.

Representation of the People Act of 1867 and its significance. Except for a few minor county and borough measures, reform, as far as Parliament was concerned, remained quiescent until Gladstone's memorable speech<sup>6</sup> in the House of Commons

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<sup>5</sup> Edward P. Cheyney, Readings in English History (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1908), pp. 702-704, contains a copy of the first Chartist petition which contains these provisions, and pp. 704-713 contain further documentary material on this movement.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gladstone's speech introducing his reform bill, "On the Advance of the Working Class," in Parliamentary Debates (Official Ed.: H. C. Debs.), CLXXXII, 1129-1135, and ensuing debate.

in 1867. Though his introduction, as Prime Minister, of a proposed reform bill ended shortly in the proroguing of his Parliament, the Conservatives who maneuvered themselves into power on the strength of defeating his bill found themselves having to face up to the passage of reforms, anyway, if they would stay in power. The bill introduced by Disraeli in response to riotous public sentiment was even more liberal than that previously proposed by Gladstone and became the "law of the land" as the Representation of the People Act of 1867.<sup>7</sup> This act extended the franchise in the counties and all but made suffrage for men universal in the boroughs. This was accomplished by a provision of the act, startling for its time, that all men who paid direct taxes should vote. In essence, this provision had the effect of shifting the balance of political power toward the working classes and solidly establishing the middle classes in Parliamentary control. This was in keeping with the trend instituted in the reform of 1832 which had begun to shift the balance of power in Commons and government toward the more numerous popular groups, though by this time the upper stratum of the middle classes which the reform of 1832 had enfranchised were fairly well identified with the erstwhile aristocracy. Commons was thereby becoming more solidly entrenched as the dominant organ of the British

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, II, 1082 f.: 30-31 Victoriae, c. 102, for a copy of this act.



Parliament. One person in eighteen now had the vote, though women were still left out. Labor received its entering wedge into the Parliamentary arena, thereby liberalizing the views of Parliament even more than had the reform of 1832. One evil, however, remained still untouched; the open ballot remained to plague the unwary, leaving the laborer or any other voter open to all sorts of reprisals and leading to such ridiculous situations as employers trooping their employees to the polls to see to it that the voting proceeded as they wished.

The Secret Ballot Act of 1872.<sup>8</sup> As soon as the evils of this situation became apparent, the Secret Ballot Act (1872) followed as a logical development. Gladstone's bill asking for the secret ballot was quickly passed in Commons, and Lords, now mindful of the inroads into its power, gave a quick and final nod to the measure rather than precipitate an election or create a basis for the civil disturbances which usually followed in the wake of refusal of needed reform. The net effect of this measure was more solidly to entrench the trend of shifting the balance of political power toward the more numerous popular groups; Labor could now develop its own voice because it could no longer directly be coerced.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, VII, 193 f.:35-36 Victoriae, c. 33, for a copy of this act.

Representation of The People Act of 1884.<sup>9</sup> For twelve years following the passage of this act, the clamor for reform was held pretty well in check, but, in 1883, when threatened with a split in the forces of his Liberal Party, Gladstone again brought up the issue of political reform, a subject upon which all liberals apparently could agree, to heal the breach. The ministry brought forth a bill proposing to give the agricultural workers in the counties virtually the same franchise privileges that the bill of 1867 had given to workers in the cities. Agricultural workers had only recently been supplanted as the most numerous group in the population, but they had yet to win franchise privileges for themselves. Simple justice demanded that they receive franchise rights at least equal to those gained by the laboring elements in the cities. Though the bill took a bit of forcing, it passed rather handily, its principal opposition obviously rising in Lords, the last stronghold of landed power. In Commons, the opposition was not given much of a chance. The Liberal whips shuttled the bill through under something of a "forced draft." This bill, however, left still unresolved the question of the distribution of Parliamentary seats and the women's vote.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, XXI, 3 f.: 43 Victoriae, c. 3, for a copy of this act. Cf. also the Index of the Parliamentary Debates, 1883, for debates on the issues involved.

Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885.<sup>10</sup> One taste of reform apparently produced the quest for a little more. In less than a year the question of the distribution of the seats in Commons received its solution. According to the bill, the remaining rotten boroughs were abolished and the number of seats in Commons increased to 670. England was given 465 of these seats, Ireland 103, Scotland 72, and Wales 30. Though there was some vociferous opposition, the bill passed readily. Representation in Commons was now rather evenly distributed on the basis of population, property rights, and means of livelihood, but for men only.

Ensuing redistribution of the vote. Four out of five males, as an end result of the bills of 1884 and 1885, now had the vote, where one in thirty or forty had this right in 1832. Young men still living at home, servants, and men who did not maintain separate households were now about the only males who did not have the franchise. Because the increase in the population largely represented births among the laboring classes in the cities, these bills tended to keep the balance of power in Commons shifting more and more toward the ideas of laboring groups, the most numerous elements in the

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, XXI, 128 f.:48-49 Victoriae, c. 23, for a copy of this act.

total population. Not many years later, in 1896, Labor saw its first full-fledged Representative, Keir Hardie make Labor's maiden speech in Commons. Middle-class ideas, however, were still dominant in Parliament and would continue to be so until Labor caught up to them in Parliamentary representation in the third decade of the twentieth century.

Franchise and electorate reforms in the Twentieth Century.

For the twenty-six years following the bill of 1885, the energies of liberal reformers were pretty directly taken up, as they had been in other franchise reform intervals, with more immediate questions of domestic reform such as poor laws and social security, though franchise reform proposals still hovered in the offing. The first new reform in the electorate came in 1911 on the heels of Lords' action in regard to the Lloyd George Budget of 1910. Twice the issue of the budget went before the electorate, and twice Lords refused the budget which contained measures proposing to create social security for workers. This led to the Parliament Act of 1911<sup>11</sup> aimed specifically at smashing once and for all the power of the House of Lords. The principal provision of this bill declared that once a bill had passed in Commons over a second veto of

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, XLIX, 38 f.:1-2 George V, c. 13, for a copy of this act.

Lords it automatically became law. Lords was blackmailed into the passage of this bill by a threat of flooding the civil list (and thereby Lords) with enough new peers to force acceptance of the bill. More social reform followed, but as its backing petered out and World War I approached, the cry for franchise reform again arose, this time from the women. "Suffragettes" began their clamor for the introduction of the "feminine prerogative" into the electorate. By 1918 the government was ready and willing to grant them the right to vote. In that year Parliament passed the Representation of the People Act<sup>12</sup> which gave voting privileges to women over thirty. The act also restricted traditional "plural" voting privileges to people holding university degrees and to businessmen whose enterprises produced an aggregate income of ten pounds per year. Women were enraged by the age restriction; so, though they exercised the franchise privilege granted them, they still kept up the tumult. In 1919, therefore, they received appeasement in the Sex-Disqualification Removal Act<sup>13</sup> which granted them the franchise on an equal basis with men. Universal suffrage was now nearly an accomplished fact. That same year, 1919,

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, LV, 253 f: 7-8 George V, c. 64, for a copy of this act.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ibid., LVII, 325 f: 9-10 George V, c. 71.

also saw the passage of the Re-election of Ministers Act.<sup>14</sup> This bill put an end to the nuisance of "by-elections" for men who accepted paid offices while sitting as members of Parliament. The bill limited the number of such elections to three in any one Parliament. The last step on the road to universal franchise was taken in 1928 with the passage of the Equal Franchise Act.<sup>15</sup> Property and financial qualifications, the historical basis of the franchise were removed, and universal suffrage on the basis of person was substituted, thus giving franchise rights to all those men and women who had been ignored or overlooked in earlier reform bills. Universal suffrage for all adults had become a reality.

Recapitulation and addenda on Franchise Reform. Reform had been a long road strewn with many pitfalls. Changes had been gradual, and the over-all tendency of the reforms had been to shift the balance of political power into the hands of the more numerous popular groups. The impetus behind the reforms had been almost wholly internal, though the whole general sweep of Western civilization had given ideas and strength to it. All of Western civilization had for some time been drifting in

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, LVII, 4 f.: 9 George V, c. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Public General Acts, 1928, 27 f.: 18-19 George V, c. 12.

the general direction of governments representing a pluralistic basis for all political decisions, governments generally referred to as republics, or representative democracies. This movement was characteristic of the whole civilization, and from its sweep English reformers had borrowed ideas and arguments with which to bolster their own indigenous trends. Still, the particular instrumentation taken by the English people was peculiarly their own and predicated upon influences rising in the British Isles. The only foreseeable weakness in the system the British have developed lies in the potential evil inherent in the fact that the less numerous popular groups are without effective voice in government. In moments of national stress such a condition could lead to ochlocracy, government intimidated by mob rule. However this may be, the problem of this study is now to assess the effects, if any, of these major franchise changes upon the course of Britain's imperial rule.



## CHAPTER V

### PARLIAMENT AND IMPERIAL LEGISLATION

Since the course of imperial rule preceding the American Revolt has already been discussed, it should suffice to review its trends and then proceed with the course of imperial rule since that time. Legislation or royal writs preceding this period and concerned with imperial rule were issued, for the most part, under the guidance of the mercantilistically-oriented Privy Council of the Crown. True, there had been the Act Creating The Commonwealth passed by the Interregnum Parliament (1649), but this had proved pretty much a dead issue, never having been resorted to for any decision of consequence after the Restoration (1660). Britain's technique was to superimpose imperial order on colonies after they had been established by her own or other Caucasian nationals. Agencies charged with the successful accomplishment of this transition had first been instituted by and in the interests of the Crown. The first to take up this task was the Crown's own Privy Council. Next, in 1695, the Board of Trade and Plantations was organized. Most of its energies were directed toward the management and direction of colonies Caucasian in population, particularly those in North America, since it was during the period of its tenure that England, largely through the efforts of individual

citizen groups, was carrying on the decisive duel with the French which spread her control and influence into Asia. As she continued her expansion in Asia, a colonia secretaryship was created, abolished, and recreated in order to integrate management over the member units of the growing and far-flung colonial system. Direction was still largely in the hands of the Crown, but the middle of the eighteenth century began to see Parliament assert its desire to usurp control. Parliamentary attempts began with a series of legislative measures aimed at making the Thirteen Colonies share in the cost of their defense.<sup>1</sup> Next came North's compromising India Regulating Act (1773) which asserted Parliament's authority over the government of India but left actual rule and regulation almost wholly in the hands of agents of the East India Company. This was followed by the equally compromising Quebec Act (1774)<sup>2</sup> which bargained for the quiescence of the Canadians in the event of further troubles in the Thirteen Colonies. Next came the series of so-called "Intolerable Acts" which helped lead to the American Revolt.<sup>3</sup> Parliament had not fared very

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<sup>1</sup> Among these pieces of legislation was the Stamp Act (1765), Statutes at Large, XXVI, 179 ff.:5 George III, c. 12, quickly repealed and followed by the Declaratory Act (1766); Ibid., XXVII, 19 f.:6 George III, c. 12, asserting a right Parliament and Crown had been unable to enforce.

<sup>2</sup> Statutes at Large, XXX, 549 f.:14 George III, c. 83, for a copy of this act.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. supra, pp. 74-77 for root of troubles in America.

well as yet in her attempts to don the "imperial robes," but the American Revolt appears to have pointed out the path Parliament might tread successfully. It was a road which compromised not only with the Crown, but with amenities of strategic, political, and economic realities as well.

I. SELECTED IMPERIAL LEGISLATION PRECEDING  
THE FIRST MAJOR FRANCHISE REFORM BILL  
AND FOLLOWING THE AMERICAN REVOLT

The Irish Appeals Act (1783). The American War was no sooner over than Britain donned her "new look" in colonial affairs. The year 1783 saw the passage of the Irish Appeals Act,<sup>4</sup> which asserted the joint tenure of Crown and Parliament over Ireland and "...the exclusive rights of the parliament and courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature."<sup>5</sup> To all intents and purposes Parliament and Crown were thus assenting to the validity of the claims of the radicals who had stirred up the revolt in the Thirteen Colonies<sup>6</sup> and, perhaps hoping to avoid a similar conflict in the face of pending difficulties with France. Ireland was given internal autonomy,

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<sup>4</sup> Statutes at Large, XXXIV, 256 f.: 23 George III, c. 28, for a copy of this act.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. supra, pp. 56-78, particularly Note 18, p. 63, for the roots of the American Troubles.

but the question of her share in certain tax matters and control of her external affairs remained still unresolved because she had no representation in Parliament. An attempt was soon to be made to remedy this situation, but not before Parliament had given further consideration to the Canadian question.

