

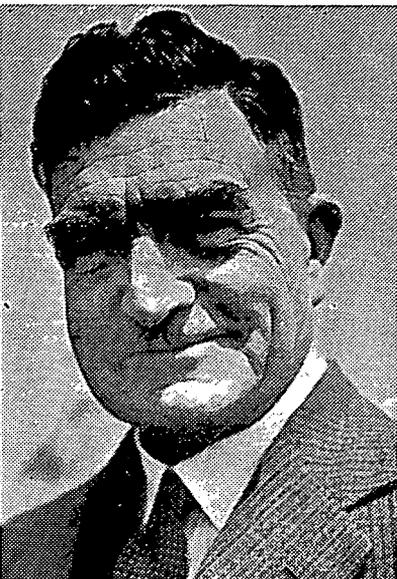
# A RICHER AND STRONGER BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

—Comments on Sir Guy Garrod's article by  
leading Australians

THE November-December "Review" contained an article by a leading Englishman, Air Chief Marshal Sir Guy Garrod, urging the need of a large-scale scheme of mass migration of people and industries from Great Britain to the Dominions. The objects of the scheme are to relieve the pressure of population on Britain's own limited resources—which is at the root of her economic difficulties; to develop fully the great resources latent in the Dominions; and thus to restore the British Commonwealth of Nations to its old position of power and influence in the world. In order to set the scheme in motion, Sir Guy proposed a Conference of the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth and then the establishment of a special Migration and Development Organisation.

In recent months the economic vulnerability of Britain has given rise to a great deal of public discussion in the daily press and elsewhere on the problem of mass migration. In Britain, the movement for mass migration is led by the Migration Council, an organisation sponsored by many prominent British people. The Chairman of the Council is Sir Frank Whittle, the inventor of the jet aircraft engine during the war.

For this number of "Review," we have invited three leading Australians to comment upon Sir Guy Garrod's proposals—Sir Herbert Gepp, who was head of the Development and Migration Commission set up by the Australian Government after the first World War; Mr. E. F. Atkins, President of the Associated Chambers of Manufactures of Australia; and Mr. S. J. Gandon, General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales.



Sir Herbert Gepp.

"The prospect of Britain paying for its necessary imported food is very grim—indeed it looks impossible on the basis of 55 million people."



Mr. E. F. Atkins.

"One aspect of any organised mass migration scheme must not be overlooked, and that is the transfer of complete industrial units, complete with personnel, plant and machinery."



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## Sir Herbert Gepp

YOU have asked me to comment briefly on the article on "A Richer and Stronger British Commonwealth" which appeared in your November/December, 1951 issue—written by Air Chief Marshal Sir Guy Garrod.

In a brief comment, space does not permit a review in detail. Suffice it to say that whilst I agree with the purpose and intention of the article I cannot accept a number of the data given in support.

Sir Guy Garrod makes three major points:—

1. The serious economic position of Great Britain caused mainly (but not wholly) by its tremendous efforts in the Kaiser and Hitler Wars.
2. The need for greater productivity in industry—primary, secondary and tertiary.

3. The urgency of a better distribution of population and industrial power within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

There are certain facts to be considered:

- (a) Nations usually breed up to their food supply;
- (b) When the population is so great as to exceed the food supply (for one or more reasons), various things can happen. For example—the birth rate decreases, or the death rate increases, or emigration increases greatly, or the nation starts an aggressive war and, if successful, expands its frontiers at the expense of the nation or nations attacked, or the nation increases its productive effort in food production and in exports. Mostly several of the possible things happen more or less simultaneously.

The very rapid increase in the population of Great Britain occurred in the 19th century, when that country took the lead in manufacturing based upon its coal, iron and steel and its textile industries, and consequently became the world centre in international finance, in insurance and in shipping. The Pax Britannica was due to the dominance of the British Navy.

The inevitable result was that Britain imported over a half of its food in spite of the fact that agriculture, in all its phases, has always been the largest industry in Britain. As the manufacturing dominance of Britain was lost due to other nations developing their own industries, cracks began to show in Britain's economy even before 1914.

This economy was based upon Britain's ability to pay for its imported food and its imported raw materials by the income from its exports, manufactures and coal, plus income from overseas investments, insurance and shipping.

The Kaiser and Hitler Wars destroyed this delicate balance. There is no longer any net income from exported coal; therefore there is no longer any imports with low sea-freights in ships returning to Britain for coal cargoes.

There is no longer the million of pounds sterling (or their equivalents) being placed annually to Britain's credit from overseas investments—these were mostly sold to help to finance the two wars. And so, in spite of the valiant efforts of the Britishers in producing more, using less, and exporting more,

the prospect of Britain paying for its necessary imported food is very grim—indeed, it looks impossible on the basis of 55 million people.

