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COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT : THE PROGRESS TO PARTNERSHIP

THE selection of speeches by General Smuts which has recently appeared under the title "Plans for a Better World"* makes its appearance at an opportune moment when, as recent debates in the House of Lords and House of Commons on Colonial policy demonstrate, many of the problems which General Smuts discusses, including the idea of trusteeship which he did so much to promote in the mandate system, are coming under close and critical review. The volume includes his presidential address to the British Association at its centenary meeting in London; an address on science from the South African point of view; and another address delivered in 1927 outlining his theory of holism. In this glimpse of General Smuts's views on science the volume does something to redress a conspicuous gap in Mrs. Millin's "Life" of General Smuts, and the picture it gives of the wide interests and sympathies of the author, his versatile and imaginative mind is both fair and balanced.

Interesting as is this glimpse of the secret of General Smuts's real strength—and his speeches on the Statute of Westminster, the Commonwealth Conception, his St. Andrews' rectorial address on the challenge to freedom, the Rhodes Memorial Lecture on native policy in Africa read as vividly to-day as when they were delivered ten or even twenty-five years ago, or as those of last year on "Investing in Friendship" and "A Vision of the New World Order" with which the volume closes—it is of even greater interest as illustrating the evolution of outlook and policy which is taking place in South Africa and elsewhere. That evolution is exemplified strikingly in the thought of Smuts himself. Between the views on segregation expressed in his Rhodes Memorial Lecture at Oxford in 1929 and those of his speech at Cape Town in January of this year, in which he admitted the failure of segregation, and of his still more recent "The Basis of Trusteeship", there is no small advance.

The debates in the House of Lords on May 6 and in the House of Commons on June 24 well show the extent to which the War has already shaken conventions and opened men's minds. No one reading the full debates can doubt the reality of Parliamentary interest in Colonial affairs, however much yet remains to be done to quicken interest generally and to arouse public opinion to a sense of its full responsibility in these matters. Mr. Eden's plea for the future development of the Colonial Empire in his speech at Edinburgh on May 8 had already indicated the extent to which the problems of the Colonies are before the Government as it faces the tasks of the future, and the speech of Mr. Harold Macmillan, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, on June 24, made it perfectly clear that the policy of the Government towards the Colonies is in no way inconsistent with the high ideals of liberty and justice which have inspired the Atlantic Charter.

* Plans for a Better World. Speeches of Field-Marshal the Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts. Pp. 288+8 plates. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1942.) 8s. 6d. net.

The two debates in question followed somewhat different courses. That in the House of Lords put organization and administration in the forefront. In speaking on his motion on the staffing and administration of the Colonial Empire, Lord Trenchard endorsed views earlier expressed by Lord Moyne on the importance of efficient staff to enable the Colonial Office to deal effectively with social problems such as health, education and standard of living, and replan Colonial economies in production and marketing. Lord Trenchard made two proposals. First, he suggested the grouping of the Colonies into not more than a dozen areas, each having a governor-general and a central authority of its own responsible to the Colonial Office. These larger areas are necessary for purposes of defence, economic planning, medical research and the social services. The scheme outlined has points in common with one outlined in a recent *Planning* broadsheet; and in one of the suggested areas—the West Indies—there is already co-operation between Great Britain, the United States and the Netherlands, and in another—West Africa—between the British, French and Belgians.

This suggestion is in harmony with the general tendency towards larger units, and there are many fields in which the precedents of co-operation across national frontiers created during the present War may serve us well in the peace to follow. Lord Trenchard's suggestion is not indeed inconsistent with the continued existence of the smaller unit, which will still have its functions, especially among undeveloped peoples, but it might well provide the means of more effective international collaboration than has hitherto been possible under even the mandate system. In supporting this proposal later in the debate, Lord Hailey clearly indicated that in his view it offers possibilities of building up new and more responsible forms of self-government on the basis of existing local customs and institutions, especially where the units are too small in resources or with little political balance to attain responsible government or the position of a dominion themselves.