The Canadian Constitution Act (1791). Parliament's answer to the potentially dangerous Canadian problem was the Canadian Constitution Act (1791)<sup>7</sup> which did several things: 1) solved a potentially disruptive religious problem by dividing Canada into two provinces, upper and lower on the basis of dominant religion; 2) gave the Canadians a great deal of internal autonomy, though its legislatures were answerable to a royal legislative council; 3) suggested the Crown's inability to legislate for the colonies without the advice and consent of Parliament, the Crown's prerogatives being limited by certain provisions of this act; 4) adapted the United Kingdom's franchise regulations to the purposes of Canadian government, property still being the basis of the franchise; 5) asserted the Crown's prerogative of a two-year legislative veto period on any piece of internal legislation in Canada, and 6) thus retained for Britain control of Canada's external affairs. The

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Statutes at Large, XXXVII, 294 ff.:31 George III, c. 31, for a complete copy of this act.

constitution bill also helped quiet the clamor for independence being raised by certain Canadian and outside groups. Parliament's next step was an attempted solution of the Irish problem.

Act of Union with Ireland (1800). Though the Irish question is rarely considered a phase of British imperial maneuvering during this period of the empire, there appears to be more than a little basis for considering it in this light. Certainly the Irish have ever viewed it in this manner, and, by 1922, the British Parliament appears to have been ready to concede the point. Though the modern phase of this question really dates from Cromwell's occupation during the Interregnum, the real purpose at the time under consideration, 1800, appears to have been three-fold: 1) an attempt to answer once and for all the arguments raised by the American Revolt; 2) to quiet Irish clamor in the face of difficulties with the French, and 3) to protect the Protestant north of Ireland from troubles with the Catholic south. Cromwell's occupation had led to serious religious problems and the problem of "absentee landlordism." From Cromwell's time forward the Irish have continued to scheme and fight for independence while English interests have concerned themselves with protecting sympathetic and Protestant northern Irish groups from almost certain reprisals from the predominantly Roman Catholic remainder of

Ireland should it succeed in breaking free. At the time under consideration here, however, c. 1800, the attempted legislation was more concerned with satisfying conservative parliamentary interests who wished to consolidate and make uniform the administration of the empire. The Act of Union with Ireland (1800)<sup>8</sup> was on the order of a "trial balloon," conservative stimulated, aimed at pointing the way toward a satisfactory solution of the problem of creating a uniform imperial administration free of troubles stemming from the American argument and strategic difficulties. The "Act of Union" had followed relatively rapidly on the heels of the "Appeals Act" and would seem merely the next logical step toward parliamentary representation for colonies. "Union" legislation attempted to gain this end by uniting the United Kingdom and Ireland under joint allegiance to the Crown and by giving Ireland a relatively fair representation in the British Parliament. Ireland still preserved her control over internal affairs and was given the added voice of parliamentary representation to preserve its interest in its foreign affairs.

Parliamentary consideration of the Union Bill. The sometimes comical union issue began with a joint resolution of

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Statutes at Large, XLII, 648 ff.:40 George III, c. 67, for a complete copy of this act.

both houses of the British Parliament proposing the act of union. Uproar followed in Ireland, but Parliament went blithely ahead. Lords quickly implemented the resolution by passing a Bill of Union and sending it to Commons. In Commons the question of bringing up the report on it moved rapidly. Before too long a somewhat bored and nearly empty Commons, sitting as a Committee of the Whole, passed this amended bill, dividing 140 to 15<sup>9</sup> in its favor, and submitted it to the Irish for ratification. Ireland wanted no part of the union and said so, but Parliament was in a mood to persist despite the rejection. When needled on the issue in Commons, Mr. W. Smith answered for the "Bench" that he "...did not think the union absolutely a bad measure, but contended, that having been rejected by the Irish Parliament, we ought not to [sic] persevere it at present."<sup>10</sup> The question was put to continue and continuation so ordered: Ayes 149, Noes 24.<sup>11</sup> Again the bill went back to committee while negotiations were undertaken

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, XXXIV, 321: 39 George III.

<sup>10</sup> Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, XXXIV, 387: 39 George III.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 387.



by imperial authorities to see what could be done about instilling in the Irish a measure of the proper attitude requisite to presiding over what the Irish considered their own national downfall. As these negotiations continued, the question of bringing up the amended report on union divided: Ayes 120, Noes 16.<sup>12</sup> It was shortly after this division that the Crown, in the person of George III, in an address to a joint session of both houses indicated the success of negotiations in the following words:<sup>13</sup>

My Lords and Gentlemen; I receive with the greatest satisfaction, the deliberate opinion of my two Houses of Parliament on this interesting subject; and you may depend upon my embracing the first favourable opportunity of communicating to my Parliament of Ireland the propositions which you have laid before me, as calculated to form the basis of a complete and entire union between Great Britain and Ireland. Such a settlement established by mutual consent, and founded on a sense of mutual interest and affection, would, I am persuaded, produce the happiest effects in promoting the security and happiness of both kingdoms, and in containing and augmenting the stability, power, and resources of the empire. (*Italics, Ed.*)

Ensuing debate on this address indicates the sub rosa agreement of the Irish Parliament to countenance an act of union containing the proper safeguards and representation. The only vociferous opposition to the final bill came from the conservative Charles Grey, afterwards the Earl Charles Grey, who did

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 512.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 978 ff. Address presented on April 26, 1800, to a joint session of both houses of Parliament.

not think that the bill would accomplish its purpose, "...containing and augmenting the stability, power, and resources of the empire," but he was continually voted down.<sup>14</sup> Grey's view also indicates that conservative opinion was as wholeheartedly behind such a measure in Commons as it was in Lords. The first reading of the final bill passed a business-like Commons: Ayes 133, Noes 58,<sup>15</sup> though the meagre vote indicates the issue was a foregone conclusion; most of the members of Commons considered it not worth debating. Interest, however, picked up enough by the second reading to produce a division: Ayes 208, Noes 26.<sup>16</sup> The third reading passed a voice vote without an objection.

Significance of the Act of Union with Ireland. According to the Act of Union, England and Ireland were to be united as the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ireland was to receive 100 seats in Commons and appropriate representation in Lords, but the significance of the bill hardly rested in this fact. Rather, in terms of imperial rule, the bill was significant for far more cogent reasons. First,

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, XXXV: 39 George III, pp. 85ff., 117 ff., et seqq.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

combined with the "Appeals Act," it appears to have been a logically developed, but somewhat abortive attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the American Revolt and to answer the pleas for representation that "radical" elements had used during events leading up to it. As such it was never repeated because it did not succeed. Rather, the kernel of the legislative dyarchy contained in the principles of the "Appeals Act" was to prove to be the key to later maintenance of relative stability in the imperial structure. Second, aside from the little debated act of 1801 which established the Colonial Office, it was the last important piece of imperial legislation prior to the major franchise reforms. As such it gave some indication of the attitude of the English Parliament regarding not only its own prerogatives in imperial affairs, but its view of them. The bill appears to have originated from motives of the Crown and aristocracy, who desired stable control of Ireland, and Parliament appears to have viewed it as a practical and necessary experiment. In fact, Parliament's attitude seems to have been, "the more quickly implemented the better;" it was an act which had to be countenanced in order to escape a repeat of the American debacle in which dissatisfied elements had stirred up the populace on the subject of representation and foreign powers had supported their insurrectionist movement in order to encroach upon British preserves.

French intrigue was again hovering in the background and may have worried British planners. Third, the act revealed the position that the House of Lords, until the Parliament Act of 1911, was to take in future imperial legislation concerned with colonies of Caucasian origin, the area in which British attempts to establish a unified imperial order were first to "come a-cropper." In these areas Britain was to lose control of much of her logistical potential and thereby be forced into retreat elsewhere. The fact that Britain never really encouraged the development of heavy or finishing industries in these areas was to make her strategic position even weaker.

## II. IMPERIAL EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO THE FIRST REFORM BILL

India Office Act (1858). Following the establishment of a full-blown Colonial Office (1801), imperial affairs, with the exception of those concerned with India, appear to have separated themselves into two general categories: Caucasian affairs under the legislative dyarchy and non-Caucasian affairs under the principles of the administrative dyarchy. Parliament seems to have taken unto itself the general and direct management of Caucasian affairs, though it did designate the Crown as symbol of authority and executor of its wishes. Royal prerogatives, however, were directly limited by Parliament and the Crown would be answerable to that body for the

actions of its agents and emissaries. Non-Caucasian units, on the other hand, appear to fall to the lot of the Colonial Office, which was little interfered with as long as the administrative dyarchy it set up preserved order over its domain. The Colonial Office, too, was answerable to Parliament, but the Crown enjoyed a goodly number of privileges in its domain. The one exception to this general division of rule was India which for many years was to be treated as a non-Caucasian unit and later to be treated as a Caucasian unit. The year 1784 had witnessed the first example of this separate treatment of India with the establishment of the Board of Control for its affairs. This structure had superseded North's India Regulating Act (1773), which had delivered nominal control of Indian affairs into the hands of Parliament, though actual execution of this control resided symbolically in the Crown and, perhaps diabolically, in the hands of the agents of the East India Company. North's regulating act had asserted Parliament's wish to take a more active part in the direction of the Indian government. The disturbances and dishonest administration it was intended to curb, however, continued intermittently until serious disturbances led to the introduction in Parliament of the India Office Act (1858), which, aside from the Ionian question to be taken up momentarily, is the first important piece of colonial legislation following a major franchise reform. Mutiny among the "Sepoys" had

initiated Parliament's activity. Apprised of this situation, the East India Company, whose agents had been trying to restore order along with Her Majesty's forces, petitioned Parliament to forego its own wishes until the disturbances had been quelled and the problem could be considered in a less inflamed light.<sup>17</sup> Commons, pretty well fed up with the activities of the East India Company, ordered the request laid on the table and continued proceedings on the India Office Act which had already sailed through an angered Lords. In rapid-fire order this bill which put an end to the East India Company, asserted Parliament's primacy in rule over India, and established an administrative dyarchy for India in the name of the Crown passed three readings. Divisions on the first reading, the only ones available, were: Ayes 318, Noes 173, pairing included,<sup>18</sup> with the Irish vote dividing: Ayes 36, Noes 24, and complete abstentions for absence or other reasons, 44.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, CXLVIII, 970 ff.: 21 Victoriae, 1857.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 1715-1718.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 1715-1718. The Irish vote was derived by comparing the official tabulation of the division with the official membership list. The vote is indicated as a partial answer to persistent rumors that Irish members of Parliament were effective in helping colonies free themselves from British regulations. Except on matters of home rule, the Irish do not appear to have made any attempt, judged on the basis of available Parliamentary divisions, to hamstring legislation minimizing British rule nor have they, on the other hand, shown any special interest in it. Apparently, it concerned them not at all.

Thus passed, ignoring the minor Ionian matter, the first piece of major imperial legislation following the major franchise reform of 1832.

The significance of the India Office Act. The significance of this act lies in the fact that it indicates no appreciable change in the attitude of Parliament toward imperial legislation following the Franchise Reform Bill of 1832. Parliament still asserted its paramount authority in colonial affairs and still paid its respects to the symbol of authority represented in the Crown by making the Crown the executor of its wishes, the procedure it had developed in the case of the Irish question in 1783 and 1800 following the American Revolt. Further, it appears to have adapted the underlying principles of the legislative dyarchy, division of internal and external rule, to the purposes of Indian government and stability and introduced the first real sample of the administrative dyarchy. Not even the addition of the Irish members to Parliament, as their attitude in the division available indicates, made any difference. The Irish could hardly have been less interested in the issue, though they still continued to plague Parliament on the question of "Home Rule." Lords as usual had first try at the bill and everyone but the East India Company was made happy. For those who would argue the contrary, that this bill



did in fact indicate a change in Parliament's attitude, there are several facts to consider. First, the bill first stemmed from an uprising in the House of Lords. Second, it was passed by a Conservative Commons and ministry. Three, it adapted the principles of a system of colonial rule experimented with before franchise reform to the purposes of stable rule in India. The bill was in fact a beautiful adaptation to circumstances; it preserved the prerogatives desired by the United Kingdom while freeing it for some time from two possibilities equally undesirable: 1) possible full scale war in India, and 2) civil disturbances which threatened to disrupt needed trade relations. Parliament bargained wisely.