It has been said that the population of Britain must come down from 55 million to 30 million. Whether this be so, there is little or no doubt that the present population is much too great.

*The question under discussion is: "To what extent will the proposals of the Migration Council assist?" I fear that the answer must be—"They will assist but not to a major extent—other large and drastic lines of operation will also be necessary."*

The Chairman of the Migration Council, Sir Frank Whittle, said recently in London that none of the British political parties is prepared to get behind and support any mass migration scheme. Certainly let us have the Prime Ministers' Conference on this vital problem. But the preparation therefore is a major job requiring many months of hard work and I am not hopeful of unanimity or of quick constructive results. The problems are enormous and the extent to which the overseas Dominions can do more than at present will take many months to define, and even then only large-scale tests will tell us the best lines to follow.

The position is undoubtedly most serious. We are faced with the fact that the nation which saved the world from the imminent dangers of Hitler's Germany and so made the democracies safe from dictatorship is now itself in danger of economic collapse, of a still lower and lower standard of living and in fact of semi-starvation and economic degradation. The first job is to get the democratic world to rally round and help—not in one spurt—but in a long, long hard pull. This involves sacrifices by all of us. I do *not* oppose the proposals. I support them strongly. Some years ago, in a public address, I recommended moving part of the textile industry from Britain to Australia with the same general purpose in mind.

I believe that the people of the U.S. will help strongly if the facts and proposals are put to them in the right way. The future of the world as we would like to see it may well depend on sufficient numbers of hard-thinking, hard-working people realizing the problem and helping to solve it.

## Mr. E. F. Atkins

I HAVE read Air Chief Marshal Sir Guy Garrod's plan for a richer and stronger British Commonwealth with great interest, and there are many points which are worthy of attention.

Every impartial student of history will agree that Great Britain, and through Great Britain, the British Empire as it grew in strength, has been a fine and inspiring leader in world affairs. Unlike the empires of old, who lost their leadership mainly through decadence, Great Britain owes her present decline in prestige to honourable and unselfish devotion to her principles and international obligations—many of the latter self-imposed but regarded as none-the-less binding. Whatever country has come under British rule has found that rule just and beneficent, and has developed to a status which has prompted it to seek autonomy—not always with the happiest results.

Far from becoming decadent, Great Britain has demonstrated through two world wars and the intervening and ensuing uneasy peace, powers of endurance and resilience which must be capitalised for the world's good. Moreover, no other country, however powerful and willing, today possesses the centuries of experience in world leadership which has accrued to Britain, and it is unthinkable that this experience should be lost or that it should not be exploited to the full, and a plan of development such as that outlined by Air Chief Marshal Sir Guy Garrod presents a practical operational basis from which to work.

Apart from her allegiance to, and partnership in, the British Commonwealth of Nations, from purely selfish reasons Australia should actively support such a plan. To hold this vast continent as a "White Australia," and to ensure that it remains a British outpost capable of defending its own independence and contributing its quota to the defence of the free democratic world, we *must* increase our population rapidly and our resources in proportionate degree so that one will not outstrip the other. We must also ensure that our "New Australians" are of the right stock—and, while we are glad to welcome reputable members of some European nations, the ideal Australian citizens are, of course, colonial-minded British

men and women. It is recognised that many of these are not in a position to make the move entirely independently, and to these and to ourselves an organised plan of migration would be highly beneficial.

*One aspect of any organised mass migration scheme must not be overlooked, and that is the transfer of complete industrial units, complete with personnel, plant and machinery.*

Experiments in this direction have already been most successfully carried out in Australia—and these are not being confined to British firms alone, but are expanding to well-established Continental businesses. In any developmental plan intended to safeguard the free democratic world, decentralisation of industries—not only of those regarded as essential from a defence point of view, but of all industries necessary to supply the wants, and even the luxuries, of life—is as important as the dissemination of people.

One of the most pregnant points of Chief Air Marshal Sir Guy Garrod's plan is contained in the last few paragraphs—and that is the possibility of imbibing, with the new population, a revitalised attitude towards work. It is unhappily an indisputable fact that many Australians—in both the Management and Labour fields—have become lax in their outlook regarding the production necessary to maintain the industrial and living standards we have attempted to establish in the past, and also concerning the personal effort required from each one of us to this end. If newcomers arrive in sufficient numbers and of the right calibre, there is every chance that their fresh enthusiasm may rekindle the fires in the "old inhabitants" so that we regain that "will to work" which was such an important factor in our early achievements and without which neither manpower nor infinite resources are worth anything.