Another proposal made by Lord Trenchard was for the establishment of the Colonial Service, at home and abroad, as a single, interchangeable service, independent of the rest of the Civil Service, and that appointments to the Service should be based to a much greater extent on selection. While placing recruitment on the broadest possible basis, he urged that all types of recruit should be given first a year's training in a university which might in time come to be regarded as specially concentrated on Colonial interests. Lord Trenchard also advocated outside recruitment at the top of the Service, and warmly welcomed Sir George Gater's appointment to the Colonial Office. He also endorsed Lord Moyne's proposals for proportional pensions to facilitate retirement of Colonial officials.

Two other recommendations were advanced by Lord Trenchard as even more vital: first, the establishment of a Colonial Advisory Board, and, secondly, a Colonial Staff College to which the abler and more promising men in the Service would be drafted for a course at the age of about thirty-five. The aim

would be to bring them in constant contact with each other and with the outside world, to broaden their outlook, and to stimulate their enthusiasm so as to encourage a progressive and constructive spirit. Furthermore, Lord Trenchard looked to a representative Colonial Council to stimulate and focus public interest in the Colonies and bring informed opinion to bear upon them.

Generally speaking, Lord Trenchard's proposals were well supported in the debate which followed. Lord Moyne considers that recruiting should be very much on the lines suggested, and he and Earl De La Warr, and also Lord Hailey, stressed the importance of bringing the largest possible number of native-born Africans and other Colonials into our Government services. Lord De La Warr pointed out that in great portions of Africa education and health must be treated as one subject, but in place of a Colonial Staff College he suggested a system of travelling scholarships. He stressed, too, the importance of more enterprise and courage in administration, more attention to the right political development, to the things that are the foundation of life, the intelligence, health, food and economy of the native African population. The Colonial staff should be chosen, organized and trained with that essential purpose in mind.

In Lord Hailey's tribute to the present capacity of our Colonial Services, he, too, emphasized the need for men capable of dealing with economic problems, an aspect which has hitherto received insufficient attention in the Colonial Service, but he agreed with Lord De La Warr as to the high quality of some of the younger and more recent recruits. Lord Hailey doubted whether a fully interchangeable service is desirable, although he believes that interchangeability would do something to enhance the position of the Colonial administrative service and that the Colonial Office would gain substantially through the presence of a much larger number of men with actual experience of executive work and its requirements. In his view, the ideal would be to have a staff in the Colonial Office composed partly of men from the Colonial administrative service and partly of men who have had experience in other departments of Home Government, officered by the home Civil Service and departments, which deal with so many activities, social and economic, now forming an increasing part of the work of the Colonial Office. Lord Hailey insisted once more on the importance of the conception of the State as the chief agency for social welfare, which, forcing its way into Colonial politics, is giving us a new and more constructive and beneficial interpretation of trusteeship without diminishing its moral quality.

Viscount Elibank, in supporting the idea of a Colonial Staff College, advocated, not so much the refresher courses, as selection at an earlier age on the lines of the selection of Rhodes Scholars, while Lord Faringdon, referring to the friction between technical and administrative services which is liable to arise under the selection system of recruitment if the administrative service holds a superior position, believes that a college to which all aspiring Civil

servants should be sent would meet the difficulty, and he supports the idea of refresher courses.

Lord Trenchard's speech was welcomed by Lord Cranborne, who in replying for the Government stressed the dynamic character of the British Empire. While interchangeability could not be so complete in the Colonial Service as it is in the Diplomatic Service, the desirability of the fullest possible mobility is fully recognized in the Colonial Office, especially in the technical branches of the Service where mobility is easier. Lord Cranborne stated that he intends to see that there is the greatest possible measure of interchange between the Colonial Service and the Colonial Office, and that this is one of the reasons for the appointment of Sir William Battershill as Deputy Under-Secretary and of Sir Cosmo Parkinson as his personal representative to maintain contact with the governors in the Colonies.

