

This article deals with an issue of momentous importance to the British people throughout the world. How is British power and leadership to be maintained in the post-war world and in face of the great developments of the U.S.A. and the emergence of a new giant in Soviet Russia? The author sees the answer in a better distribution of population and industries between Great Britain and the countries of the British Commonwealth and in a new enthusiasm for the utmost individual productivity.

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A RICHER AND STRONGER BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

By Air Chief Marshal SIR GUY GARROD, G.B.E., K.C.B., M.C., D.F.C., LL.D.

THE British Commonwealth excites the admiration of the world as the perfect example of free political development within a closely-knit family of nations. It forms a major bulwark against the advance of Communist tyranny, because its widespread geographical distribution enables it to provide rallying-points and centres of resistance in every quarter of the globe. Nor is it only in political wisdom and maturity that the British race excels. It has proved itself to be outstanding in scientific inventiveness, though it has often allowed others to apply British discoveries in the industrial field.

OVER 

Another notable quality which we can claim is a level-headedness, which gives us a steadying influence in international affairs. And the whole Commonwealth in the last half century has given a shining example of courage and determination in defending liberty and the rule of law in human relationships.

It is thus no idle boast to say that, together with the United States, the future of civilisation depends largely upon the vigorous leadership of the British Commonwealth in world affairs. This leadership is unfortunately being weakened by our grave difficulties in restoring our battered economy after two World Wars, in which we have borne the brunt and have been unstinting in our expenditure of blood and treasure. We find ourselves unable to produce within our own family all the food and goods that we require and we are forced to depend for some of our essential supplies upon the U.S.A. and the dollar area, whose economic strength in both World Wars suffered far less drain than our own.

A REMEDY

We in Great Britain never cease to be grateful for the magnificent generosity shown by the United States in our hour of need. The flow to us of Marshall aid has now ceased but we have not solved the problem and the dollar gap is yawning widely again. *If there were nothing we could do about it, we should have to accept the consequences, among which would be the surrender of our position of joint leadership in the world. But this is far from being necessary. There is a remedy that lies in our hands if only we will seize it with imagination and urgency.*

Within the British Commonwealth, there is a family of six nations settled by European stock (mainly British) or controlled by European settlers. These are Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia (or the proposed British Central Africa Federation). These six British countries contain a total *habitable* area of over 5 million square miles with a European-settled population of nearly 74 million. This population if evenly spread would provide an average density of 15 per square mile. *I have used this average figure solely to illustrate the extreme*

unbalance of the present distribution, which is nearly 550 per square mile in Great Britain and only 4 in Australia. The figure for Canada is 9, for South Africa (Europeans) 3 and (Coloured) 11, and for New Zealand, 19.

The agricultural and mineral resources and industrial potential of these six countries equal those of the United States of America or of Soviet Russia. If there are any deficiencies they can be made good from the British Colonial Empire. The wealth is there that can make the British family of nations self-sufficient and the richest in the world. But the younger nations are not able to develop their wealth owing mainly to lack of man-power.

There have been periods in the last half century, when these young nations have been reluctant to admit a large flow of immigrants, lest the newcomers might depress the standard of living of those already there. This stage is now past and it is realised that the development of national resources is the surest way to increase the wealth of the whole community.

This has led Australia to set her population target at 20 million, and she plans to reach this figure within fifty years by an annual intake of 170,000 to 200,000 immigrants, together with the natural increase of her own population. This is the most progressive scheme yet published, but even so, it does not fully meet the urgency of the need. Australia's resources in coal and iron, lead and zinc, copper and silver, antimony and tin, are wanted now together with a great increase of food production to help towards rebuilding the economy of the whole Commonwealth and of the sterling area. There is no time to waste.

AN EXAMPLE IN THE EMPIRE AIR TRAINING SCHEME

If the present extreme lack of balance of population within the British Commonwealth is to be corrected, with the speed which the world situation demands, we need the same wide sweep of imagination that inspired the Empire Air Training Scheme with which I had the privilege of being closely connected as Air Member for training on the Air Council in London from 1940 to 1943. Here was a combined operation which made the best use of each country's geo-

graphical advantages as well as its manpower and materials. Here was a true decentralisation of responsibility and effort, a great easing of the air congestion within the British Isles, with all the participants contributing freely and enthusiastically towards the common good. The results surpassed all expectations and played a decisive part in ultimate victory.

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We need a similar co-operative endeavour today, in order to speed forward the mass migration from Great Britain to the Dominions (yes, and from Continental Europe also) which is the only way of developing their latent resources in time to restore the British Commonwealth, before it is too late, to its old strength and power in the world.

There need be no fear that this large-scale movement will weaken the defensive power of the Commonwealth in the event of war. Indeed, it would give it added strategical strength. Let me quote from the pamphlet, "Operation British Commonwealth," recently issued by the Migration Council in London:—

"Should there be a war with the Communist powers, their aim would clearly be to defeat Britain, the Western democracies' chief base: and this either by bombing or by the method that has most nearly succeeded twice before—the method of starvation by blockade.

"And if Britain fell, not one of the Commonwealth countries overseas would possess the manpower or the industrial capacity for self-defence. As things now stand, to knock out Britain would be perilously to weaken the British Commonwealth.

"How greatly the picture would change in favour of the British peoples everywhere if, before the war began, large numbers of them and a substantial armament industry had, in full security and in a well planned manner, migrated from the British Isles to Australia, Canada, Africa, and New Zealand.

"This view has the authority of the Chiefs of Staff. On the 26th April, 1946, they advised the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference that dispersal of population and plant from the United Kingdom should be put in hand, on the grounds that Britain is the most vulnerable of all Great Powers, and that it was essential that some considerable portion of Commonwealth industries then in the United Kingdom should be nearer the sources of raw materials.

