The Prize was awarded to Waddell, Nov. 1935

Gladstone Prize Essay, 1935:

James H. Waddell.

The Conflict of British Opinion on the Value of the British Empire during the Nineteenth Century.

The colonial and 'imperial' policy of Britain in the 19th century developed from a despairing attitude of laissez-faire during the early part of the century to an enthusiastic imperialism in the last quarter. This development was naturally attended by some conflict of opinion, but the opposition to each of the extremes was very weak. With remarkable unanimity the men of each generation seem to have been agreed on the broad objects of policy within the imperial sphere, so that direct conflict of opinion on the value of the Empire was not very frequent, and there was great continuity in the arguments used, especially in those used by the opponents of imperial expansion. The feeling of apathy with regard to colonial responsibilities that was general until about the seventies was supported from a positive point of view by sound historical arguments and by strong economic considerations urged by Cobden and others of the Manchester School — who also emphasised the negative factors represented by the cost of upkeep and defence and the added danger of war involved by having interests everywhere. But there were degrees of apathy, for while the Manchester School would have been glad to be rid of all overseas possessions,
"Quoted by Egerton, "Short History of British Colonial Policy", P. 25"
colonial and imperial, some officials and humanitarians wanted to keep certain dependencies as an outlet for emigration and for the socially undesirable; and in the 'thirties a vigorous group of administrators, the colonial 'theorists' or 'Reformers,' became active in opposing many of the conclusions drawn by the great mass of their contemporaries from their reading of history. When it did revive, aggressive imperialism had for various reasons a very complete triumph, and the comparatively slight opposition it encountered came from a remnant of Free Traders and pacifists and from a small though noisy section of extreme democratic opinion, which saw in imperialism one aspect of the dominance of the upper classes.

Castlereagh gave a very candid statement of the prevailing indifference to colonial possessions when he defended in Parliament in 1815 the attitude he had adopted at the Congress of Vienna. "It was expedient freely to open to France the means of peaceful occupation, and it was not in the interest of this country to make her a military and conquering instead of a commercial and pacific nation." This statement was made just after the close of the long war, but its substance is repeated by many prominent statesmen until about the time when Palmerston became the dominant force in British foreign policy. Glynedg, the Colonial Secretary at the end of the 'thirties, felt that the jealousy of foreign powers might be excited by the extension of British colonies, and that we had Colonies enough. They were very expensive to govern and manage and were not of sufficient value to make it worth while to increase their number." And even after Palmerston's day of power we find Lord Blackford in 1855, who had held an important post in the Colonial Office from 1860 to 1871, writing of that period: "I had always believed—
and the belief has so confirmed and consolidated itself, that I can hardly realise the possibility of anyone seriously thinking the contrary—that the destiny of our Colonies is independence; and that in this point of view the function of the Colonial Office is to secure that our connection, while it lasts, shall be as profitable to both parties, and our separation when it comes, as amicable as possible."

The explanation of the attitude is not to be found merely in the considerations of peace or cost urged by many statesmen. As Lord Blackford's words indicate, a much more powerful influence on the minds of intelligent men was contemplation of the series of events that had preceded and followed the loss of the American colonies. The 18th century era of competition for colonies and empire was over, and since men thought that the outcome of the American experiment would be repeated with other colonies they saw no need to strive to obtain new colonial lands or even to make any great effort to keep what they already had. It was noticed, too, that the loss of the colonies had not been attended by any particular evil effects to the Mother Country, for trade with America had increased steadily since 1763 and Britain had, though after a severe struggle, succeeded in checking Napoleon. After the war there were great problems of home politics that tended to absorb general attention, and many undoubtedly felt with Castlereagh that to develop outside Europe would only provoke further war and disturbance; the value of the colonies for emigration purposes was hardly as yet fully realised. Humanitarian opinion similarly was not yet actively enlisted for or against empire, for until 1833 it concentrated on obtaining the abolition of slavery. The best economic theory of the time in its broad aspects deprecated the state interference with individual initiative that was practically involved by

2. See, for example, his remarks on the Canadian timber and West Indian sugar trades, ibid., p. 27.
colonisation and empire, and more particularly it disapproved the principle on which colonies had hitherto been viewed. Empire was discouraged by the two great prophets of laissez faire thinking; Bentham said, "Emancipate your Colonies" and Adam Smith, though he has been justly described as a liberal imperialist — for he advised that Britain should neither carry her burden worthily or drop it" — announced at the same time that "Great Britain derives nothing but loss from the dominion which she exercises over her colonies." The gospel of Free Trade preached as a substitute for the old colonial policy of monopoly, gradually made converts, and Pitt, Hothfield and Peel marked stages in the transition of economic ideas to the complete ideal upheld by Cobden.