Colonial laws validity act and the Colonial Marriages Validity Act (1865). The next important piece of colonial legislation, foregoing again for the moment the Ionian question, were two proposed bills concerning the validity of colonial laws and colonial marriages. These laws were formulated and suggested by the Colonial Office as a solution to certain problems which had begun to plague administration in various parts of the empire. They were an answer to certain technical and legal problems which had arisen from extralegal practices such as "common-law" marriages on colonial frontiers where no religious auspices were available. Estates left by the deceased male partner in such unions were cluttering colonial courts, and there seemed to be no legal precedent

available for untangling these estates and settling rights or questions of heirs and inheritance. For the purpose of solving such problems, the Colonial Marriages Validity Act was proposed. The Colonial Laws Validity Act, on the other hand, was intended to clarify the legal aspects of the term "colony" and to establish the areas of validity for colonial laws.<sup>20</sup> These bills were first read in Commons on the petition of a Mr. Chichester Fortescue and were approved instantanter without debate.<sup>21</sup> The bills were passed by a voice vote, the need for them having been communicated to Commons by the Colonial Office. The second and third readings were also passed without debate by later committees of the whole. Here again Parliament had bowed to necessity, for Lords passed the bills just as swiftly, even though it was the stronghold of Lords Spiritual.

Significance of the Colonial Laws Validity Act. The true significance of this act lies in its declaration that the<sup>22</sup>

"...terms 'legislature' and 'colonial legislature' shall severally signify the authority, other than the imperial parliament or her majesty in council, competent to make laws for any colony. The term 'representative legislature'

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<sup>20</sup> Statutes of the United Kingdom, CV, 129 ff.: 28-29 Victoriae, c. 63.

<sup>21</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, CLXXIX, 1042.

<sup>22</sup> Statutes of the United Kingdom, CV, 129 ff.: 28-29 Victoriae, c. 63.

shall signify any colonial legislature which shall comprise a legislative body of which one-half are elected by the inhabitants of the colony. The term 'colonial law' shall include laws made for any colony either by such legislature as aforesaid or by her majesty in council. An act of Parliament, or any provision thereof, shall, in construing this act, be said to extend to any colony by the express words or necessary intendment of any act of parliament.

...no colonial law shall be deemed to have been void or inoperative on the ground of repugnancy to the law of England, unless the same shall be repugnant to the provisions of some such act of parliament, order, or regulation as aforesaid....(Ed.: aforesaid being ...repugnant to the provisions of any act of parliament...or repugnant to any order or regulation made under authority of...parliament.).

In other words, Parliament had openly asserted its supremacy in colonial affairs and indicated that the Crown's authority derived from its deliberations. Thus far the progress of imperial authority had shown no disposition to change in response to the reform bill of 1832. Parliament was recognizing areas of validity for colonial law and finishing off the job of taking any semblance of royal colonial prerogative away from the Crown.

The Ionian question (1809-1864). It is at this point that the etiology of the Ionian petition for independence had best be taken up in order that its bases and procedure may be contrasted with those of the North America Act, a comparison which may serve to expose Britain's basic interests in colonial holdings. The Ionian problem began in 1809 when British forces occupied most of the Ionian Islands as one phase of a strategic

deployment during the Napoleonic Wars. Together with Heligoland, Gibraltar, and Malta, they helped provide an effective blockade to Napoleon's ambitions, answering his embargoes and effectively blocking any further designs he might have upon the Near East, Europe, or North Africa. The continuation of the Napoleonic Wars brought to the Ionians a prosperity theretofore unheard of; yet, as the war ended, they petitioned Great Britain for the "restoration of their independence." Signatories to the peace treaty session at Paris, in 1815, however, overlooked their request, declaring that these islands, in the interests of peace and prosperity, were to be a "free republic under protection of the King of Great Britain." Someone set down a constitution for this so-called Septinsular Republic, but, though the outward amenities of the republican process were observed, control really rested in the hands of the British Lord High Commissioner, Maitland, who kept firm rein on it in order to protect the average citizen from the "tyrannical and arbitrary control" of the old noble families in the islands. Prosperity had ended with the war as quickly as it had begun and the British found themselves saddled with imperial obligations they were not at all happy to assume; a portion of the British treasury was rapidly deteriorating into an Ionian almshouse. As accidents will happen, Britain's interests in the Ionian Sea forced her into a closer associa-

tion with the forces of the Greek national revival and war of independence. Once Greece was set free the basis of the treaty of 1815 was removed and the British protectorate, therefore, became an anomaly. British rule over the islands continued for sometime, but when the Ionians, in 1857, petitioned for reunion with their ancestral homeland, Greece, the foreign and colonial offices, tired perhaps of the financial burden they represented, conscious perhaps of personal obligations to patriots of the infant Greek republic, or too aware of the fact that they no longer served any strategic function, undertook negotiations with the signatory powers of 1815 with a view toward granting the Ionian's request. The general attitude pervading the whole matter seems to have been: "Since they no longer serve any useful strategic or economic purpose and are therefore a somewhat pointless expense, why not grant the islands' request?" Consequently, by 1864 negotiations with the signatory powers were brought to fruition and the Ionians quietly restored to their ancestral union. Except to give its assent to the relief of the treaty, Parliament had little to do with the problem, most of the work falling into the hands of either the Colonial or Home Offices. The value of the islands was of so little moment that Parliament

was not even interested enough to debate the issue of relief of the treaty.<sup>23</sup>

The Ionian question and the North America Act. This procedure may be contrasted with that undertaken in the case of Canada. French and English in origin, Canada presented the United Kingdom with a problem vastly different from that in the case of the Ionian Islands. It was, first of all, a much vaster territory. It was continually being plagued with insurrectionist movements. It also represented rapidly advancing percentage of the United Kingdom's bread (food) supply. Canadian wheat and minerals were becoming more and more vital to a British economy which would soon absorb forty per cent of the world's annual grain movement.<sup>24</sup> The Canadian Constitution Act (q.v. supra, p. 123) had never proven entirely satisfactory. Perhaps its worst fault was that it left the United Kingdom still saddled with the costs of governing and defending the Canadian area and with no acceptable means of persuading the Canadians to accept their share of the burden.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Carrington, op. cit., p. 257 ff., for a fuller exposition of this problem in its historical context and for the views and actions of Maitland and Oswald, the two dominant figures in this issue.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Smith and Phillips, op. cit., pp. 398-428, or George T. Renner; Loyal Durand, Jr. et al., World Economic Geography (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1951), pp. 231-42.

Administrative costs coupled with the influences of revolutionary movements and strategic factors led to a number of imperial commissions organized to examine the problem and suggest solutions; for example, the Durham Commission. In implementing the recommendations of this commission, administrations were far more canny than they had been in the case of the Irish Union Bill. They apprised Parliament of a forthcoming Constitutional Convention in Canada, to which Parliament had no objection and which it, in fact, encouraged. This body, composed largely of Canadians, was convened for the purpose of laying down a permanent constitution for the government of the Canadian colonies. Avoiding one of the principal pitfalls of the Irish Union Bill, colonial administrators allowed the Canadians first to compose a bill to their own liking before Parliament was to act upon it. The Constitution laid down was then sent to the Parliament of the United Kingdom for its approval.

Action upon the Canadian Constitution Bill: The North America Act of 1867. Parliament could have done any number of things with this constitutional bill submitted by the Canadians, but it did very little. As events turned out, this bill with a few minor changes turned out to be the sum and substance of the North America Act (1867), which set up what was to be the final imperial government of Canada until



1932 when Canada escaped from the reins of British administrators. The bill in Parliament asking for the acceptance of this constitution originated in the House of Lords and was introduced by the Earl of Carnarvon on February 12, 1867.<sup>25</sup> After relatively quiet debate had ascertained the fact that British-desired prerogatives were being protected in the bill, it passed quite rapidly and uneventfully on February 26 and was immediately sent to Commons.<sup>26</sup> In Commons the bill became the immediate order of the day and was "voice-voted" clause by clause, such amendments as were desired by interested parties being taken up for debate immediately upon their introduction. Those amendments desired were largely a matter of wording.<sup>27</sup> The bill was then rewritten to include such amendments as were passed, and the second reading was agreed to, again by a clause by clause voice-vote.<sup>28</sup> The embossed bill quickly passed a third reading and was sent back to the House of Lords for approval in its amended form. "Lords"

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Parliamentary Debates (H. L. Debs.), CLXXXV, 279: 30 Victoriae, 1867.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1020.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., (H. C. Debs.), 1310-1322.

<sup>28</sup> Parliamentary Debates (H. C. Debs.), CLXXXV, 1322: 30 Victoriae, 1867.

quietly nodded its head, hardly bothering to protest amendments.<sup>29</sup> Embossed copies were quickly delivered to the Crown, and the bill received the royal assent on March 29. Truly, as the "Bench" sagely remarked, there was "no real sentiment against the bill." In a short matter of forty-five days Parliament had with good grace swallowed what might turn out to be a bitter pill and, what is more remarkable, had swallowed it at its own request as the only practical solution to the imperial problem with which it was faced. Under the legislative dyarchy set up by the bill, Canada was to be saddled with the costs of her own internal government, which was to be left pretty much in its own hands, the royal veto now being largely a matter of "window dressing" in regard to internal affairs, while the United Kingdom was precariously to retain certain governmental prerogatives it desired in Canada's international dealings.

Significance of the North America Act. The final bill, the North America Act (c.v.) is highly significant in the history of the empire for a number of reasons. It illustrated to the civilized world just how precarious British colonial tenure had become. Strategic, demographic, and economic factors were already forcing the United Kingdom into

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., (H. L. Debs.), 1710. The royal assent is indicated in the order of the day for March 29.

a defensive and conciliatory role, particularly in regard to the more technologically advanced units of the empire which were Caucasian in origin. Then, too, a number of Parliamentary precedents were set by the bill. Henceforth, all bills concerned with legislation upon imperial matters in the Caucasian colonies were to originate in the House of Lords. They would arrive there from the desk of the Colonial Office which, in its turn, had received them from constitutional conventions it had instituted in the colonies concerned. The technique of the constitutional convention would serve to avoid the pitfalls of the Irish experiment, and it would serve also to produce the successful refinement of the legislative dyarchy desired by the United Kingdom. It would serve to produce for some time the end expressed in the words of George III, "...containing and augmenting the stability, power, and resources of the empire." (*Italics, Ed.*).<sup>30</sup> The North America Act also served to illustrate the fact that Parliament's attitude in imperial matters had shown no particular disposition to change in response to the changes in its makeup introduced by the Franchise Reform Bill of 1832. Rather, the bill was the relatively successful conclusion of the experiment begun by the Irish Appeals Act which preceded

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. supra, p. 138 f., address of George III.

franchise reform. Controversy over the Irish Union Bill had momentarily sidetracked this experiment, but the Union Bill itself had pointed out the pitfalls to be avoided in establishing the successful legislative dyarchy. The desire of the United Kingdom appears always to have been to preserve relationships established with those colonies of value to the imperial structure. Colonies which did not return enough profits to the United Kingdom in the form of food or raw material credits were somewhat quickly dispensed with as was the case with the Ionian Islands. Imperial holdings would be pointless if the United Kingdom has to return all the benefits derived in the form of administrative or strategic costs. Since the best solution to the problem of these costs would be compromises which relieved the United Kingdom of them while still insuring the persistence and protection of existing and expanding economic arrangements with the member units of the empire, the United Kingdom avidly sought such an eventuality. Food and raw material supplies had to be protected. The North America Act is the first successful example of such a compromise, and the road toward it had been pointed out by the experiments represented in the Irish Appeals and Union Bills. The "Act" quieted revolutionary clamor in Canada, pointed out the way to successful compromise in the future, and incidentally and rather guardedly pointed out just how important a factor trade was to become in the United

Kingdom's grip upon the empire. As the following trade tables show, trade was to become the key to imperial rise or decline.

