

I humbly think that such a consensus of opinion may be taken to indicate the policy which, without unnecessary delay, it would be wise to follow at this stage in the evolution of the sea-
united Empire. I have, &c.,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Elgin, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

APPENDIX.

Letters and Papers referred to in the Foregoing Communication.

Letter No. 1.

MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN CLUB,—

Ottawa, 21st October, 1905.

It was a great satisfaction to me, as I am sure it was to every one present at the gathering this afternoon, to hear Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Geoffrey Drage set forth their views on a subject of the very highest importance—the unification of the Empire.

When they concluded, I would have wished, had it been in order, to give expression to my own thoughts and their bearing on the great subject which these distinguished gentlemen have been good enough to bring before the club. As there was no opportunity afforded me of expressing my views, I trust there will be no impropriety in submitting a few words in this form.

I cannot but feel that, in common with our fellow-subjects in New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and elsewhere, we in Canada are under a debt of gratitude to those gentlemen in England, represented by Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Geoffrey Drage, who have given so much time and thought to the common interests, and have taken so much trouble concerning our future. We especially owe our warmest thanks to these public-spirited gentlemen themselves who have crossed the Atlantic as envoys to us, who have journeyed through the Dominion on their patriotic mission, who on their return to Ottawa have explained to the Canadian Club the views held by them, and who desire to ascertain how far these views will fit in with Canadian conditions.

It appears that the conclusions they have reached are the outcome of much consideration and active discussion on the part of from fifty to a hundred men of high position in the Mother-country, of persons holding almost every kind of opinion in English politics, and representing many interests.

Sir Frederick, as spokesman for all these gentlemen, read a paper on the subject at the Royal Colonial Institute, London, in April last. The views submitted to-day to the Canadian Club, Ottawa, are substantially the same, and they must be regarded here, as they were on the other side of the Atlantic, of the greatest weight and well worthy of the most serious consideration.

I think I speak correctly for the Canadian people when I say that they welcome enlightenment, the more so when it comes from so high authority; but I am not sure that they are ready, or that the people of all or of any of the other portions of the Empire are ready, to accept or reject any plan of organization, however excellent it may appear at sight. It is, I think, regarded of the first importance that they should act with deliberation, that they should be well informed, that they should be afforded the fullest opportunity of an interchange of thought, and thus obtain that knowledge of the wants and wishes of each other so necessary to wise decision and action.

When in England last summer I was much impressed by reading the discussion on the paper of Sir Frederick Pollock at the Royal Colonial Institute. Among other things stated, one of the speakers reminded those present that so sound a statesman as the late Lord Salisbury considered it dangerous to attempt to force the various parts of the Empire into a mutual arrangement for which they are not ready. He said, "If we will be patient and careful, there is a tremendous destiny before us; if we are hasty, there may be the reverse of such a destiny; there may be the breaking-apart of those forces which are necessary to construct the majestic fabric of a future Empire."

These and other considerations lead me to think that those associated with Sir Frederick Pollock have scarcely attached sufficient importance to the sequence of their proposals. Without going into particulars, the two main proposals made are, first, an Imperial Council, and, second, an Intelligence Department for the purpose of acquiring knowledge for use of the Council, and possibly for other purposes.

The first, as explained by Sir Frederick, is not seemingly too ambitious a proposal, and, as some better arrangement than now obtains is recognised to be desirable, it may prove to be the best. I am at present offering not the slightest objection to it. I do not suggest that it be renounced, but I am inclined to think that, if it be the best, there would be the best chance of it receiving general assent eventually if preference be given to the second proposal in the first instance. What the Empire really requires without unnecessary delay is a properly organized Intelligence Department—that is to say, some effective means by which the British people in all climes would mutually exchange information on every subject of common interest.

In addressing the Canadian Club, Sir Frederick animadverted on the criticisms of Mr. Richard Jebb in the London Press on some of the features of the scheme advocated. I have read the articles referred to; and, while the two gentlemen do not see eye to eye respecting the proposal to establish an Imperial Council, it is clear to my mind that they have a common goal in view in the distance. The difference between them in details merely illustrates the difficulties which are so frequently raised against any scheme, however excellent it may appear to those who have studiously prepared it. In one particular the two gentlemen are more nearly agreed, and that is with respect to the necessity for some means of collecting intelligence for mutual enlightenment.

For myself, I am a member of a number of associations, each aiming to promote the consolidation of the Empire. I have listened to or read everything which has been said or written thereon