The policy of the Government and the bureaucracy which controlled colonial affairs under these influences dipped into a dull indifference, but the colonial policy urged by the Cobdenites was by no means apathetic, for they believed that the sooner the tie was severed that bound colony to Mother Country the better for both concerned. Cobden about 1835 found that "nothing presented so fair a field for economical analysis, even in this age of new lights, as the subject of colonisation," and his investigation led him to believe that self-government ought to be granted at once. The broad basis of his reasoning was the economic individualism compounded of Adam Smith and Bentham which taught that every man had the soul right to work unhampered by any restriction and to enjoy the fruits of such labour, so that, for example, the state must not interfere to help the economically weaker classes of society since the working out of economic laws would effect an adjustment; and with the further consequence that such artificial interference with the course of trade as issued in the old policy of monopolies was bound to be hurtful. And
there was in his view no substitute except free trade for the other extreme of
monopoly. He calculated that if Canada were to become independent, or
join the United States in some way, the saving to Britain would be in
each some million pounds annually and in addition Britain would
be freed of the harassing task of defending an almost indefensible
military position. The colonies did not even approach the desirable
situation of "paying for their keep"; taking account of trade relations,
Cobden estimated the annual loss on the colonies as a whole at about
four million pounds, to which had to be added some twenty to thirty
millions of interest on war debts. And finally they had on his view a
manifest tendency to involve Britain in wars for extremely remote or
non-existent interests, for he affirmed — truthfully for all practical
purposes at the time — that no State would ever voluntarily give up a
fraction of its territory.

So far as India in particular was concerned, Cobden was throughout
his life convinced, like Abraham Lincoln, that the Almighty had
endowed no nation with wisdom sufficient to entitle it to exercise
power over other peoples, and he was inclined to find little but hypocrisy
in the claims made by some on behalf of British justice and Britain's
conscientious efforts to raise the general level of civilization throughout
the world. He feared that the only effect of Britain's connection with
India would be to lower the general standard of life in Britain by the
corrupting influence of wealthy and unscrupulous nabobs. In later
life — he died in 1865 — events made him carry further these views on
India and apply them also to lands such as South Africa, where a
small white population ruled a large number of natives. In accord-
ance with his doctrine of non-intervention he maintained that no
good could be done to an "inferior" race by government action; only missionaries could do anything valuable. And in any case he felt that the lesson, "Physician, heal thyself," was being neglected in the emphasis contemporary humanitarian opinion tended to place on the "mission" of Britain. "First things first," he said, and demanded who had granted us India in trust for religious purposes. The problems of South Africa, he thought, would speedily solve themselves if self-government were granted to the white settlers; a much more circumspect native policy would be pursued if the settlers had to suffer its consequences entirely alone.

When faced with the belief that colonies offered a good outlet for emigrants, Cobden retorted that the United States under normal conditions received some double the number of British emigrants who went to Canada, and he rightly maintained—rightly at least in theory—that emigration could only be a palliative for the social ills of the mother country since the conditions which caused these ills were not thereby eradicated. But official opinion did not agree, and although it believed ultimate separation from the colonies to be inevitable, and although it realised that transportation could not go on indefinitely, it believed that the value of the colonies from the point of view of emigration and transportation justified the maintenance at least of Australian colonies. Thus the only appreciable development that took place in Australasia until almost the middle of the century was due to perception of this somewhat sordid aspect of their value. Establishments in South Africa were maintained partly at the behest of certain missionary opinion, which believed that the contaminating influence of the white man on natives was outweighed by the value of the
protection given by a strong imperial government, which could save the nations from their own barbarism. And during the middle years of the century some impetus was given to the acquisition of tropical lands by British business interests which required oil for lubricating the ever-growing machinery in British mills and for making soap to wash the increasing number of workers.