Analysis of British trade (1887-1927) based on data from the statistical abstracts of the United Kingdom (1887-1927). The trade totals of the United Kingdom (Cf. Tables I-IV, pp. 162-165), digressing for the moment from the subject of imperial legislation, prove very revealing on a number of points. These tables cover years in which the United Kingdom maintained the "gold standard." This means that the United Kingdom had to balance annual trade deficits through money shipments, gold or silver bullion or specie. Because of this fact, even though for many years the United Kingdom shows a very large surplus of imports over exports (result of returns on her extensive foreign investments), actual trade losses in a given year are revealed by a surplus of money exports over money imports, though in some cases surplus money exports probably indicate unusual activity in the export of investment capital rather than trade losses. The latter is probably particularly true of the years 1896-1897, 1903-1904, and 1908, years when the United Kingdom was pouring tremendous amounts of capital into the development of Australia, Canada, the prospective dominion of South Africa, and Southeast Asia. On the other hand, in the years 1915-

1925, the totals available reveal what are probably not only tremendous trade losses but the liquidation of the United Kingdom's investments abroad, particularly in the United States. These losses and liquidations had occurred, for the most part, during the key years of war payments, 1917-1919, years for which even the usually unsecretive British archives have no available records. The rapid rise in the total of imports in these years not coupled with a corresponding increase in the total of exports, however, gives some indication of just how tremendous these losses and liquidations must have been. The years 1913-1918 show a rapidly increasing export deficit, the total for 1913 being 133,914,413 pounds and that for 1918 being 783,786,825 pounds, sterling at that.<sup>31</sup> Yearly imports, as the tables reveal, increased during these years to an annual average of 200 per cent over those of 1913 while exports, at best, just managed to hold their former levels and, at worst, show drops in totals during the years 1914-1915. For the years prior to 1913, however, export deficits combined with bullion import surpluses serve to provide a rough index to the total earnings of the United Kingdom's investments abroad

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<sup>31</sup> These export deficits are the "inverses" of the import surpluses shown in Table I. For example, the import surplus for 1913 is 133,914,413 pounds; its inverse, the export deficit, would be 133,914,413 pounds.

as well as a rough index to the investment total itself. The "inverses" of these export deficits, the import surpluses shown in the tables, do not represent, as Mackinder<sup>32</sup> and others would have it, "imperial tribute" nor do they represent or contain any estimate of the amount of money to be returned imperial holdings in the form of "imperial costs." Costs are hidden in the annual budget of the United Kingdom and derived from taxes, the base of which is only partially made up by trade totals. Short of a detailed year by year analysis of the annual budget, any estimate of "costs" would represent the sheerest guesswork. Any estimate of "imperial tribute" is utter nonsense because the United Kingdom has earned from its investments any material benefit it has derived from an imperial holding; it has never looted a colony. Import surpluses, then, for the purposes of this study, represent, for the years prior to World War I, return on investments. As the tables indicate, these import surpluses, for the most part, show a steady pattern of rise, though there are a few backward movements, until the year 1913. Bullion imports also show a continuous surplus (exceptions have been noted), now rising now falling, but a continuous pattern of surplus

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Sir Halford J. Mackinder, Britain and the British Seas (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1902), Chap. XX, pp. 342-352. Mackinder admits that he is making a common estimate, but he has a tendency to regard these estimates as absolute. The United Kingdom has never collected tribute; it has earned its way.



nonetheless until the year 1913. From these surpluses some idea of the amount of British capital invested abroad can be gathered by adding together the bullion and trade import surpluses for any given year, clearing out transshipments first, and then multiplying this total by a factor of 15, thus allowing for a slightly better than six per cent return on investment. Obviously, this will produce only an estimate, but it will serve to give some idea of the gradual rise of the United Kingdom's investment totals abroad, and its use on the key years 1913-1925 will also serve to give some index to the amount of British capital liquidated from foreign investment by the exigencies of World War I and the depressed economic conditions which followed. Sampling this estimate, one would find that by the year 1913, in round figures, the United Kingdom must have had somewhere between two and two-and one-quarter billion pounds of capital invested abroad. Also, sampling from the bullion export deficits available for the years 1915-1925, one can readily see that the United Kingdom liquidated an observable 150,000,000 pounds of capital in order to balance its trade books by 1926, but this takes no account of what must have been tremendously greater liquidations of foreign investment capital during the years 1917-1919 for which no bullion figures are available and during which the United Kingdom maintained a large surplus of

imports over exports. Certainly the surplus of imports had to be paid for in some manner, the United Kingdom's trade books having left but a small bullion import surplus before that time to compensate for a tremendous rise in imports. The uniform bullion losses between 1915-1925 also attest to a radical change in the United Kingdom's position in international financial circles, particularly when they are related to the tremendous acceleration of exports from the United Kingdom following World War I. This rapid rise in export totals suggests that the United Kingdom was making up its investment losses by increasing the export trade volume, particularly when this rise is related to the re-export trade totals, not in the tables given, which had risen from a total of less than two per cent of the United Kingdom's annual trade volume in 1887 to about four per cent in the years immediately preceding World War I and had leaped subsequent to that time to a total of about twenty per cent of the annual trade volume.<sup>33</sup> All these facts attest to the progress of the United Kingdom's economic fortunes, good and bad.

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom, nos. cited below in Note 34, for tables of re-exports for the appropriate years. The re-export totals are contained in the tables on the pages cited but were cleared out for the purposes of this study.

Statistical Compilations of Significant Annual Trade  
Volumes of the United Kingdom (1887-1927).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> All figures in the following tables are derived from tables in the following sources:

- A. Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom (1887-1901), 49th No. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1902), pp. 280 ff.
- B. Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom (1893-1907), 55th No. (London: Wyman and Sons, Ltd., 109 Fetter Lane, E. C., 1908), pp. 69, 77, 80-81, and 221 f..
- C. Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom (1908-1922), 68th No. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1924), pp. 356 ff..
- D. Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom (1913-1927), 72nd No. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1929), pp. 377 ff..

It is to be noted that the totals given do not include the transshipment of goods under bond which, with the exception of the starred totals for the years 1902-1903, were cleared out to provide the figures used in this study. For the years 1902-1903 there are no transshipment figures available.

TABLE I

## IMPORT-EXPORT TOTALS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (1887-1927)\*

Year	Net Total of Imports	Net Total of Exports	Surplus of Imports Over Exports
1887	302,878,589	221,913,910	80,965,679
1888	323,593,114	234,534,912	89,058,202
1889	360,980,111	248,935,195	112,044,916
1890	355,970,464	263,530,585	92,439,879
1891	373,562,696	247,235,150	126,327,546
1892	359,370,115	237,216,389	122,153,726
1893	345,809,626	218,259,718	126,549,908
1894	350,564,580	216,005,637	134,558,943
1895	356,985,497	226,128,246	130,857,251
1896	395,575,241	240,145,551	155,429,690
1897	391,074,550	234,219,708	156,854,842
1898	409,889,954	233,359,240	176,530,714
1899	319,993,136	254,492,211	165,500,925
1900	459,893,405	291,191,996	168,701,409
1901	454,148,306	280,022,376	174,125,930
1902	462,576,461	283,423,966	179,152,495
1903	483,026,725	290,800,108	192,226,617
1904	480,734,347	300,711,040	180,023,307
1905	487,240,004	329,816,614	157,423,390
1906	522,786,020	375,575,338	197,210,682
1907	549,865,858	426,035,083	123,830,775
1908	513,329,790	377,103,284	136,226,506
1909	533,360,138	378,180,347	165,179,791
1910	574,495,979	430,584,772	144,111,207
1911	577,398,393	454,119,298	123,279,095
1912	632,902,940	487,223,439	145,689,501
1913	659,168,008	525,253,595	133,914,413
1914	601,160,947	430,721,357	170,439,590
1915	752,831,169	384,868,448	367,962,721
1916	850,940,314	506,279,707	344,660,607
1917	994,487,217	527,079,746	467,407,471
1918	1,285,205,822	501,418,997	783,786,825
1919	1,461,409,897	798,638,362	662,771,535
1920	1,708,895,550	1,334,469,269	375,426,281
1921	978,580,755	703,399,542	275,181,213
1922	899,404,229	719,507,410	179,896,819
1923	977,682,409	767,257,771	209,424,638
1924	1,137,469,001	800,966,839	336,502,164
1925	1,166,678,391	773,380,702	393,297,689
1926	1,115,866,309	653,046,909	462,819,400
1927	1,095,388,311	709,081,263	286,307,048

\* All Totals are in English pounds.

TABLE II

## COLONIAL IMPORT-EXPORT TOTALS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (1887-1927) \*

Year	Net Imports From Colonies	Net Exports to Colonies	Surplus of Imports Over Exports
1887	76,898,857	75,370,256	1,528,601
1888	79,429,357	83,241,512	-3,812,155
1889	90,708,960	83,278,990	7,429,970
1890	89,009,128	87,370,383	1,638,745
1891	92,082,687	85,956,088	6,126,599
1892	91,303,280	74,748,130	16,555,150
1893	85,336,305	72,150,163	13,186,142
1894	88,114,753	72,788,545	15,226,208
1895	89,655,353	70,197,294	29,458,059
1896	86,694,965	84,136,937	2,558,028
1897	87,738,468	80,675,063	7,063,405
1898	92,939,042	83,426,761	9,512,281
1899	100,177,167	87,597,472	12,579,695
1900	101,886,179	94,379,596	7,506,581
1901	97,243,743	104,788,401	-7,544,658
1902	106,916,457 **	117,578,862 **	-10,662,405
1903	113,670,792 **	119,484,189 **	-5,813,397
1904	88,074,704	88,839,804	-765,100
1905	92,832,903	97,677,097	-4,844,194
1906	102,133,072	90,614,883	-11,518,199
1907	114,527,660	103,844,687	10,682,973
1908	89,540,169	126,765,027	-37,224,856
1909	100,020,252	127,238,084	-27,217,832
1910	120,670,201	147,302,942	-26,632,741
1911	121,945,774	158,844,144	-36,898,370
1912	129,799,630	177,092,638	-47,293,008
1913	135,355,788	195,311,399	-59,955,611
1914	137,983,834	171,629,498	-33,645,664
1915	215,052,795	148,419,684	66,633,111
1916	248,914,683	186,175,871	62,738,812
1917	316,794,566	172,657,816	144,136,750
1918	410,882,045	178,362,122	232,519,923
1919	494,376,562	205,622,460	288,754,102
1920	436,563,563	501,470,423	-64,926,860
1921	276,525,148	298,616,633	-22,091,485
1922	260,021,561	285,568,724	-25,547,163
1923	263,219,077	300,602,626	-37,383,549
1924	316,145,178	337,464,361	-21,319,193
1925	341,809,349	335,114,162	6,685,187
1926	304,364,967	316,851,427	-12,486,460
1927	296,271,569	326,650,210	-30,378,651

\* All Totals are in English pounds.

\*\* These are total figures. For some unaccountable reason, no transshipment figures are available for these years.

TABLE III

## MONEY IMPORT-EXPORT TOTALS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (1887-1927)\*

Year	Total Imports Bullion and Specie	Total Exports Bullion and Specie	Import Surplus or Deficit
1887	17,774,764	17,131,018	643,746
1888	22,001,528	22,559,571	-558,043
1889	27,099,439	25,121,630	1,977,809
1890	33,953,708	25,170,072	8,783,636
1891	39,591,218	37,228,971	2,362,247
1892	32,329,614	28,910,690	3,418,924
1893	36,748,122	33,092,018	3,656,104
1894	38,577,764	27,812,600	10,765,164
1895	46,675,661	31,726,759	14,948,902
1896	38,797,696	45,172,059	-6,374,363
1897	48,840,949	49,589,559	-1,738,610
1898	58,400,759	52,213,701	6,187,058
1899	45,261,486	35,491,184	9,770,302
1900	39,513,173	31,972,039	7,541,134
1901	32,217,306	26,015,102	6,202,204
1902	31,393,345	26,125,206	5,268,139
1903	38,967,728	39,233,238	-265,510
1904	45,563,927	46,302,832	-738,905
1905	51,559,909	45,391,519	6,168,390
1906	63,330,653	61,482,552	1,848,101
1907	73,072,439	67,786,858	5,285,581
1908	56,479,203	63,252,987	-6,773,784
1909	66,506,718	60,034,718	6,472,000
1910	71,422,077	64,724,213	6,697,864
1911	62,987,500	57,024,077	5,963,423
1912	69,467,185	64,871,488	4,595,697
1913	74,028,598	62,142,038	11,886,560
1914	70,595,001	41,488,125	29,106,876
1915	21,388,527	46,578,689	-24,190,162
1916	31,467,952	49,190,254	-17,722,302
1917	Figures for 1917 - 1919 Unavailable		
1918	No Record Kept of Them		
1919			
1920	60,601,317	104,058,403	-43,457,086
1921	59,940,490	71,393,580	-11,453,090
1922	44,642,057	58,073,561	-13,431,504
1923	53,597,710	69,122,069	-15,524,359
1924	49,723,410	61,842,268	-12,118,858
1925	52,073,450	61,836,021	-8,762,571
1926	49,745,611	38,086,024	11,659,589
1927	39,577,563	36,205,587	3,371,976

\* Totals represent bullion (both gold and silver) and specie. All totals are in English pounds.