In regard to recruitment, the procedure proposed by Lord Trenchard is already largely the normal. Lord Cranborne hopes that selection on merit will remain the Colonial Service system of entry, and he does not believe that any alteration is necessary in the system of selection. The Colonial Office is already studying methods of improving the training of both the technical and the administrative services, and the idea of a further course of one or two years training for those who have had several years experience in the Service is under consideration. Lord Cranborne also warmly welcomed the idea of giving the Government powers of compulsory retirement of officers before their time is up, so that dead wood could be cut out. He promised full consideration of the suggestion of a Colonial Staff College; but he is dubious about the proposal for a Colonial Advisory Council and believes that advice should be given in Parliament and not by an officially appointed body. As to recruitment by bringing in new blood at the top, while that is often done, much harm could come to the Service if too frequent use be made of such powers by the Secretary of State.

The whole debate in the House of Lords remained at a high level, and in his closing remarks Lord Cranborne emphasized the importance of the right spirit pervading and inspiring policy and machinery. Without a moral and ethical basis, no Colonial Service could achieve what it set out to do and our Empire would not deserve to survive. That note was noticeably lacking in the House of Commons during the debate on Colonial affairs on June 24, which was indeed of a different character.

Mr. Harold Macmillan's speech was mainly concerned with the short-term aspects of Colonial affairs, in the course of which, however, he paid special tribute to the work of the Economic Department of the Colonial Office, which has been extended. In looking to the future, he developed the same outlook as Lord Cranborne, stressing the necessity for understanding and friendship as a basis for partnership. Changes or preparations for changes in the Colonial Service should have two chief aims: first to provide increasing opportunities for the people of the Colonies to fill posts in the public service of their own countries; and second, to provide a mobile force of highly qualified

experts in administration, in science, in agriculture, in mining, etc., at the command of the Secretary of State to be posted wherever in the Colonial Empire they were most needed at a particular time. The unification of the Colonial Service which has been proceeding since 1930 is to be taken a stage further for this purpose in accordance with proposals initiated by Lord Moyne which are being worked out in consultation with the Colonial governors.

Mr. Macmillan then urged that our development policy should be considered as a whole and not in single compartments, and he went on to describe the various technical advisory committees which have already been appointed, of which the most recent is the Colonial Labour Advisory Committee. Special reference was made to Lord Hailey's services in the organization of research, which must cover economic ends as well as nutrition and education, etc. To promote the increased prosperity of the peoples in the Colonies scientific research must be applied to market needs. In the long run, the standard of living and the expenditure on social services in the Colonies depend on their economic prosperity, and the Colonial Development and Welfare Act is regarded as the instrument for long-term planning. Large-scale public investment on public needs will be required, and we should now prepare the plans and priorities for capital development so as to be ready to advance our demand for a fair share of reconstruction work for the Colonies.

It is clearly recognized by the Government that systems of government or administration alone are not enough; they must be supported by vigour, decision, imagination, ruthless and overriding zeal. That view was reflected in the subsequent debate, in which a proposal for a Colonial Development Board was strongly advocated by Capt. P. D. Macdonald and Squadron-Leader P. W. Donner. Pleading for a new conception of Empire, Capt. Macdonald suggested that the proposed Board should be a statutory body under the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in addition to a representative of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, it should include full-time members for economy and finance, health, education and housing, and all the supply departments, with power to co-opt from outside on special sub-committees. It would take over the Colonial Development Fund, and Capt. Macdonald stressed the opportunity for real statesmanship and for adequate financial resources. The five millions of the Colonial Welfare and Development Board should, he suggested, be used to pay the interest on the far greater loan of two or three hundred million pounds which is really required to tackle on an adequate scale the problems confronting us.

Squadron-Leader Donner suggested that the Colonial Development Board should have the four principal functions of the Imperial Development Board suggested by the Royal Commission of 1917. It should promote first new sources of supply, and secondly new measures for the prevention of waste; thirdly, it should investigate the possibility of finding substitutes, and fourthly, would stimulate scientific research. Recalling the weakness of the Colonies in

regard to research—a position on which the Royal Commission had commented—Squadron-Leader Donner said that our Colonial administration has been weakest in dealing with economics and development.