But for a time from about 1830 onwards it certainly seemed possible that the scale of values determining colonial and imperial policy would be revolutionised. This was on the rise to influence of the little group of Radical colonial "Reformers", under the guidance of Gibbon Wakefield, who himself formulated a "system of colonisation" as a substitute for the hap-hazard emigration hitherto countenanced by the Colonial Office. The Reformers were deeply impressed about 1830 by the troubled state of Britain and by the lack of facilities for developing excellent land in the colonies, but they distrusted the capacity of the Colonial Office, presided over by men like Gullett's "Mr. Mother-Country," to deal with the situation. They therefore suggested a centralised control over colonisation, to be achieved by charging a "sufficient" price for all colonial lands, the proceeds of the sale to go to the encouragement of desirable emigrants. Their liberal sympathies and Benthamite way of thinking contributed the other side of their theory, that the resulting colonies should look forward to and an early realisation of responsible self-government, and this in their view was not incompatible with the scheme for disposal of Crown lands by a central authority. The Reformers thus had something in common with both of the more general attitudes of the day. On a long view, they agreed with the majority of their contemporaries that the tendency of
"Darwin's Report" contained passages such as this: "The experience of keeping colonies, and governing them well, ought at least... might supply the wants of our surplus population, and raise up millions of fresh consumers of our manufactures, and producers of a supply for our wants." (p. 244). Quoted by Egerton, "Short History...", p. 301.

2. Disraeli seems to have been thinking particularly of the West Indies, but the contemporary opinions of such men as Cornwallis, Lewis and Sir Henry Taylor show that his judgment would have been applied generally by many people at the time.
historical development was toward ultimate colonial self-government, but
their way of regarding this end was hardly the line of indifference
taken by the majority of men, and in fact they thought very much
more highly of colonies—not, be it noted, of Empire—than did
most later imperialists. Most men of the time would have agreed that
colonial lands were a heritage held in trust by Britain for the
common purposes of Empire but few would have risen to the lofty
idealism that inspired Durham’s enthusiastic plans for Canada. And
on the other side, though they were in agreement with Cobden on the
virtue of an early grant of self-government, they could never agree
with Cobden’s view of the ends of this policy. They attributed to the
colonies economic value very greatly in excess of the total less colonies
were conceived to be by the Cobdenites; they had no fear of the political
consequences of colonial expansion feared by men of Cobden’s way
of thinking, for their activity was what drove the government to
conclude the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, which practically added the
Government hopelessly to New Zealand to the number of colonies, in the hopes of safeguarding the
interests of the Maoris; and through Durham’s Report the Reformers
had immense influence on the political development of Canada. But
with the great mass of ignorant indifference and reasoned neglect
their efforts were comparatively futile, and the general attitude of
responsible opinion in England could be adequately summed up in
Disraeli’s comparison of certain colonies to “a millstone round our
necks.”

Indifference perhaps reached its zenith in the ’sixties, when the
influence of Cobden and Bright was at its height and had been
reinforced by the vigorous writings of Goldwin Smith and those
Goldwin Smith: "The Empire", p. 94
"Philosophical Radicals" who disagreed with the Reformer. When Goldwin Smith in 1862-3 wrote a series of anti-imperial articles, and again in 1891 when he was still writing to the same effect, the position had changed, especially in India, and the writer had a new stock of figures at his command, but he still followed essentially the same lines of argument as his intellectual masters Adam Smith and Cobden. He complained of the unprofitable character of investment in very distant trade such as that with the colonies, and though he analysed the trade returns quoted by 'The Times' and other supporters of at least a conservative if not a forward imperial policy, he maintained that no argument from these could be valid until it was concluded that it could be shown that the trade balance, favourable or otherwise, depended on the character of the political connection between Colony and Mother Country. In the absence of a trade monopoly — and even that had been mischievous, in his view — there could be no possible advantage remaining to the Mother Country, while the cost of colonial defence was immense. He found various reasons advanced for maintaining dependencies: "Now it is the amount of the colonial trade, now it is the security of the colonial trade, now it is the preference of our people for the colonies as a place of emigration." And he concluded: "When facts overturn these arguments, it is glory, national spirit, prestige... I look in the French dictionary for 'prestige,' and find that it is an illusion, a juggling trick, an imposture." On the humanitarian motives occasionally advanced by missionary opinion in Britain as a plea for annexation in Indian and similar lands, and on the high ideals professed by some concerning the political mission of Britain to spread her democratic
conceptions and institutions over the earth, his views were identical with those of Cobden, who had said, "Physician, heal thyself" and had always feared a lowering of the world level of culture instead of a raising of it. He regarded not as argument but as "remonstrations of argument" the imposing dogma that Providence had put the colonies into our hands — "unless Providence has revealed its will...by some other channel than that of reason." The view of that generous "expansion of England" which Sealey stated so well in 1873 was combated in advance by Goldwin Smith in 1867: "When people talk of the dependencies as the very soul of England they forget that the oak flourished broad and deep before these parasites began to cling round its trunk and feed upon its life." But he was willing to admit that colonisation, as distinct from colonies, might have a definite value: "What is doubted is the value of keeping colonies in a state of dependence on the Mother Country when they are capable of self-government and self-defence and when their fitness to manage their own concerns has been formally acknowledged by the gift of parliamentary institutions." The difficulty with India, of course, as such men as Nassau Senior had recognised, was to be "well rid of it", for the spirit and principle of liberty could hardly fail to be less sacred in a nation which held despotic dominion over others.

