

THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

South Africa.

III.—By A. L. Gordon Mackay.

In the first article of this series the principle was enunciated that the key to the solution of the proper government of the British Commonwealth was to be found in finance. In the second article an application of the principle was made to the state of affairs in Canada, where we saw that the financial "pull" was north and south instead of being east and west, as was the case before the war. We now turn our attention to South Africa. The main characteristics of the South African system of national economy are as follows (the figures are official, and are for 1923, the latest available):—

- Primary production, 5,321,000,000 lb.
- Live stock, 12,000,000 head.
- Manufactures, £74,488,292.
- Mining, £54,630,492.
- Imports, £57,000,000.
- Exports, £81,000,000.
- Shipping (clearings), 25,000,000 tonnage.
- Population, 6,928,580, of whom 5,409,092 are aboriginal natives and coloured peoples.

The system of national economy revolves round a financial hub, the component parts of which are fine big banks working in liaison with a central bank. This financial hub generates the financial energy which sets the whole of the industrial machinery in motion. In one important respect the system is unique in that its activities revolve round the personalities of a small group of men whose power of control is centred in certain key organizations. The position can, perhaps, best be set out in the following table, which outlines the directorate of the five most important companies in the whole system:—

- Beit, H., De Beers, Rand, chartered company.
 - Jameson, L. S., De Beers, chartered company.
 - Maguire, R., Goldfields, chartered company.
 - Mitchell, Sir L. L., De Beers, chartered company.
 - Neumann, S., Premier, Rand.
 - Werner, De Beers, Rand.
- To these can be added other names, viz., Mr. E. Eckstein, Lord Harris, and Sir G. Farrar. Practically all of these are De Beers and Beit representatives, and they are mainly cosmopolitan financiers with their basis of operations in Kimberley, Johannesburg, and London.

This organization used to function under the magnetism of the personality of Cecil Rhodes, but, now that his influence has been withdrawn, the operations have become more technical and involved and less open and statesmanlike.

The activities of this South African group have produced certain reactions in South Africa, resulting in the creation of problems which cause the South African citizen's heart to throb with excitements which do not enliven us in Australia. These problems may conveniently be set out under the following heads:—

1. The problem of the South African flag.
2. The question of the colour bar.
3. The triangular relations between British, Dutch, and coloured people.

These questions are fundamental, since they all raise problems of interest to the whole of the British Commonwealth because they cannot possibly concern South Africa alone. Let us look at each more closely, beginning with the third. The Dutch do not exactly live in harmony with the British, whom they call "rednecks," and whom they blame for all their troubles from 1890 to to-day—in particular the Boer war. The economic interests at variance here are largely those of agriculture versus finance and commerce. The Dutch are mainly farmers, who direct their animosity against the big financial group which they claim controls the political forces led by Gen. Smuts. The Dutch are ably led by Gen. Hertzog, and their particular grievance against the British is that the latter propose to educate the coloured man and eventually admit him to full citizenship. This alarms the Dutch, who, claiming to know the coloured man very well, say that he should be kept off the pavements and sidewalks and confined to the street, so to speak.

The Labour Difficulty.

The second problem is a labour problem. The white workman thinks that the black labour should only be admitted to the mines and elsewhere under certain restrictions; the owners of the mines and other properties claim that the blackman is necessary to keep down their costs of production. The white worker retorts that if this is admitted, then the white standard of living will be reduced. The white workers' point of view is represented by the Labour Party, ably led by Col. Creswell. Gen. Hertzog and Col. Creswell have very little in common, except their dislike and distrust of the financial group; and, at present, they are united against it, and they control the political Government.

The Flag.

Both the above problems are rolled into one in the "flag" problem. South Africa's flag is the Union Jack; she has no other as we have in Australia. The uniform worn by the South African soldier is the Imperial uniform and not a local one, as is ours in Australia. Hence, to the Dutch man, the Union Jack is the symbol of external domination supported by the financial group; to the Britisher in South Africa the flag represents all that is best in life—justice, freedom, and the glories of political government, of which Britain is the chief exponent. To the white workers the flag means one of two things—(a) It represents the ideal of justice to the worker which the English factory legislation and trade union laws reflect; (b) it represents the recent Rand strike, where the troops in Imperial uniform under the Union Jack were turned out against him in the interests, so he says, of the big financial group. All these conflicting views are crystallized in the various attitudes to the present Bill to determine a suitable flag for South Africa.

