

VIII.

From the Very Reverend Mgr. O. E. Mathieu, C.M.G., Rector of Laval University, Quebec :—

[Translated.]

Allow me to offer you my most sincere congratulations on the right ideas you express in regard to the prudence required in dealing with an enlightenment of public opinion, especially when we consider the state of ignorance which exists throughout our vast Empire concerning each of its different parts. To dispel this ignorance is an excellent work. It is a good work also to aim at making the inhabitants of such a colony as ours better acquainted with one another, as I am convinced that if the people of Canada had a more correct knowledge of each other they would more thoroughly appreciate one another, to the great advantage of this country, which we love, and which can only be made great and prosperous by peace and union.

IX.

From the Reverend William Patrick, D.D., Principal of Manitoba College, Winnipeg :—

The question you raise occupied my mind before I became a citizen of Canada, and has been repeatedly under my consideration since. I have also had the advantage of discussing it with some of the foremost men in Scotland. I am a profound believer in the unity of the Empire and I desire to further that unity in all possible ways, but I am convinced that the people of the Empire are not ripe even for the formation of an Imperial Council, and that anything in the shape of a Constitution interfering with the free action of the different nationalities would do harm rather than good. The Constitution of the Empire must be a growth arising out of the needs and interests of the times. It will come naturally, so to speak, when the peoples are educated for it. If it is to come soon, if the unity which all desire is to be more than a name and an aspiration, the dissemination of sound and full information touching the views, habits, products, and needs of the different peoples will be of essential service. Hence I look with the greatest favour on the suggestion of an Imperial Intelligence Department, believing that such a Department wisely officered and administered would do much to unite the different portions of the Empire by furnishing them with the truths and facts which would form the basis for common conclusions and common action. To the forces thus generated I attach a higher value than to anything which may be advised in the shape of an experimental Constitution.

X.

From W. Peterson, Esq., LL.D., C.M.G., Principal of McGill University, Montreal :—

The proposed Intelligence Bureau ought, so far as I understand the matter, to cover much more than an improved cable service. What surprised me was that Sir Frederick Pollock should have proposed to make the Secretary of the proposed Bureau Secretary also of the Colonial Conference. It seemed to me, indeed, speaking personally, that Sir Frederick Pollock came out to this country with quite a small programme and left Canada with the said programme reduced to even smaller proportions than those which it originally bore. On the other hand, I appreciate, of course, the wisdom of those who wish to enter a caveat against any hasty or ill-considered action.

XI.

From the Reverend John Scrimger, D.D., Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal :—

The idea strikes me as a good one, being entirely practicable at the present time without introducing doubtful constitutional changes, fitted to strengthen greatly the bonds of union already existing, and likely to prepare the way for some form of Imperial co-operation, if not of federation. The matter of the unity of the Empire is one that ought to lie near the heart of every Canadian, and has long interested me. But apparently all that can be done in the meantime is to tighten the sentimental bonds as much as possible, and this plan ought to have that effect. I see no hope in any of the federation schemes so far proposed. We shall move safely only by moving slowly.

XII.

From the Reverend J. P. Sheraton, D.D., Principal of Wycliffe College, Toronto :—

I must say, at the outset, that I am in entire sympathy with every well-considered effort to promote the unification of the Empire. Imperial unity, however, must be a growth. Whatever form it takes, it must be the expression of the inner life and conviction of the country. You cannot secure it merely by legislation. There must be a community of sentiment and conviction, and this can only be promoted by a more intimate knowledge and by getting the different parts of the Empire into closer touch with one another.

Unity cannot be grounded on militarism, nor on commercialism. It seems to me that either of these, by itself, not only would be insufficient, but that a unity dominated by them would not prove enduring. We do not want to create a great military power, nor a great commercial monopoly.

Whatever form the political development assumes, nothing can be done without mutual knowledge, and whatever helps to promote that mutual knowledge and to bring the various provinces and dependencies of the Empire into closer touch with one another is not only most desirable, but is essential to any advance in the right direction. The establishment of an Imperial Intelligence Department and Bureau would be a splendid step in the right direction. What we want to do is to dissipate ignorance and to bring all these races and dependencies into touch with one another. At present, what do we know of Australia, or what does Australia know of us? What have we in common? These are difficulties to be overcome.

I think that the suggestions assented to by Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Drage, and set forth so lucidly in your own letters, are the most practical that have been advanced.