Yet even during those years when indifference, apathy, was the general attitude to the fate of the Empire there were prophets of the imperialism which was growing up and was to blossom forth with the aid of Disraeli and Sealey and Disraeli and others more extreme in the later years of the century. Carlyle might be described as a mystical imperialist of the fifties. He is fully conscious of his own vagueness when he

"Dawson, "Richard Cobden", p. 197."
writes: "Is there no value then in human things but what can write itself down in the cash ledger?"..."An instinct deeper than the Gospel of
McCready teaches that Colonies are worth something to a country! That if
under the present Colonial Office, they are a vexation to us and themselves,
some other Colonial Office can and must be continued which shall
render them a blessing." And at the same time Dalhousie was in direct
action in India expressing his view of the value of dependencies there.
Cobden attacked him vigorously in 1853 for basing his policy on the
principle that "In the exercise of a wise and sound policy, the Govern-
ment is bound not to put aside any rightful opportunities of acquiring
territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves." 2. An
explanation of this growing revolt against prevailing opinion is no doubt
to be found in the normal swing of the pendulum from the extreme of
inactive complacency to an active policy of expansion, but certain
particular influences also tended to increase the arc of the swing and
push out the limits of British influence. The broad effects of the Industrial
Revolution were already evident and Britain had taken on the aspect
of a country of cities in which the inhabitants necessarily developed
industry at the expense of agriculture and so were becoming less and
less self-sufficient. Neither the "calico millennium"—as it was described
by Carlyle—nor the reign of peace predicted or expected by the Free
Traders had come to pass, and with the arrival, especially after
1848, of other European nations in the field of competition for world
markets, men began to think it a matter of no less than life and death
to have a secure source of food and raw materials. And it was
expected—rightly as events turned out—that the colonists, then
mainly of British flesh and blood, would be much more readily even
the friendliest foreigner to support the Mother Country in difficulties. There was always the drawback that colonial and imperial responsibilities were the cause of a great number of possible difficulties, but the advantages seemed to outweigh the disadvantages, even where these were appreciated. The Industrial Revolution had further influenced attitudes in England through the consideration that distance was no longer nearly so important as it had till recently been. Visions arose of a Greater Britain made possible by modern science, which, according to Seeley in 1883, "has given the political organism a new circulation, which is steam, and a new nervous system, which is electricity." He maintained that this made it not only possible—since the difficulties faced, for example, by Burke had been overcome—but necessary, because states on the old scale of magnitude would now be "unsafe, insignificant, second-rate," to attempt to "realise the old Utopia of a Greater Britain." The active interest of the Queen in imperial matters and the example of Russia and, more especially, of the United States, in showing political union over large areas to be practicable encouraged men to look to the realisation of an imperial ideal in the near future.

