

APPENDIX III.

STATEMENTS REGARDING THE COLONIES, PROTECTORATES, AND MANDATED TERRITORIES.

21ST OCTOBER, 1926.

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Mr. Amery: At our first meeting I gave some account, as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, of the reasons which, from the point of view of our relations with the Dominions, made it desirable to create that new office. But I think I indicated that, from the point of view also of its administration of the colonial Empire and the immense growth of its work, there were advantages in freeing the Colonial Office, properly so called, from the work of correspondence with the Dominions—work of an entirely different character. The work of the Colonial Office has grown immensely in recent years. It is not only that the actual area which it administers has been greatly increased and its problems multiplied by the addition of such mandated territories as Togoland, the Cameroons, and Tanganyika Territory, and, more difficult still, Palestine and Iraq—it is not only that, but the fact is that the whole work of colonial administration in the tropics has risen on to a new plane, immensely more interesting and immensely more complex, and inevitably calls for a much greater degree of supervision, and, in many directions, of initiative, on the part of the central Department which guides all those territories. The colonial Empire has, in fact, during the last generation, evolved as a separate constituent element in the Empire, different on the one side from the Dominions, in which I include for that purpose Great Britain as well—I mean those self-governing parts of the Empire inhabited by people of white race and based on democratic institutions—different also in very many respects from that wonderful complex of races, religions, creeds, and old civilizations which make up the Empire of India. In that sense, and in the sense that the responsibility for their various Governments in the last resort does lie with the Parliament here at Westminster and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, though they enjoy autonomous institutions in varying degree and ever-increasing measure, they possess a certain unity; they also derive unity from the fact that they are mainly inhabited by populations of a non-white character and are mainly situated in the tropics.

Diversity of Colonial Empire.

Mr. Mackenzie King said very truly the other day that each Dominion has its own character. It is only for very limited purposes that you can classify the Dominions as a type. That is equally true of the colonial Empire. The various parts of it differ enormously in their history, their racial composition, and their state of evolution. You have at the one end of the scale a little white self-governing community, like the Island of Malta, with a very small area, yet with a national feeling of its own; at the other end are the vast backwood regions of Africa, inhabited by primitive peoples whom we are only beginning to lift up from the most elementary barbarism, and among whom such a thing as national sentiment is, of course, an entirely inconceivable idea. Now, that Empire is of considerable intrinsic importance; it covers over 2,000,000 square miles, an area greater than India, an area more comparable with that of Canada and Australia. It is inhabited by a population of over fifty millions, and in that sense is a more populous element in the Empire than either the Dominions or Great Britain. The population of India only, within the Empire, exceeds it. In that calculation I have not included the immense area or the population of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Sir Francis Bell: Is that under the Colonial Office?

Mr. Amery: No, that is under the Foreign Office.

Its Interest to other Parts of Empire.

That Empire and its administration are, I think, of interest to this Conference for more than one reason. In the first place, we are not the only Government nowadays to have colonial responsibilities, and, except Canada, the Irish Free State, and Newfoundland, every one of the Dominions to-day has to deal with problems of Native administration, and colonial or quasi-colonial administration. It may be, therefore, that what we are doing, both in development and in our methods of administration, may be of interest to other Dominions, and certainly what they are doing will be of interest to us. Then, again, there is the interest due to their geographical propinquity which various Dominions have in territories which we administer. South Africa, with its own Native population, cannot but be intimately interested not only in those High Commission territories which lie within the confines or along the borders of the Union itself, but in all that happens in the administration of Africa to the north of it. As communications improve, as contact between the Native races increases, whatever affects the welfare of the Natives and the improvement of the Natives in one part of Africa has a very wide repercussion. Again, Australia and New Zealand, with their various island dependencies in the Pacific, are naturally interested in what we do in the adjoining dependencies which are directly under the Colonial Office. Canada has taken in recent years an ever-increasing interest in the development of the West Indies and in her intercourse with the West Indies.