TABLE IV

MONEY-IMPORT EXPORT TOTALS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (1887-1927) \*  
 MONEY EXCHANGE BETWEEN COLONIES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Year	Total Imports Bullion and Specie	Total Exports Bullion and Specie	Import Surplus or Deficit
1887	2,673,522	7,259,223	-4,585,701
1888	6,677,567	7,930,089	-1,252,522
1889	7,168,096	13,167,153	-5,999,057
1890	5,718,518	12,499,884	-6,781,366
1891	9,382,416	7,734,355	1,548,061
1892	12,664,731	10,193,241	2,471,490
1893	12,143,792	13,788,387	-1,644,595
1894	17,498,473	9,139,591	8,358,882
1895	17,900,735	13,249,859	4,650,876
1896	15,458,562	9,157,864	6,300,698
1897	27,001,125	9,961,947	17,039,178
1898	27,162,509	9,259,321	17,867,188
1899	22,831,863	13,426,449	9,405,414
1900	11,615,267	13,927,527	-2,312,260
1901	15,679,651	11,889,833	3,789,818
1902	17,733,276	11,678,762	6,054,514
1903	26,596,608	11,560,226	15,036,382
1904	30,977,053	14,885,838	26,091,215
1905	34,031,316	12,811,116	21,220,200
1906	38,543,254	21,945,638	16,597,616
1907	40,913,916	20,551,004	20,362,912
1908	41,057,632	13,800,698	27,256,944
1909	41,157,097	12,995,760	28,161,337
1910	43,095,691	21,270,900	21,824,791
1911	44,280,402	20,432,471	23,847,931
1912	50,302,264	26,724,259	23,578,005
1913	49,382,997	22,643,853	26,739,144
1914	31,512,407	14,065,077	17,447,330
1915	7,622,857	8,699,819	-1,076,962
1916	Figures for 1916 - 1919 Unavailable No Record Kept of Them		
1917			
1918			
1919			
1920	41,452,988	37,683,802	3,769,186
1921	48,762,229	9,922,511	38,839,718
1922	36,846,459	22,851,108	13,995,351
1923	42,884,026	28,402,955	14,481,071
1924	33,448,192	17,661,063	15,787,129
1925	26,139,199	22,244,384	3,894,815
1926	35,224,176	13,555,504	21,668,672
1927	28,240,452	8,513,176	19,727,276

\* Totals represent bullion (both gold and silver) and specie. All totals are in English pounds.



Relationship of Colonial trade volumes to imperial legislation. Abstracting from these tables also, one finds that net imports from colonies, totals most germane to the issue of imperial legislation, represent a steady percentage of the total net imports into the United Kingdom in the years between 1887-1913, varying between twenty-four and thirty per cent of the annual net volume of imports. Of even more interest is the fact that these imports are almost entirely made up of food and raw material shipments.<sup>35</sup> Of further interest is the fact that in this same period, 1887-1913, colonial goods climb from about five per cent of the United Kingdom's re-export business to almost fifty per cent.<sup>36</sup> Total colonial imports during the war years are something of an anomaly, but the percentage of the United Kingdom's import totals they represent remains about the same. Up to 1908, the same may be said of exports to colonies as is said of imports; they represent a steady percentage. But beyond 1908, a highly significant fact in imperial relations, colonies begin to

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. "The Statistical Abstracts of the United Kingdom," nos. cited in Note 34, p. 161, for the detailed analysis of these shipments. They are pages and pages of "breakdowns" of colonial shipments of food and raw materials from the various colonies. These tables are remarkable for the paucity of finished goods contained in imports from colonies, just as the export "breakdowns" are remarkable for the amount of finished goods they contain.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ibid. for re-exports which have been cleared out.

represent a greater and greater percentage of the United Kingdom's export market. Where in 1908 colonies had absorbed about twenty-five per cent of the United Kingdom's exports, by 1928 they were absorbing fifty per cent of them. This fact suggests three things in terms of imperial relations and legislation: 1) that economic competitors were making successful inroads into the British export market; 2) that the United Kingdom's financial relationships with colonies was undergoing a reversal, that colonies were beginning to assume a self-determining international economic position; and 3) that such Inter-imperial Conferences as those of 1926 and 1928 could end in no other way than they did, the enactment of the Statute of Westminster (1931), which merely served to place the official sanction of the United Kingdom's Parliament on a condition already a fait accompli. All these developing facts the United Kingdom was only too well aware of, as the "abstracts" attest, as the last half of the nineteenth century progressed. Administrators knew that it was only a matter of time until the events which took place in the first half of the twentieth century should come to pass. They were only too well aware of the United Kingdom's vulnerable strategic position and precarious economic tenure.

Commonwealth of Australia Act (1900) and the govern-  
ment of New Zealand. The general drift of these economic

trends and the strategic difficulties they present have had a profound influence on the United Kingdom's imperial conduct subsequent to the North America Act, especially when compounded by demographic factors (particularly population differentials and the food problem), the rise of nationalism among colonials, and already established legal and Parliamentary traditions. More and more the food and raw material supply problem has loomed large. The United Kingdom has had to develop food and raw material sources in areas whose stability could be depended upon. Many colonial administrators appear to have seen just such a possibility in the rapidly accelerating Australian development. True, Australian administration was pretty well bogged down in feuds and rivalries among its five colonies, but this did not appear to be an insuperable problem. Largely because of the Canadian precedent the way was already open for federation, and the Colonial Office took great pain to encourage it. Several conferences pointing toward the development of a constitution uniting Australian colonials, using the Canadian precedent, had been called at the behest of the Colonial Office. The first was a committee appointed in 1852 to prepare a constitution for New South Wales. It was little more than a deliberative body, and it met annually until 1899. It was able to do very little except publicize the desirability of

and need for federation of the Australian colonies, and it died in 1899 with the dawn of the effective federation movement. The real beginning of effective movement toward the federation of the Australian colonies stemmed from Major-General Edwards' report on the defenses of Australia, a work which was brought to public attention in 1889. The unnerving nature of this report led Sir Henry Parkes to call an immediate conference to explore its ramifications. All seven colonies in the Australian area were invited to the conference, and its purpose, as events quickly showed, was to persuade the Australian colonials of the wisdom of speedily implementing union under the Crown. This conference led almost immediately to a constitutional convention to which the various Australian administrations appointed delegates for the purposes of drafting a federal constitution. The six resolutions adopted by this body, whose work ultimately failed, formed the basis of the later successful constitution convention which took place in 1899. These six resolutions were: 1) that the powers and rights of existing colonies were to be retained by them under federation so long as they were concerned with matters not of common concern to all colonies; 2) that without the express consent of the administration of a state in question no liberties were to be taken by the proposed federated government with the structure and

geography of that state; 3) that there were to be no restrictions upon trade among the proposed federated colonies; 4) that excise and tax powers were to be within the province of the proposed federal government and its parliament; 5) that naval and other military defenses were to be brought under a single unified command; and 6) that the constitution itself should provide that each state should be able to propose such amendments as it thought feasible in order to insure adoption of the constitution. Unfortunately, by the time that this convention had finished its work, public fears brought on by the "Edwards" report had somewhat abated and its work fell absolutely dead. Again, in 1894, another attempt was made to produce an effective federation movement. This attempt was made by an unofficial convention which met at Corowa in that year and strongly advocated union, but again the matter died. Then, in 1895, G. H. Reid (later Sir G. H. Reid) of New South Wales brought forth the proposal which gave effective life to the federation movement. He convened a meeting of the premiers of all the colonies, coy New Zealand excepted, at which it was proposed that all colonies should draft a legislative bill seeking the appointment of ten men from each colony to a proposed constitutional convention. There is little need here to go into the trials and tribulations of this constitutional convention and the public refe-

rendums which followed. It should suffice to note that one or another colony staved off the adoption of this constitution for some time. Finally, the Enabling Bill which the Colonial Office had so avidly sought, was passed by an agreement of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, but it still needed the approval of the home parliament. Some areas, particularly Western Australia and New Zealand, had chosen to hedge for one reason or another, so they were temporarily left out of the bill. Western Australia soon made up its mind and was included in the Enabling Bill, but New Zealand kept procrastinating even after the bill had reached the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Consequently, it was only after some hue and cry that she was amended into the Constitution Bill then undergoing its second reading in the home Parliament. Also, as a consequence, New Zealand was until the Statute of Westminster much more a colony under the legislative dyarchy than was Australia because the British governor-general under the proclamation extending dominion privileges to New Zealand could refuse to prorogue an unpopular Parliament.<sup>37</sup> a right the Australian governor-general could not exercise. The proclamation

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Statutes of the United Kingdom, 15-16 Victoriae, 1852, c. 72 for the background of this proclamation. It contains the precedent for the governor-general's prerogative.

creating the Dominion of New Zealand was issued by the Crown on September 9, 1907,<sup>38</sup> in accordance with provisions laid down in the Commonwealth of Australia Act (q.v.).<sup>39</sup>

Parliamentary consideration of the Bill Creating the Commonwealth of Australia. As a parliamentary issue, the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia first received the attention of Commons during the referendums of 1898 and 1899. The matter was brought to public attention by a spokesman for the Colonial Office. In Commons this led a Mr. Charles Dilke to question the "Bench" as to whether in the case of the forthcoming Australian Commonwealth Bill "...Her Majesty's government propose[s] to suggest to Parliament to make any changes in the constitution as accepted by the five colonies."<sup>40</sup> Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, replied for the ministry that exactly the same precedent would be followed as had been established in previous colonial legislation and that "...delegates from the Australian colonies are coming to this country to give and receive explanations as to certain points...[and] that ...the introduction of the

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, XXXVIII, 63-64 Victoriae, c. 12, for a copy of this proclamation.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Ibid., 24 f., par. 2 and 3, for these provisions.

<sup>40</sup> Parliamentary Debates (Authorized Ed., H. C. Debs.), Fourth Series, 63 Victoriae, 1900, LXXVIII, 1051.



bill will be deferred until they have arrived."<sup>41</sup> Chamberlain and Parliament were already well aware of the conciliatory nature of the bill, but precedent had to be paid its due respect in such delicate matters. The fate of a strategic problem, partial amelioration of the food problem, the fate of the wool industry, and the fate of certain other strategic raw materials hung in the balance. Consequently, once the delegates arrived, the bill received what was becoming the usual quick trip through Lords. Sent on to Commons it received quick introduction by Chamberlain, guiding light of the Colonial Office, who presented the bill on behalf of the ministry. Again, as was becoming the precedent in Commons, Commons adjourned instanter and re-convened as a Committee of the Whole to consider the bill, subjecting it to a clause by clause voice-vote on each provision.<sup>42</sup> It quickly passed with minor amendments, and the amended version was so ordered, ordered printed, and sent back to a committee set up to expedite the problem. There had been little amending to do since the Colonial Administration and the colonial governments

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1051.

<sup>42</sup> Parliamentary Debates (Authorized Ed., H. C. Debs.), Fourth Series, 63 Victoriae, 1900, LXXXIII, 46-103. Amendments here were largely a matter of wording, much of the debate being given over to impassioned but ineffective oratory by those who would stop the destruction of the "empire."

concerned has already ironed out most of the real parliamentary problems.<sup>43</sup> Much of the debate was the usual ineffective oratory about the preservation of the prerogatives for which "our ancestors so mightily strived." On March 21, a few days later, the bill was subjected to its second reading by voice-vote, clause by clause. It was during this reading that New Zealand, now not so coy, was amended into the proclamation provisions of the bill because she had raised a hue and cry subsequent to the passage of the first reading of the Bill. New Zealand's representatives were somewhat chagrined at being included only in the proclamation provisions of the bill, but they had to bow to precedent and take what they could get; Parliament wanted no part of being the agency of possible disturbances in New Zealand stemming from the exercise of "imperial authority" without an Enabling Act.<sup>44</sup> This second reading of the bill was actually its final version, and it was ordered printed and committed for the order of the day for Monday, June 18, 1900.<sup>45</sup> Other matters twice delayed the third reading, but when it was brought up on

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. the general tenor of the debate in Ibid., LXXXII, pp. 46-103, which suggests that attempts at any amending would be largely a waste of time since the bill appeared satisfactory to both Australian and United Kingdom interests.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Ibid., LXXXIII, pp. 758-806.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 805-806.

June 25 it passed a voice vote without a protest.<sup>46</sup> Royal assent was thus a matter of course, and the Crown, carrying out its share of the responsibility, soon issued a proclamation (September 17, 1900), declaring that on and after the first day of January, 1901, the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia should be united in a federal commonwealth henceforth to be known as the "Commonwealth of Australia."

Significance of the Australian Commonwealth Bill. The significance of this bill lay in the fact that it again illustrated to the civilized world how the union of strategic necessity and the economic verities of the colonial picture were stimulating the activity of Parliament on the subject of imperial legislation. The bill also illustrated the fact that as long as arrangements could be made which preserved the interests of the United Kingdom, Parliament was willing to let imperial prerogatives take whatever course they would. Legislators appeared to view the price of any other possible arrangements as altogether too costly and fraught with danger to the survival of the United Kingdom. Commons emerged during the debates on this bill as the completely dominant force in the United Kingdom's imperial maneuvering. Lords was to take

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Ibid., LXXXIV, p. 638, p. 923.

a back seat, however unwillingly, in the course of British history. Lords was to be paid the respect due to precedent, the right to first pass judgment upon imperial legislation, but it would have little effect upon it. There also emerged in the consideration of the bill recognition of the fact, in the light of the "Edwards" report, that strategic policies, diplomatic policies, and colonial policies of the United Kingdom were a unity. The success of any one of them was predicated upon the delicately balanced articulation of all three and their relationships to the British economic potential.