Seeley, who himself did much to inculcate the imperial habit of thought, recognised that there was a school of bombastic writers as well as a number of extreme pessimists in attitude to colonies and empire. The "pessimists," he may take it, were the remaining representatives of the Manchester School, but it is not quite so clear what group or number of men is meant in the epithet "bombastic," for radical opinion would say that all imperialists are bombastic, differing only in slight degree. Probably for all practical purposes we can see the extremists in the die-hard Tony
newspapers of the time, and in attacked men like Rhodes; some imperialists like Seely himself and Egeron and Dicey and Lecky being moderate conservatives and right-wing liberals. Gladstone strenuously denied the charge brought against him of indifference to the process of imperial disintegration so noticeable to Disraeli's eye, but his policy showed that in fact he attached little value to the glory or economic gain available to an imperialist power. Certainly the "pessimism" which coloured the policy of his Cabinet, 1882-5, and caused the "withdrawals" in Africa and Afghanistan had some influence by way of reaction on the outlook of imperial sentiment that followed. And the revelations of African conditions made as a result of Livingstone's journeys brought over, in the 'seventies, the last remaining element of humanitarian opinion, along with that of traders and military men, to appreciation of the urgent need for Britain to secure a large share of Africa in the "scramble" of European Powers which was soon to take place. Kipling in the last years of the century seemed to regard himself as a very moderate imperialist when in his "Recessional" he criticised those "wild tongues" that uttered "frantic boast and foolish word", forgetful of the trust imposed by the Empire, but he and Chamberlain were among the most prominent men who accepted the extreme valuation of Empire. Even in what Chamberlain called his "Radical days" he had not supported with enthusiasm the "Manchester" view of the value of a colonial empire, and during Gladstone's ministry of 1882-5 Bright had remarked that he was the only "Jingo" in the Cabinet — referring to his dislike of laissez-faire and of the timidity of what later became known as "Little Englandism." While he was still under Gladstone's influence these opinions were apparently kept in subordination, but he was always
a keen supporter of imperial federation and from about 1887 he constantly advocated a closer bond throughout the Empire for purposes of defence and commerce. When he was in office as Colonial Secretary, with commanding power in the Cabinet, 1895-1900, he did his utmost by constructive statesmanship, and with increasingly strong Unionist backing, to educate public opinion into agreeing with him that the responsibilities of the Mother Country were not to be construed merely according to the selfish interests of a nation of consumers.

This tended to be the general line of imperialist thought, that the use of a colony to England cannot be judged by its present or marketable value, but some imperialists kept more closely to real economic values than others. Seeley, for example, in spite of his "revolutionary" conceptions on English history, drew a vital existing distinction between the value to Britain of her colonies and of her Indian Empire. The great fact in recent British history, he thought, had been the foundation of "Greater Britain." In place of the old and inaccurate conception of the colonies as "possessions" of the Mother Country, Seeley found only one alternative—the basic idea of which is expressed in the title of his book, the "Expansion of England"—they must be part of Britain, and a very valuable part, bound together by community of race and religion, and, he would say, interest, for he thinks the possibilities of new lands must hold a solution for the social ills of the body politic at home. That view had to be adopted in earnest, and good note taken of the way in which the United States had solved their problems and organised democracy over a huge area, virtually an Empire. Seeley maintained that Turgot's simile, "Colonies are like fruits which cling to the tree only
ill they ripen," involved a false deduction from the events of history. for conditions had greatly changed from the days when religion, notoriously a disruptive force, had been the main stimulus of colonisation; mere materialism was the inspiration of contemporary emigration and he saw that men were no longer taking with them gods different from those worshipped at home. And further, different means were now available for the solution of the problem in that a better form of colonial government had been evolved, mainly owing to the efforts of the Reformers of the 'thirties; distance as an obstacle to political combinations was rapidly being annihilated; war, trade and emigration were becoming great uniting forces; and in the absence of the old countering acting influences the ties of nationality, language and religion were increasing in strength. Referring to one of the great points emphasised by the Manchester School, the prosperity of the United States and Great Britain since their separation, Sealey pointed out that they had had a second war and might have a third and that "it is wholly an illusion to suppose that their prosperity has been caused or promoted by their separation." (Colden's followers would of course retort that it is sufficient from their point of view that no evil result is directly traceable to the separation.) From a political point of view he believed that the increased cost and responsibility and danger of war involved by an extensive colonial empire to be worth while as compared with the evil consequences which would presumably follow complete separation, which would leave Britain a small state beside the great bulk of Russia and the United States - small even beside France and Germany. But the case of India was entirely different, and here he was willing to meet
"See, for example, J. A. Hobson's "Imperialism", published in 1905 but apparently first written about 1895."
anti-imperialist opinion. The question, “What is the good of our Empire?” applied to the colonies he regarded as pernicious, like doubting the use of Middlesex to England, unless it could be shown that the colonies were too remote either to give or receive any advantage from their connection with us, for they were genuinely a part of England; but India had saddled us with responsibilities out of all proportion to the benefits received. The great Indian trade - some sixty millions annually - which had been the result of the mixture of philanthropy and greed that had sent us to India had brought with it perpetual maintenance of Russia, and the upholding of the status quo everywhere; the East had become a “vital interest” for Britain. Even by diligent searching, all that could be found to set against this political threat, apart from traders’ profits, was the value of administrative training provided by India and of the enforced broadening of the minds of men in Britain through contact with an ancient and noble civilization; idealist opinion could hardly be greatly uplifted by the indifference with which Seeley speaks when he says “that the influence of western civilization on India may be for good.