Mr. Macmillan promised to examine the suggestions carefully, and while dubious as to the desirability of establishing the particular organization suggested, recognized the importance of study and research as a basis for policy. Instruments for making and executing plans must be included, and some continuity of policy preserved in capital development in future. In regard to the suggestion for an assurance in realistic and convincing terms, pointing the way to freedom, equality, responsibility, and the reconstruction of Colonial economic and social life, Mr. Macmillan referred to the Joint Declaration and the Prime Minister's explanatory comment.

Though it could not be said that the debate touched the high level of that in the House of Lords, it is clear that many members of the House of Commons are alive to the grave issues and responsibilities involved. Mr. R. W. Sorensen made several valuable suggestions. We should see that the whole of the Colonial Development Fund is expended on development, if not in the particular year allocated, then in the following year. Friendship between the black peoples and ourselves should be fortified by a comprehensive scheme of educational development. Our medical services also require drastic development, and if enforced labour is required, we should see that the finest conditions that can be secured are granted to the people. Finally, we should consider drawing up a plan of constitutional and political development in West Africa as well as in the West Indies.

The emphasis which is rightly being placed on economic development as the basis for Colonial stability and prosperity, and on international co-operation in the attack on such problems as soil erosion and tropical diseases, if adequate technical staff is to be available, should not lead us to overlook the importance of some of the other basic conditions and principles inherent in the idea of trusteeship or partnership between the peoples of the world on which the Atlantic Charter is based. It is not solely a matter of more imagination and creative insight in fostering the growth of self-government through new institutions more adapted to Colonial conditions than the outward forms of British institutions. Equally with economic development must come educational development, not merely of the few who must be drawn into the active conduct of affairs, but also of the many, so as to eliminate the psychological errors, misunderstanding and apathy that have thwarted in the past well-meant but erroneously conceived administrative measures. In this we must, as Mr. I. L. Orr-Ewing pointed out in the House of Commons, redress our failure to popularize education among African women, and also the tendency to excessive concentration on book-learning in education. We must educate the African to be a good African and not a mediocre European, and to develop on his own traditional lines.

That the pre-war official or accepted conception of Colonial policy is now inadequate as a guide can scarcely be questioned. The two principles of fulfilment of the obligations of trusteeship and of assisting the dependent units of the Empire to attain self-government are not really definite enough. The first is negative rather than positive, corrective rather than constructive, and, as Lord Hailey has pointed out, its moral standards are liable to too many interpretations to be a satisfactory guide. The inadequacy of the second was fully exposed in the House of Lords debate, and if we are to bring new life and strength into the system the first step may well be, as Lord Hailey suggests, the restatement of our relations not as between trustees and wards, but as senior and junior partners, on terms which recognize that the latter must as of right acquire an increasing share in the control of our common undertaking. Moreover, as we apply to the Colonial empire the conception of the State, not merely as an agency for maintaining justice or preventing abuse, but also as the most active agency for promoting social welfare and improving the general standard of living, our obligations to the Colonial peoples become not those of trustees but those incumbent on the modern State in regard to the improvement of the social services and the standards of living in its own backward areas.

That shift of emphasis in itself should prove a powerful solvent of misunderstandings and friction. By the stimulus it gives to the self-respect of the Colonial peoples it should promote the more rapid development of representative local institutions, and the full participation of the people of the country in their own administrative services. Moreover, building firmly on the basis of existing institutions so as to assist the evolution of forms of self-government best suited to the traditions and circumstances of the people should also assist in that co-operative attack on the great problems of health, nutrition and the conservation as well as development of natural resources, which will be essential on an international scale as well as within the bounds of our own or any other Colonial Empire.

CYNIC SCIENCE

The Scientific Life

By Dr. John R. Baker. Pp. 154. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1942.) 7s. 6d. net.

DIOGENES had only one request to make of Alexander: "Keep out of my sunlight". Insolation, to the Cynic, was what the bath, the omnibus, and the tea-tray have been to eminent physicists and chemists; and in a world overshadowed by a planned technology, Dr. Baker takes up the cause of individual freedom for men of science.

That technology is something quite distinct from science, as we understand it, Dr. Baker has little difficulty in showing. That a planned technology, which is essential and inevitable in a time of national crisis, necessarily threatens the freedom of scientific discovery, is less easy to prove. He notes unfavourable