The Union of South Africa Act (1909). Just how aware Parliament was of this oneness of foreign policies and its position in imperial affairs is reflected in the aura surrounding the enactment of the next important piece of imperial legislation, the Union of South Africa Act (1909),<sup>47</sup> a necessity brought on by actions of Cecil Rhodes, prime minister and benevolent despot of the Cape Colony who, acting as a private citizen, involved himself in an insurrectionist movement in the Transvaal. The ultimate result of Rhodes' interference was the Boer War, and once it was settled Parliament was only too eager to give the Boers and others internal self-government, but it wanted no part of forcing such arrange-

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, XLVII, 42 f.: 9 Edward VII, c. 9, for a copy of this act.

ments and thereby providing fuel for possible future insurrectionist movements. Parliament had a number of interests to preserve, among them the developing mineral wealth of South Africa and the strategic value of the "Cape," and it could not see how they could be insured if union were forced. Consequently, the attitude of the Boers being somewhat recalcitrant, the somewhat "middle-of-the-road" conservative government of Lord Asquith was hard put to bring the South Africans to any kind of terms at all. Colonial administrators worked long and hard to persuade the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to accept British rule and even harder building up sentiment for a contemplated federated union of the South African states, a task in which they were aided no end by the encroachment of German interests upon the reaches of South Africa. Finally, after what was now the usual constitutional convention, an Enabling Act proposing a Union of South Africa was forwarded to the United Kingdom and introduced into Parliament. Lords, as was now usual, gave it a quick "nodding" treatment. Commons, except on the matter of "apartheid," gave the bill, if possible, an even more cursory treatment. Commons knew it was bargaining and therefore, took what it could get. Even on the matter of segregation, about which it might have wished to do something, Parliament did little except observe the amenities

of idle protest. "Apartheid," or segregation, was taken up by a somewhat nonplussed special committee formed in response to considerable pressure from special interests in the United Kingdom, but this committee did little. After a quick review of the implications of "apartheid" and a rather frustrated "shrug of its shoulders," the committee divided: Noes 155, Ayes 55: on the subject of removing the segregation clauses from the "Union Bill."<sup>48</sup> Its attitude seems to have been that regardless of the desirability of removing the segregation clauses nothing could be done about them unless one wanted the painful "Boer fiasco" repeated.<sup>49</sup> Otherwise, the bill quickly passed three readings with little protest, another important piece of imperial legislation again being subjected to a clause by clause voice-vote.<sup>50</sup> According to this bill, union was again established symbolically under the Crown as the executor of Parliament's wishes. The United Kingdom again retained control of external affairs while the African states obtained a large measure of internal autonomy, though in this case colonial administrators were to retain

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Official Reports, Parliamentary Debates (H. C. Debs.), IX, 1063-1066, 9 Edward VII, for the tabulation of this division.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 1059-1063, for the committee report.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 951-1058, 1533-1660, for readings and debates.

more than the usual measure of authority under the legislative dyarchy, a retention related to the unusual potential for explosiveness in the unsettled African situation. The way, however, was left wide-open for re-negotiation on this point. In other respects, there was little new or significant in the action on this bill.

Political ministries and imperial legislation. Action on the African Union Bill, however, does serve to focus attention on an aspect of imperial legislation not yet considered, the effect of the "political cast" of a ministry upon its implementation of suggested or needed imperial legislation. This question directly relates to franchise changes and the modifications they introduced into the makeup of Commons and into British government in general. Among British historians it appears generally to be conceded that Conservative ministries would be inclined to be and were more imperialistic than Liberal historians, but is this really the truth of the matter? In the face of the actual record, this belief would hardly appear to be valid. Examination of the record would hardly substantiate it. For example, the somewhat Liberal first Pitt ministry passed both the Irish Appeals Act (1783) and the Canadian Constitution Act (1791). It also passed the Irish Union Bill (1800). On the other hand, the India



Office Act (1858) was the product of the Conservative second Derby ministry, though much of the spadework upon it had been undertaken by previous ministries both Liberal and Conservative. Solution of the Ionian problem was also a joint maneuver. Negotiations attendant upon it were initiated by the Liberal first Palmerston ministry (1857). They were continued by the Conservative second Derby ministry and finished by the Liberal second Palmerston ministry (1864). Two Liberal ministries, those of Palmerston I and Russell II, account for the passage of the Colonial Laws and Marriages Validity Acts (1865), while the North America Act (1867) was enacted by the Conservative third Derby ministry on the basis of recommendations formulated during the previous Liberal ministries of Peel and Melbourne. Acquisition of the strategic Suez Canal (1875), which circumvented established procedures, and the declaration elevating Victoria to "Kaisar-i-hind" of India (1 January 1877) took place under the direct manipulation of Disraeli, a Conservative Prime Minister. Though these might be termed imperial acts, they were, as shall be discussed further on, hardly anything of the kind nor any more so than the seemingly flagrant violations of national sovereignty directed by the Liberal, Lord Palmerston, particularly his use of the fleet to enforce seemingly capricious, but really vital strategic demands upon Turkey

and other areas of the Near East. Conservatives, headed by Lord Salisbury, next turned their backs upon the Disraeli technique when, but a few short years later, they enacted the Australian Commonwealth Bill, though in so doing they were merely carrying to its logical fruition the establishment of the legislative dyarchy for which previous Liberal and Conservative ministries unstintingly had strived. Conservative attempts to stabilize the South African situation, however, were not quite as successful, foundering on a wave of public sentiment directed against the government for countenancing the importation of "coolie labor" into South Africa and foundering upon the stubbornness of the Boers. Consequently, passage of the Union of South Africa Act (1909) fell to the lot of a subsequent Liberal administration headed by Asquith. Up to this point certainly, the continuous nature of colonial policy would argue against the influence of political bias in imperial affairs, which is what the franchise influence argument amounts to. Rather, the conduct of the ministries involved would argue for continuous and intelligent action toward predetermined ends, the ends in mind being the already mentioned "containing and augmenting the stability, power, and resources of the empire." British administrators were only too aware of the unity of European policy, other foreign policy, imperial policy,

strategic policy, and economic policy. The "checkmate" of one would be the "checkmate" of another. They were all of a piece because of the United Kingdom's separation from raw materials and food and because of the vastness of the colonial enterprise itself. Trouble in Europe would undoubtedly mean trouble in the colonies if the United Kingdom became involved. This is the real meaning of Disraeli's purchase of Suez and the real meaning of Palmerston's conduct in the Near East and Turkey. They had to contain Russia and stabilize Europe, prevent trouble before it started, else the fate which has overtaken Britain since 1900 would have arrived that much sooner. If franchise changes have tended to bring more and more Liberal ministries into power, this has apparently had little effect upon changing imperial policy because no more than any other group have they been able to ignore that famous dictum of British imperial policy which suggests that "Britain has no permanent enemies and no permanent friends; she has only permanent interests." Just how permanent these interests were has been shown again and again since the opening of the twentieth century, and the political cast of a ministry has had just as little to do with the matter of how they were preserved. Always, the empire perched on a precipice from which the most seemingly insignificant troubles could fling

it to disaster. And always, the British have traded their way out of possible troubles if they could, particularly in their relations with their colonies upon which their stronghold, the United Kingdom, was becoming more and more dependent, almost insupportably so.

The strategic and economic impact of World War I.

It remained for World War I to expose to the world-at-large the nearly insupportable syndrome of strategic, economic, demographic, and psychological facts which the United Kingdom was protecting from public view, as it had always done, and upon which the empire was slowly but surely disintegrating. World War I was hardly under way when the German U-boat campaigns began to snipe away at Britain watery life-line and seriously reduce food and raw material supplies. The vulnerability of merchant vessels soon had the beleaguered islands in a virtual state of siege, exposing to public view a fact long known by British administrators but bluffed into ineffectuality; it was the fact that shipping was the most vital and weakest link in the too-thinly-deployed-because-too-widespread British strategic armor. Britain had too many geographic areas to protect. Food and raw material supplies were soon diminished and rationing was introduced. In the Orient, fortunately, Britain was able to bargain its way out of really serious trouble by persuading the nascent

Japanese power to enter the war on the side of the Allies because Japan probably did not yet feel ready to start upon its campaign for the subjection of the Orient. As if the exposure of strategic weakness were not enough, the United Kingdom soon found itself faced with the imminent demise of its "famous and fortuitous series" of coal and iron deposits. By 1917 reserves of high-grade iron ore were depleted and the mines nearly played out, making the United Kingdom even more dependent upon outside sources for the functioning of her industrial and strategic machinery, forcing her while the war was yet in progress to turn more and more to the use of such ores as she could import from Swedish, Spanish, and Portuguese sources and thereby tying up a good deal of her naval potential in a line stretched from the North Sea across the Atlantic and one through the Mediterranean into Asian waters. Coal seams also began thinning out while Sweden, the source of "pit props" for the mines began to seem further and further away until Germany realized that it was similarly dependent upon Swedish resources. Population differentials enjoyed by non-Caucasian areas became a further source of trouble, the rising forces of nationalism stirring up one disturbance after another and being encouraged to do so by agents of the Central Powers. As a consequence, in many of these areas colonial administrators were

forced into more precipitate concessions or promises than they might otherwise have made under other than the United Kingdom's beleaguered circumstances. Had it not been for the timely intervention of the United States and his coalition with other European powers, "John Bull" might then and there have had to pull in his horns and countenance the complete collapse of the empire. As things worked out, this eventuality did not quite come to pass, but was staved off for some time. It was the British economic fortunes which suffered worst during the war, the war eventually proving itself a vital period of transition. The center of world finance began its celebrated shift from London to New York. Caucasian colonies began their inroads into homeland economic prerogatives, and by war's end they were well on the road to becoming the real centers of British economic power. Here the United Kingdom was confronted with the maturation of influences she herself had stimulated by her failure to develop heavy and finishing industries in her colonial areas. In all probability, the United Kingdom could hardly have done otherwise, granted the historical matrix in which the empire developed. In this matrix it found itself more and more confronted with the necessity of garnering profits from processing raw materials in order to obtain the food credits it needed throughout the world. The historic gamble on free

trade was thus producing the long-feared backlash upon the exercise of imperial controls and would continue to do so as the twentieth century progressed. By war's end Canada, Australia, and India, using their own and borrowed capital, were well on the road toward developing heavy and light industries of their own, thus freeing them in great measure from dependence upon the United Kingdom's finishing industries. Though percentage-wise they would continue to absorb the usual portion of the United Kingdom's exports and a great deal more, the additional arithmetical amounts were more than likely absorbed at the expense of the United Kingdom, particularly in the years following the war when British gold reserves were rapidly being depleted to balance trade ledgers. As already observed, the United Kingdom had apparently liquidated a vital percentage of its foreign investments during the desperate war years and during the years following the war had displayed an incomplete recovery. The liquidation of capital placed the United Kingdom in a position from which it has never quite recovered. It has led to conferences frankly wooing trade with anybody and everybody within and without the empire in a feverish effort to produce the proper export balances which mean the acquisition of food and the continuous operation of the British economy. Though not too readily apparent until World War II, this effort appears never quite to have succeeded. The first



indication of this failure was the United Kingdom's discard of the gold standard, and the second, a continuous indication, has been the progressive devaluation of the pound, first in sterling areas and later in the dollar and other world trade areas. In regard to this devaluation of the pound, one must view with frank admiration the adroitness with which colonial administrators, protecting the United Kingdom's "permanent interests," kept inflated in many areas, particularly the dollar area, the value of the pound when the economic foundation behind it had long since lost its relative position. In this way, apparently, British administrators managed to use former prestige to recover some of the war losses and offset the cheapening of the pound in their own backyard, but whether it has ever been enough is doubtful.<sup>51</sup>

The Irish Free State Agreement Bill (1922) and the Irish Consequential Money Bill (1922). These straitened post-war economic circumstances provide the context in which the United Kingdom was again confronted with the problem of home rule for the Irish. From the moment of the outbreak of World War I Ireland had been in a continual state of turmoil, one rebellion after another having to be put down.

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. Edward H. Carr, The Twenty Year's Crisis, 1919-1939 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940), 312 pp., for a discussion of Britain's postwar economic crisis.