From a different standpoint radical criticism of the Empire, especially in the last years of the century, arrived at an estimate of the value of imperial dependencies - apart from colonies - even less flattering to British “business” instincts, for masses of statistics were employed to show that imperial possessions never had been of economic value except to a very few members of the upper classes. They were a very real “White Man’s Burden” in a new sense, and ruthless examination of the psychology of jingoism and even some imperialism led to the broad conclusion that injustice toward and deception of native
"Hobson, "Imperialism", p. 189."
peoples were the normal instruments of class dominance. "Riddled out
with the real or sham glories of military heroism and the magnificent
claims of Empire-making, imperialism was a nucleus of a sort of
patriotism which can be moved to any folly or to any crime." This
does contain at least a half-truth, but violent language should not
be allowed to obscure the higher motives that actually were behind
much imperialist effort, whether or not to the general advancement
of mankind. Döénz was of similar opinions with such men as Seeley
and E.P. Lucas and he reminded his readers that honest
imperialists had to make the concessions, first, that it is difficult
to prove that the individual happiness of the ordinary citizen of
London is increased by Britain having dependencies; and second,
that the spirit which was drawing together the Empire against the
Boers was not the product of mere utilitarian reasoning but had
developed because of a sense of the greatness, a memory of the
achievements and a faith in the future of the British Empire.

The essence of the conflict of opinion throughout the century on the
value of the Empire lies implicit in these words of Döénz. A representive
imperialist, he found imperialism a form of passionate feeling, a
sort of political religion based on public spirit touched with emotion,
and he believed that enthusiasm for the maintenance of the Empire
was a form of patriotism with a high absolute value of its own, a
sentiment both excited and justified by the lessons of history. And he
thus implies that the Benthamite utilitarian and Coleridgite view of the
Empire is based on a narrow and exclusive view of human nature as
attempts to deny the influence of emotion; narrow also in taking
insufficient account of the uses of history, for Döénz had found
his own historical habit of mind a condition of his appreciation of
the Empire. He realised the essential point that the 'Manchester' view
of the colonies and Empire was based on standards different from
those considered by imperialists generally; what he did not fully
realise was that in some respects imperialist ideals fell far short of
Cobdenite. In particular it must now seem to many people that
the conception of peace assumed by those imperialists who aim
merely at colouring red as much of the map as possible has been
tried and found wanting. For although it can be maintained
that the British Empire is the greatest secular agency for peace the
world has known, since it creates a vast 'peace-area' and 'peace-
interest' at small cost and since its strength is a safeguard
against aggression, yet the Briton resting in control of a fifth
of the earth's surface ought not to lose sight of the fact that, human
behaviour being in such matters primitive, other peoples may
decide to risk war in order to obtain the supposed advantages of
Empire. It would undoubtedly be the greatest task ever under-
taken by statesmanship to attempt to organise peace on "pacifist"
or free trade principles, but it begins to appear that nothing short of
some scheme for sharing the resources of the earth will bring lasting
settlement. Peace has become an interest much more vital to the
world than it was even in the last century and in spite of the
prominence of the repugnant principle of self-interest the necessary
considerations of equity and peace seem to be more important in the
'Manchester' view than they are to imperialists; and they seem to
outwhelm the various considerations of sectional security and the
dubious economic and moral grounds on which imperialists
generally desire to maintain and sometimes to increase the Empire. It need not be concluded from this that the continued existence of the "British Commonwealth of Nations" is incompatible with peace — our highest interest now; but the almost unlimited centralised control over great sources of raw materials involved in the general modern conception of Empire cannot be regarded as a factor making for peace; and Britain has only too many dependencies which at least appear to give her such control. The fact that a considerable number of men would probably be found to agree with this judgment may be taken as an indication that there is still conflict of opinion on the value of the Empire between the two main schools that disputed during the 19th century; the conflict is still without settlement, for the working of our 20th century League of Nations must be regarded as holding possibilities for the supporters of both views.

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