Bearing in mind all these factors, we cannot fail to recognize that the whole of the problems of South Africa pivot about the financial group, which in its troubles has always taken refuge under the Union Jack as the symbol of the unity of the British Commonwealth. The influence of this group is felt in London in the deliberations of the Bank of England and the control that august institution exercises in the domain of Imperial finance.

A Complicated Situation.

When Gen. Hertzog goes home to the Imperial Conference, though his hands will be the hands of the whole of the African Union, his voice may be the voice of the Dutch party who are hostile to the financial group, led by de Beers and others. As much gold production is handled by this group its opinion cannot be ignored by the Bank of England's experts, since they have placed us back on a gold standard (so called), and in consequence depend for security upon a steady flow of British-owned gold. In the offing hovers the American Eagle with 50 per cent. (approx.) of the world's gold attached to its talons, and with the financial leading strings of Canada (vide article II. of this series) in its beak. When we realize that the South African group and the Wall street group are both cosmopolitan in their outlook and not British, South African, Canadian, or American, we are entitled in self-protection to raise the eyebrow of curiosity about the nature of the motives which will actuate these groups when their indirect representatives advise the statesmen, who will be assembled at the Imperial Conference. Though we may agree that these financiers are entitled to reap interest, rent, and profit, as a reward for the risks which they incur, and the responsibilities which they bear, they should not be allowed to interfere with the personal happiness of British peoples at home and in the dominions; much less should they be allowed to roll the apple of financial discord into the Imperial Conference.

Fortunately we are able to trust our financial experts who chop the wood and carry the water for the old lady of Threadneedle street. They are adept at raising the eyebrow of curiosity against camouflaged financial proposals, and, since they are men "of infinite resource and sagacity," we may, safely, leave matters in their hands. But those of us who believe in the efficacy of prayer would do well to assist them in their onerous duties by occasional orisons; and those of us, who are practically minded, can both pray and study the situation as it is revealed in the bibliography set out below. For the situation is one which truly calls for a trust in the Deity tempered by the practice of keeping the moisture out of our intellectual and spiritual provender.

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ADV. 28.6-26

Professor Osborn, who will be one of the Australian delegates to the Pac-Pacific Science Congress, which will be held at Tokyo this year, expects to leave Sydney by steamer for Japan on September 20.

The Council of the University of Adelaide on June 25 received a report from the finance committee, intimating that Sir George Brookman, acting on medical advice, had been reluctantly compelled to resign the Chairmanship of the committee. The report was received with great regret. The Chancellor (Sir George Murray) moved, and Sir Langdon Bonython seconded, a resolution, "That the council records its sincere appreciation of the services rendered by Sir George Brookman during the long period he has occupied the Chairmanship of the finance committee." Sir George was first elected a member of the council of the university in 1901, and was appointed Chairman of the finance committee (of which he will still remain a member) in 1913. Mr. W. J. Young has been elected Chairman of the committee.

REG. 28.626

In view of his contemplated retirement from the Chair of Classics at the end of 1927, the Council of the University of Adelaide on June 25 granted Professor H. Darnley Naylor leave of absence from January 1 next. The council expressed its high appreciation of the many important services rendered by him to the cause of education during his long occupancy of the chair. It was emphasized that, in addition to having discharged his professorial duties with great distinction, he had made several important contributions to the literature of his subject. The professor had also associated himself closely with the leading educational movements in the State, and, latterly, especially with the Workers' Educational Association, of which he is now acting honorary director. Professor Naylor was appointed Hughes Professor of Comparative Philology and Literature in 1907.