Here again nationalism, harking back to old cultural traditions, reared its ugly head in such movements as Sinn Fein. Ireland appeared determined upon the freedom it had demanded since the time of Cromwell, and Irish patriots apparently felt that there would never be a more opportune time to gain it than during the period of post-war difficulties. There is little need here to go into the controversies which raged over the question and led to a treaty between the United Kingdom and the Irish guaranteeing home rule. What is of interest, however, is that the United Kingdom refused to countenance such a treaty unless it provided for separate treatment of Protestant Ulster, guarantees of civil rights in the new Irish Free State, and guarantees of lasting "free trade" between Ireland and the United Kingdom. Consequently, the treaty having been signed, a constitutional convention was convened in Ireland, and Parliament began to give official notice to the matter. As the Irish convention got under way Lt. Col. Murray questioned the "Bench" as to whether the Australian and African precedents would be followed: "...in the case of the Constitution of the Irish Free State before His Majesty's government either assents to or dissents from the terms of the draft constitution."<sup>52</sup> It will be recalled that in both these cases

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<sup>52</sup> Parliamentary Debates, 152 H.C. Debs., 5s, 1922, p. 642.

the government was somewhat confronted with a fait accompli requiring its signature, so Sir H. Greenwood's reply was not at all surprising. "It is true," he remarked, "that the Draft Bills embodying the Australian and South African Constitutions were submitted by the government of the day for the consideration of Parliament, and exactly the same procedure will be followed in the case of the Irish Bill."<sup>53</sup> This meant that Lords, though now fallen from power, would first stamp its approval on the measure and then send it to Commons where it would be introduced by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Few words except profound disgust can describe the attitude of Commons as the Enabling Bill was introduced. Though Parliament was determined to be rid once and for all of the Irish nuisance, it was determined to protect the Ulsterites and "free trade" regardless of the costs. In fact, Parliament did absorb both the costs of the transition and what would have been Ireland's share of the national debt merely to implement its determination to be rid of the Irish who were disrupting governmental processes at a time of grave national difficulties. There was also pervading the issue an undercurrent which suggested that nothing else practical could be done, that the matter was beyond controversy any longer. This was reflected in the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 643.

fact that both Agreement Bill and the Consequential Bill were introduced and considered simultaneously, Mr. Bonnar Law, the Prime Minister, remarking immediately prior to their introduction that "...quick passage of these bills can be expected only if they are regarded as altogether non-controversial."<sup>54</sup> That he expected this attitude was only too well attested by the rapid manner in which the passage of these bills was implemented. Almost immediately after the Prime Minister's remarks the bills were formally introduced and the House took a privileged adjournment, reconvening instantaneously as a Committee of the Whole to consider them, Irish members observing in abstentia. In rapid fire order such clauses of the bills as produced no controversy passed the first reading, while those the subject of any argument at all were submitted to a recess committee for reworking and the order of their reading set.<sup>55</sup> Quickly they were brought back from recess and subjected to a second reading which they quickly passed, though certain financial clauses of the Consequential Bill and a clause pertinent to the Governor's duties in the Agreement Bill were held over for

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 159 H. C. Debs., 5s, p. 174.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 174 ff.

further consideration.<sup>56</sup> Further discussion cleared up the reasons for the United Kingdom's share in the costs and pension aspects of the Consequential Bill and the clauses concerned were approved, the committee dividing: Ayes 225, Noes 100.<sup>57</sup> Somewhat tardy and recalcitrant approval was also given the definition of the Governor's duties, a definition whereby his prerogatives were largely hamstrung, interest on this issue picking up to a division: Ayes 258, Noes 150.<sup>58</sup> Once these measures were approved the bills were subjected to a third reading and passed by a somewhat subdued but unanimous voice vote.<sup>59</sup> The bills in their final shape gave Ireland a government sharing all the prerogatives of the dominions, while the United Kingdom was saddled with most of the costs.<sup>60</sup> The Royal Assent was again a matter of course.

Significance of the Irish Free State Agreement Act.

The passage of Irish Bill and the Consequential Bill attend-

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 350 ff., 387 ff..

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 463.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 634.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 764.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Public General Statutes, LX, 4 ff.: 12 George V, c 4, for a copy of these measures.

ant upon it made obvious to the rest of the empire and the world-in-general just how helpless was the position in which Britain found itself. An overwhelming combination of strategic, economic, demographic, and psychological (i.e., nationalism) dilemmas was strangling the empire and loosening the United Kingdom's precarious grip upon it. All that would be needed was another serious war and the empire might well fall to pieces. Liberal sentiments directed at Parliament during the course of the Irish troubles appeared to have had little to do with the resolution of the problem. A Conservative Parliament revealed the British plight when it held out for guarantees of lasting "free trade" between the United Kingdom and Ireland before it would even consider the measures. Either the remainder of the United Kingdom desperately needed the continuance of the trade relations with Ireland, or there was no point in holding out for this guarantee. Obviously, it must have needed the trade.

Inter-imperial Conferences of 1926 and 1930. Just how badly Britain needed trade and just how seriously her economic might have been impaired by the war was revealed in the conduct of imperial conferences subsequent to the Irish Free State Agreement Act. These conferences were nothing new, having long been held under the auspices of the Crown and Colonial Office. Their purposes had been to resolve inter-

imperial problems relating to judicial and parliamentary matters and to encourage inter-imperial trade relations and cooperation. In conferences previous to 1926, the United Kingdom had always had more than the best of it, having had and preserved its initial advantages in the "Technological Revolution." Capital investments also gave it a further cushion. But in the years following World War I this cushion disappeared and the United Kingdom's position was considerably weakened. In this context there arose a growing sentiment, directed largely from the United Kingdom, for the creation of an imperial parliament. This was, in fact, a last desperate measure to preserve the empire. The United Kingdom also frankly wooed increased trade relations with the colonies, and it is through this gesture and the sentiment toward the creation of an imperial parliament that colonies, particularly the Caucasian units began to see the light. They observed carefully the fact that the United Kingdom was now almost totally dependent upon outside sources for the raw materials upon which its industries depended and for the food supplies so vital to the survival of its citizenry. Canada with her wheat, copper, nickel, iron, and asbestos--Australia with her wheat, beef, mutton, and wool--South Africa with her minerals and potentially vast food supply--India and Ceylon with their rubber, tea, spices, hemp, tin, etc.--New Zealand



with her beef, mutton, wool, and minerals--all the colonies knew they held the controlling necessities. They were only too well aware of the economic and strategic plight of the "mother country." Is it any wonder then that the Inter-imperial Conference of 1926 so auspiciously undertaken at the behest of the Colonial Office in the United Kingdom should end as it did? Is it any wonder that the sentiment for the creation of an imperial parliament so carefully nurtured by the Colonial Office should have been so preemptorily brushed aside as it was? Or is it any wonder that the conference should have come forth with the recommendation it adopted? Why else should it suggest the adoption of a resolution declaring that "...the dominions together with Great Britain are autonomous communities within the British empire, equal in status, and in no way subordinate to one another..."<sup>61</sup> The handwriting was plainly on the wall. The United Kingdom could do what it liked, but the colonies would have their way. In the subsequent conference in 1930 this view was composed into a formal resolution urging also a union under a common allegiance to a "powerless" Crown. This resolution embodying the proposed Statute of Westminster was to be submitted to all dominion parliaments for ratification and to be sent on the Dominions Office for transmission to Parliament. The legislative dyarchy was to become a dead issue.

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Parliamentary Papers, 1926, Vol. XI, for the records of this conference.

Statute of Westminster (1931). Dominion parliaments acted quickly. Early in 1931 Mr. J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, notified Commons that "...resolutions in the sense of the recommendations of the Imperial Conference of 1930 regarding the proposed Statute of Westminster have been passed in all the Dominion Parliaments..."<sup>62</sup> and the measure was formally introduced. Commons could not have been more bored with the issue, which they did not even bother to debate, but passed rapidly through three readings by voice vote. Their attitude seems to have been a recognition that nothing else could be done; the dominions had already called the turn, so why indulge an empty protest. So sputtered out the legislative dyarchy over the Caucasian colonies, though India might chafe for some time. Though MacDonald and Labor might claim credit for fulfilling Labor's pledge to decimate the empire, there was really little else they could have done; the dominions had already stated the case and Parliament had to accept it or face perhaps more defiant or unpleasant possibilities. Aside from the matter of Labor's claim, the whole subject had been started by Baldwin Conservatives, and

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<sup>62</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Off. Rep. H. C. Debs, 5s: 22 George V, v. 255, pp. 2626-2627. Cf. also the H. C. Debs. for 1930 for what little consideration Commons gave to a discussion of the matter.

Labor was merely lending official sanction to what had already taken place. Cast of ministry made no difference here.

Rumbles in the administrative dyarchy. The legislative dyarchy was thus no sooner written off the books when the United Kingdom was faced with murmurs of discontent in the administrative dyarchy. Everywhere it was confronted with the burgeoning demands for autarchy focused by the rampant rise of nationalism in non-Caucasian colonies. There had already been the Act of 1919 creating the new Council of State and Legislative Assembly for India. Obstructionist and Indian nationalist movements following its establishment in 1921 had led quickly to demands for home rule and the institution of the Simon Commission to study it. This committee made its report in 1930, and the report appears to have been poorly received both in India and the United Kingdom because it did little more than suggest an extremely limited re-establishment of the legislative dyarchy without many of the privileges of dominion status.<sup>63</sup> By 1935 Parliament had passed a federal constitution bill embodying the principles of the Simon report, but this served only to inflame Indian nationalists such as Gandhi even more. India was but a sample of what the United Kingdom was having to face everywhere throughout

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Report of the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Commission), (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1930).

the non-Caucasian reaches of the empire. Various gradations of civil disturbance, from mild to serious, were breaking out in the more advanced segments of the administrative dyarchy. Burma, Malaya, and East Africa were displaying serious symptoms of discontent. Labor ministries as well as Conservative in the United Kingdom were just as nonplussed and just as severe with these outbreaks; political bias made no difference. In fact, it had been a Labor ministry which all but forced the Simon Report down the throats of both Indian Nationalists and Moderates who were seeking dominion status.

Precis of background for World War II. As if these conditions were not enough, British diplomatic policies were going awry all over the world. The Statute of Westminster was no sooner on the books than the United Kingdom had to face the ambitions of Japan in Asia. First there was the Manchurian incident. Britain did little. Next came the reckless advance into China. Britain could no longer even observe the amenities with the Japanese, and British strategists were quaking in their boots for fear of where the Japanese would strike next, perhaps their own backyard. This fear stemmed from a possible combination of strategic difficulties which the United Kingdom had long avoided, the necessity of full scale war in Asia and Europe at the same

time. In Europe the cordon sanitaire so carefully nursed about the "Bolsheviks" at Versailles was coming apart at the seams, and it would not be too many years before the "protection of permanent interests" would see British forces aligned with those of the "Ivan" they had so painstakingly ostracized. Such an "unholy" alliance, unthinkable in 1919, would come about in the interests of a national survival threatened by the paranoid and ruthless careers of a one-time Milan journalist, Benito Mussolini, and an erstwhile Vienna "schickelgruber," Adolf Hitler, men whose delusions of grandeur were forcing Europe to the brink of the "abyss." Everywhere the British turned they faced the futile trinity of strategy, economics, and politics. Helplessly, almost incredulously, British planners watched the developing nightmare explode in all its fury.

World War II. World War II was upon the British in all its horror almost before the United Kingdom was aware of what had happened. Despite all the efforts to stave it off--including the grudging acceptance of Italy's rapid of Ethiopia and the ignominious Munich Pact abjectly accepted by a frustrated Chamberlain--the war descended upon the United Kingdom with disheartening indifference. Germany over-rode Europe and pushed the tardy British defenders of France into the sea. German U-boats began their garroting

of the merchant life-line, while the Luftwaffe's "Blitz" turned the islands themselves into a bloody abbatoir. The horrors of the Blitz were not enough, it seemed. Suddenly, but not unexpectedly, Japanese dreams of the "Asiatic Co-prosperity Sphere" ran amok and stabbed the British in the Asian "back-reaches." One by one, aided by nationalistically-inspired collaborationist forces, Japan took over the British strongholds in Asia. Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, the East Indies (Dutch), New Guinea, and the Solomons fell to advancing Japanese hordes. India, Ceylon, and the whole of Australasia were threatened. Even worse, the Japanese fleet was forcing the retreat of its British counterpart from Asian waters. Germany was now advancing into British preserves in Africa and threatening the Near East. The back of the empire was actually broken, and had it not been again for the timely interference of the United States, an event brought on by the precipitate actions of the Japanese in Asian waters, the empire probably would have remained dismembered. As it was, before and after the intervention of the United States, the British had made any number of promises to various elements in the non-Caucasian units dissatisfied with the Japanese occupation. They made all sorts of promises for prospective autonomy in exchange for immediate war-time aid. These promises were to bring the post-war deluge.