"Once such a migration had gathered momentum, the Commonwealth countries overseas would obviously be stronger to defend themselves. They would have more men to do the fighting, and an industry capable of supplying them with the necessary weapons."

What organisation is required to give effect to the policy which I have been advocating?

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE NEEDED

The vast influx into the United States of 33 million immigrants during the 50 years following the Civil War was unplanned and undirected and in consequence there was much hardship and suffering. Government planning can easily have a deadening influence. But some guidance and direction are clearly needed for a movement of population on the scale which I have visualised, since some of the problems will have to be solved on a Government level.

For example, Great Britain has incurred during the last fifty years a great increase of its national debt, mainly for the purpose of financing two world wars. The money for paying the interest and expenses of management of this debt is obtained by taxes, and amounted in the year 1948-49 to over 500 million pounds sterling. The wars that imposed this heavy burden on the British taxpayer were fought in defence of the whole Commonwealth and Empire. It would not be fair for those who migrate from the British Isles to off-load their share of this burden on to the shoulders of the reduced population that they would leave behind. *It is reasonable that the country which receives a good investment in the valuable new citizen should also accept the tax burden which he was carrying in his country of origin.* This solution has already been accepted by Australia. Mr. Dudley Barker in his book "People for the Commonwealth" has stated that the Minister for Immigration early in 1948 made a public offer. "If Britain would send Australia large numbers of migrants," he said, "Australia would take over their share of the British national debt."

A kindred problem is that of National Insurance. It is only reasonable that the new country should ensure that its new citizen does not lose any of the accumulated benefits which he may have won by his contributions to the National Insurance scheme of his old country.

There should be no difficulty about these financial adjustments, but they make it necessary that there should be an organization on the Government level that will supervise this resettlement within the Commonwealth.

An agency will be needed at the despatching end to ensure that each batch of migrants contains the right types for

the stage of development of the plan that has been reached at their destination. Another agency will be needed at the receiving end to supervise the smooth absorption of the new arrivals and deal with their problems of settling in. Indeed in the case of Australia, two councils to deal with aspects of this problem have been set up for this purpose. Care will have to be taken that the withdrawal from Great Britain avoids dislocating industry or restricting production. It should be possible to fill the gaps by drawing extensively upon the reservoir of men and women of excellent quality and of all classes that is to be found in Western Europe. Apart from the surplus populations of Italy, Holland and other countries there are some millions of Germans driven from countries now incorporated behind the Iron Curtain, as well as the smaller number of non-German political exiles. These people are a burden to the communities on which they have been dumped, and many of them are of the same type as made such good settlers in the United States. Their resettlement will therefore benefit both Europe and the country that adopts them.

In drawing upon the surplus population of Europe, care will doubtless have to be taken that these settlers are absorbed into the stream and are prepared to adopt without qualifications the nationality and language of their new country. This has been successfully achieved by the United States, although the number of immigrants admitted during the 50 years following the Civil War was greater than the whole population of the country at the beginning of that period.

The valuable contribution that Italy can make with its surplus population of from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 millions needs special mention. Many excellent Italian artisans are being brought to Uganda to assist in the development of its rich resources, and Northern Rhodesia is ready to accept Italians for the same purpose. Both countries will encourage them to settle, when they have completed the engineering or building contracts which brought them there. Italians are accustomed to a better climate than the peoples of North Western Europe. It is gratifying to learn that Italians should make first rate settlers in some of the more Northern districts of Australia, on which, so long as they remain sparsely populated, the teeming millions of Asia will always cast covetous eyes.

A NEW ATTITUDE TO PRODUCTIVITY

To obtain the fullest benefits from this resettlement a new attitude is required towards increased productivity in industry. The Anglo-American Council for Productivity has sponsored a number of teams that have studied specific industries both in the United Kingdom and in the United States. Forty-eight reports of these teams have now been published. A recent article in the Sunday Times of London summarises their conclusions. It is most interesting to note that all these reports agree that the secret of the far higher rate of productivity in America lies not so much in machinery or "prodigious production lines" as in a fundamentally different approach to the whole problem. The article continues:—"There are three outstanding factors in this new approach, none of them mechanical:—

1. A highly developed and widely disseminated standard of management.
2. Active co-operation of the workers in a drive for higher production.
3. A high standard of training for supervisors and foremen as the link between management and operatives."

These three factors produce a harmonious team of employers, foremen, and artisans, with the latter every bit as enthusiastic for high productivity as their managers and boards of directors. The American factory worker sees quite clearly that his own standard of living as well as that of all his fellow citizens depends on his own output and in this he is fully supported by his foreman and his trade union. *It is remarkable how unanimous all the reports are in forming these conclusions.* This is a most hopeful feature since the teams were all composed of representatives of management and labour and technicians. There is thus a good prospect of these teams developing a new spirit throughout British industry. *They have estimated that, given the same standards of management, factory planning, supervision and enthusiasm as they found in America, British productivity could be increased by 15 per cent., using existing industrial plant.*

A RICH AND STRONG COMMONWEALTH

Here then are the means for solving the economic problems of the British Commonwealth if we have the vision and courage to act. *A better distribution of population and industrial power between Great Britain and her sister nations, combined with a new enthusiasm for the utmost possible individual productivity in factory and farm, will enable the Commonwealth to become once again rich and strong in this highly competitive world and to continue to exercise the leadership which is its heritage.*

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In order to set the whole scheme in motion there should be a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference with the subject of Migration as its first and main item of discussion. This Conference would establish, and frame the charter for, a "Migration and Development Organisation" which would be entrusted with the task of planning the details and translating them into action.

There is no more urgent task facing the British Commonwealth today. Our whole future depends upon the energy with which we tackle it. *"That Our House stand together and the pillars do not fall."*

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