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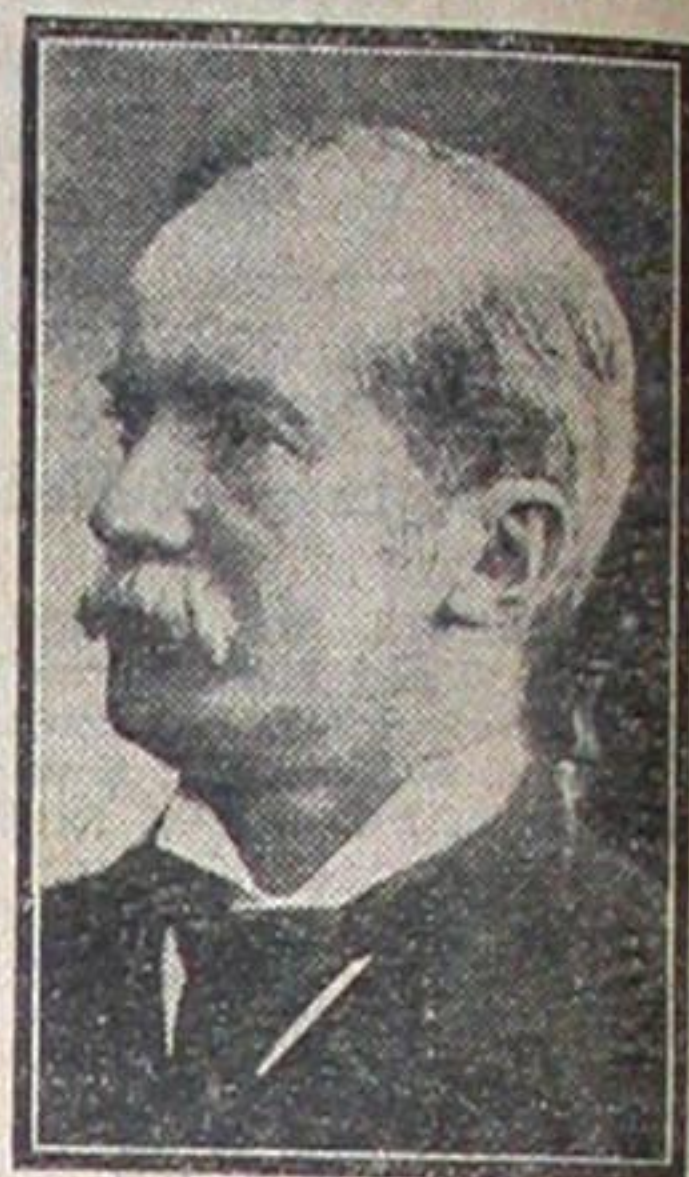
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PROFESSOR DAVID ILL

Book on Geology Delayed

(SPECIAL TO "THE MAIL")

LONDON, Today. Professor Sir Edgeworth David, formerly of the Sydney University, told the special representative of "The Sydney Sun" that his illness, which was due to overwork, had delayed the publication of his book on Australian geology, which had developed into three volumes. Professor David expects to complete the book by December next, if he has recovered his health, but his doctor has advised him to work more slowly, and therefore he has abandoned his intention to attend the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in October.

MAIL 26.6.26

First South Australian Scholar

Forty-seven years ago the University of Adelaide selected the first holder of what was known for many years as the South Australian Scholarship. The choice fell upon Thomas Hudson Beare, a young man of 20, who proceeded to University College, London, where he distinguished himself by winning the Gilchrist Engineering Scholarship and the B.Sc. degree in pure science. For 12 years from 1889 Beare was Professor of Engineering at University College, London, and since 1901 he has held the important position of Regius Professor of Engineering in the University of Edinburgh. Prof. Hudson Beare, who was recently knighted, was born at Edwardstown, near Adelaide, on June 30, 1859, and his father was the late T. Hudson Beare, who came out from England in the first ship that brought settlers to South Australia. That vessel was the Duke of York, which dropped anchor in the vicinity of Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, in July, 1836. The pioneer Beare lost his first wife during his short stay at Kingscote. He was the father of the professor by his second marriage, and died at Myponga on November 7, 1861, aged 63, when the professor was in his third year. Fifty-three years after his death the celebrated son visited his native land as one of the British Science Association delegates. He went down to Myponga, a township in the south, where his father was buried, expecting to see his grave, but there was no tombstone, and he failed to discover the old pioneer's last resting place.