Post-World War II imperial deluge. World War II was no sooner over than the deluge of demands for autonomy for non-Caucasian colonials descended upon the British. Colony by colony, in the light of war-time promises and the fact that it really could do little about it, the United Kingdom has had to give in and watch the administrative dyarchy disintegrate in Asia. India, Ceylon, and Burma have gone the way of self-determination. Nehru put an end to what appeared to him to be British procrastination in the matter of home rule for India by calmly announcing at an imperial meeting in London, a meeting incidentally called to solve Indian constitutional problems, that he "was going home to form a government for India, that the Moslems could form one in Pakistan," and that, in effect, the British could go hang; they would not delay him longer by arguments about the preservation of British or native rights and interests. This he did, and the British did nothing. Indian action is but a small sample of what the British have had to watch nationalism do to the administrative dyarchy in the past eleven years since the ending of the hostilities of World War II. The British have watched and been able to do little to stem the tide which is now rising in Africa and everywhere else through what remains of the administrative dyarchy. Is this an argument for the effectiveness of franchise changes in the dismemberment of the empire? Has anything in this study substantiated this point of view?



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

On the basis of the selected facts presented, it is the conclusion of this study that franchise reforms were only incidentally and contextually related to the disintegration of the British empire and that they had extremely little, if at all measurable, effect upon it. The decline of British imperial rule appears, rather, to have been brought about by a syndrome of factors much more practical than political bias introduced into government by franchise changes. This syndrome was composed of a combination of legal, strategic, economic, demographic, technological, and psychological factors which eventually proved too much for British planners to handle.

Legal factors combined with strategic and Parliamentary difficulties brought about the retreat of Britain in North America. War with the "Thirteen Colonies, though not generally viewed so, appears to have ended in a strategic defeat which the British appear never to have forgotten. The American revolt occurred as a part and parcel of the context of a strategic duel with France and clean-up operations on Dutch and Spanish power. Relative technological inadequacy--technology was not yet sufficiently advanced--had made the

strategic situation involved in invading the Thirteen Colonies and giving logistical support to the army carrying out this task while confronted with military commitments elsewhere somewhat insupportable. The three year siege of Gibraltar by French and Spanish forces, shipping difficulties in the West Indies because of French and Spanish marauding, and similar difficulties in the Far East were all a part of this strategic complex and materially aided, in fact almost produced, the success of the American colonies, and so did the feud between Crown and Parliament. The latter was reinforced by the general drift of Western civilization toward autonomous forms of government. All combined brought about the success of the American insurrectionist movement which broke up what appears to have been Britain only real attempt at the establishment of an hegemony containing the prerogatives of imperium. From that time forward one of the major premises of colonial administration appears to have been the avoidance of situations that might again lead to such a frustrating strategic stalemate. The policies of the Colonial and Home Offices developed after this time appear to have been predicated consistently upon this strategic consideration and preservation of the economic and diplomatic prerogatives which kept it under control.

Also in the light of this strategic consideration colonial planners appear to have predicated their course upon

a desire to absorb the minimum amounts necessary of the costs attendant upon the administration of imperial holdings and consistent with their stability. In the three-quarter century period following the American War (1775-1850), this attitude appears to have been reinforced by the realization of British planners that, granted the economic situation in which they operated, Britain was becoming more and more dependent upon outside resources for the maintenance of its national existence: economic attitudes conditioned the minimizing of costs, while the actual economic situation combined with strategic difficulties conditioned the modes of rule worked out with various colonial areas during the nineteenth century.

All during the nineteenth century, while the economic-strategic relationship was progressively worsening, Britain found itself confronted with the preservation of the status quo in Europe, Asia, and the Near East, a stability upon which the British grip upon the empire depended. British planners--strategists, and diplomats--appear early to have realized that their diplomatic policies had to be total policies, that European policy was colonial policy, that war in Europe was one phase of colonial policy, that strategic policy had to predicated upon economic policy which was colonial policy. Everywhere the British turned they realized the totality of their efforts and planned accordingly. They knew that as

long as the United Kingdom was kept off balance in Europe by civil disturbances colonies would have to be treated gingerly or compromised with. They never lost sight of the fact that every colony was a potential enemy. Europe proved to be the empire's greatest enemy. First, there were the Napoleonic troubles. The United Kingdom had no sooner brought these to a conclusion than a continuous series of troubles followed in rapid fire order. Revolt simmered in the Mediterranean and then exploded. Greece revolted and Europe's "sick man," Turkey, had to be calmed by Codrington only to raise further difficulties with Russia. While the Russian problem was just coming to a boil, the downfall of monarchy proceeded apace. One revolt after another toppled monarchical thrones and led Britain into postures of European stabilization. The French Restoration led to adventure in the Crimea, while Africa and the Near East began to simmer. Then Prussia fell hungrily on hapless France, a problem no sooner settled than purchase of Suez, an apparent strategic-economic necessity, led to further troubles in the Sudan and Africa. All these problems occupied a considerable portion of the British strategic might, and all made even more vital the stability of colonial holdings as the situation of the United Kingdom's dependency upon outside resources progressively worsened. That Britain was only too well aware of

this fulcrum of the colonial policy is amply attested by the existence, makeup, and progressive modification of the "Statistical Abstracts," in existence since the demise of the Board of Trade and Plantations.

As a consequence of these matters, the United Kingdom, at the behest of the Colonial Office and faced with unsettled Europe, was more than willing to compromise on matters of colonial rule rather than face the test of again having simultaneously to quell disturbances in Europe and the colonies which would divide the forces of its strategic power and attack their industrial base. By 1867, Britain was well aware of its dependency upon colonial areas for food and raw materials. As the nineteenth century drew to a close this dependency situation grew progressively more perilous to the United Kingdom and created a situation in which efforts to stabilize colonial arrangements were to run afoul of an unholy union of nationalism and economic theory in both Europe and Asia. More and more, particularly in Asia, nationalist forces howled about "exploitation" and threatened revolt when British forces were otherwise occupied. Caucasian colonials also chafed under similar, but much more lenient feelings about national destiny. These realities led Britain into many concessions, and population differentials further complicated the problem. By 1900, some 45,000,000 citizens in the United

Kingdom found themselves staggered with the problem of stabilizing government for half a billion colonials and some 250,000,000 Europeans over whom they supposedly had no controls at all. By the end of the nineteenth century the British were sitting on a powder keg, concerning the contents of which they were intimately aware. All that was needed was a major war and the empire would show the cracks in its seams, the patchwork of legislative and administrative dyarchies might well fall apart. Astute British diplomacy combined with adroit colonial policies had managed to stave off this eventuality and stabilize both colonial and European governments for most of the nineteenth century. Colonial holdings had been stabilized by a division of rule between colony and homeland in assorted gradations from colony to colony, the particular colony being allowed to charge "only what the traffic would bear" at a given time. Europe was stabilized by force and conferences. Such economic arrangements as the sterling block, inter-imperial conferences, and free trade also helped toward stabilization of the empire as did colonial dependence upon British manufactures and the ready market for colonial food and raw materials represented in the United Kingdom.

By 1900, the shaky foundations of the empire so long hidden from public view were ready for exposure. It was only

a matter of time until Germany or some other European power challenged them. Germany had rapidly overtaken the British industrial might and was just about on equal terms with it. The Boer difficulties and the subsequent efforts made to settle them added further fuel to the fires gnawing at the imperial vitals.

The progress of the twentieth century has seen the British empire, slowly at first and then more precipitately, disintegrate as the cumulative and combined effects of strategic problems, economic problems, demographic problems, and the problem of nationalism in Europe and colonial areas--a single problem in terms of imperial rule--have exacted their long-feared tolls. Stability in the empire flashed a-glimmering with the somewhat emotional and pointless assassination of a minor archduke in Serbia. World War I was no sooner under way than the United Kingdom had to face the horror of a technological development, the U-boat, against which it had yet to develop adequate defenses, and it also had to face the numbing reality of the fact that its high-grade coal and iron supplies in the Midlands were all but exhausted. While these troubles had the United Kingdom in a virtual state of siege, disrupting movements of all varieties--economic, political, nationalistic, and strategic--erupted throughout the empire. By war's end it was only a matter of time until the major



segments of the empire would cast themselves loose from the imperial stream because the exigencies of the war had wrenched them free of many of the old imperial relationships and prerogatives. Between the two wars (World Wars I and II) Britain was able to do very little to stem the developing tide because of the known and almost complete dependence of the United Kingdom upon outside resources for the continuance of its national existence. Almost as soon as the war was over, the Caucasian units cast themselves loose, and the non-Caucasian colonials began to "champ at the bit." Such non-Caucasian units as were held on to were held on to in desperation by the United Kingdom because it feared that if these areas were cast loose they would fall within the orbits of hostile powers thereby ending the stream of supplies from them. They were vital to the United Kingdom's welfare.

Franchise reforms have had little to do with these changes. Regardless of government, Conservative or Liberal, British colonial policy has been realistic and consistent since the time of the Irish Appeals Act. The basic process colonial administrators developed to manage the empire was based upon a realistic appraisal of the context in which the empire operated. The process of dividing rule between colonials and home government was the most practical which could have been devised, given the context in which the

United Kingdom matured and the ends toward which it strived. It is this latter context which conditioned the separation of raw materials and manufactures, thus saddling the United Kingdom with the major burden of the strategic costs; and it is this separation which materially aided in producing the principle of divided rule in colonial affairs. The Crown may have started out to inaugurate an imperium, but Parliament appears to have preempted and ended with a precariously held empire which World War II all but put an end to.

Regardless of whether or not liberalism of one type or another were introduced into British government with the advent of franchise reforms, franchise reform appears to have had little bearing of the issue of the imperial fate. For example, the economic liberals introduced into Parliament following the Franchise Reform of 1832, could they have gotten away with it--accepting that they were politically biased--would more likely have held on to imperial holdings as such if they could; after all, as the situation matured, this type of liberal was to realize more and more his dependence upon colonial holdings for the progress of his industrial enterprises. He was caught in a trap from which there was no real extrication. He could not bear the internal expense of these governments, nor could he bear the loss of their raw materials and food. Once in political power, all he

could do was use the already devised and practical system of governmental dyarchies which made it possible to realize the maximum utilization of the colonial potential. He had to compromise to profit and continue in business. Unfortunately, he could not profit forever. After further maturation of the historical context, the colonial caught on to the fact that this economic liberal was the same fellow he had been dealing with yesterday, only then he called himself a conservative. The colonial realized the consistency of colonial policy and he also realized that he held the key to the United Kingdom's control, food and raw materials. He realized also just how badly this weakened the strategic potential of the United Kingdom. The consistency of colonial policy had to persist despite governmental bias, else the empire would be dismembered. It is at this point, the food and raw material nexus, that the non-Caucasian colonial began the attack which burst into flame in the period between the two wars. Combined with a strategic factor, this nexus also accounted for the behavior of the MacDonald Laborites in post-World War I, India. They might prate about the necessity for dismembering the empire while out of office, but once in office they would have to face the realities concerned with preservation of national existence. Everywhere Britain was retreating, but the Laborites given

the chance to augment this movement procrastinated; much more than internal politics was concerned. It was a matter of life and death realities, the preservation of permanent interests and protection of national existence. Indian demands for national sovereignty were by-passed and compromises proposed. But this, as always, was only a stop-gap measure, an attempt to plug a "leak in the dike" holding back the flood waters of imperial disintegration.

World War II let loose the floodgates. This war and its aftermath is already writing the final chapter of the British empire. Unit by unit the administrative dyarchy is falling to pieces. Much of Asia has already escaped the imperial hold and the rest of administrative dyarchy, particularly Africa and the Near East are growling louder and louder. British attempts to promote the use of Africa as a bread-basket for both the United Kingdom and the Africans are falling on deaf ears. Colonials no longer have to be polite. It seems only a matter of time until the United Kingdom will become a cooperative world workshop totally depend upon the puissance of other powers for the continuation of its national and economic existence. The United Kingdom is now almost totally dependent upon outside sources for food and raw materials, and almost totally dependent upon the world market for its national survival. In effect, this means that it has

become almost totally dependent upon other powers for the maintenance of stable world conditions, the only conditions in which in the face of atom bombs and other technological monstrosities it can survive as a nation. Another war would ruin the United Kingdom; it might even leave it a hopeless atomic ruin.

Faced with the ominous rumble of Communist China and Russia, the present diplomatic position of the United Kingdom, as the former are only too well aware, is a colossal bluff almost wholly dependent upon the might of the United States for its effectiveness. The Chinese and the Russians both know why Chamberlain suffered the "indignity at Munich" and why Hitler was let loose upon Europe. They also know how far Britain can be pushed, and so does India and the rest of Asia. This is why they are all pushing. It is also, incidentally, the reason the empire appears to be almost a dead issue. Someone, perhaps the United States, will have to fill the "power vacuum" being created by the imminent and total collapse of the imperial structure.

Franchise reform has had little to do with this eventuality. Britain has been beaten by her dependency upon outside resources and technological developments which have created a strategic situation in which the United Kingdom is totally vulnerable.

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