Like Great Britain, we are grateful to America for her splendid allegiance to and championship of the principles of democracy. Such a people, allied by ties of kinship to a strong and united British Commonwealth, could in reality defend the rights of all free peoples of the world and with such an alliance we could look forward with confidence to an era of peace, security and progress.

## Mr. S. J. Gandon

THE ideas which have been so well presented by Sir Guy Garrod deserve close consideration by the people of the British Commonwealth.

It is, of course, a fact that the problem is occupying the thoughts of many people and in the case of Australia thoughts have been translated into action. Doubts remain as to whether the operation is being carried on in a manner calculated to secure the maximum effect in the shortest time.

To emphasise the urgency of the situation it is well to review very briefly the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our community of sister nations is somewhat in the position of an individual accustomed to exert power and influence on those around him, and who, for various reasons, finds himself apparently losing his capacity to put forth his strength and exercise that influence as in former times. An uncomfortable and disturbing experience. Notwithstanding that British power was attained by methods sometimes subject to criticism, that there have been mistakes and defects in administration and other weaknesses apparent when we review the record, it still remains a fact that the world owes a tremendous debt to the influence, ideals and ways of life of the British race. The trend has been towards the preservation of liberty and justice, opposition to tyranny and despotism, support of moderation and compromise as opposed to extremism; in other words, towards the development of a better and sounder civilisation. No greater proof can be found than in the fact that Britain has been, on so many occasions, the balancing influence in world affairs and the final barrier against domination by tyrants. We may well be grateful that the United States of America with her great power and resources has taken her stand for a way of life so similar to that which Britain has tried to uphold for so long. Nevertheless we must not allow that circumstance, or any other, to weaken our aspirations for the maintenance of the character and influence of the peoples of the British Commonwealth.

It is against this background that we in Australia, and British people everywhere, should view the ideas put forward by Sir Guy Garrod.

In changing world conditions it has become clear that no part of the Commonwealth, standing alone, can hope to assert adequate authority and influence in international affairs. The economic situation of Britain herself has become subject to a series of recurring crises, and there is no need to stress her vulnerability to modern methods of warfare. The other members of the Commonwealth are separated by great distances and in a comparatively undeveloped condition.

How, then, can Australians view the situation and the remedial measures proposed by Sir Guy?

In the first place, I think that we have to recognise not only the difficulties and dangers of the position, but also the many problems involved in the proposals now under consideration. *To recognise them is not to be daunted by them. Their solution will require resolution and tenacity, but if the character of the race is what it was the challenge will be met.*

Transference of industries from Britain is a complicated business, since attention has to be given not only to the circumstances of the industries themselves, but to the overall effect on the economics of Britain and the transferee countries. If we concentrate on the movement of skilled workers the capacity of Britain to rectify the weakness in her trade balance and general economic structure might be adversely affected, for though her population might decrease, thus easing the food difficulties, she could not look with equanimity on a fall in productivity per man due to loss of her best workers. Therein lies the necessity for maintaining a flow of Continental migrants of the right type even though the good British worker is most welcome in Australia. Sir Guy Garrod has included this aspect in his consideration of the matter.

*So far as this country is concerned comment would be incomplete if there were failure to emphasise a vital feature—the necessity to build up our primary industries, the production record of which has been so poor in recent years. It seems quite essential that a considerable proportion of rural workers should be included in the scheme.*

As to the population carrying capacity of Australia, it would seem that this should not be a matter of concern for very many years. However, it is interesting, and perhaps amusing, to recall that some years ago a number of well known people who had given close attention to the question were asked to give their views. Their estimates varied between 15,000,000 and 250,000,000! The truth is that the matter will be decided by standard of living and the aid which can be given by science in solving some of our major problems, such as those relating to water conservation, power, soil, and pastures.

We should not omit from our thoughts some questions bearing on our own standards and way of life. If we in Australia are to play our proper part in the great scheme envisaged by Sir Guy Garrod (and though they cannot be touched upon in detail there are good reasons for thinking that we should have priority in the development of the scheme) considerable readjustment of outlook must take place if we are to provide a suitable "atmosphere" and conditions for the reception and absorption of those coming to us. Old prejudices should be thrown aside and an end put to the stupid hostility between classes and factions. We must try and eliminate the distorted outlook towards work and achievement induced by false propaganda, and to a considerable extent by the influence of an "easy" climate and remoteness from the more densely populated parts of the world.

Briefly summarising the views of the writer:—

1. The dangers of the situation are obvious and the need for action is clear.
2. While we may well work for the eventual closer relationship of the English-speaking peoples, in the meantime the strengthening of the British Commonwealth is a matter of urgency.
3. *Consideration should be given to enlisting the aid of the United States of America. It seems certain that, in due time, the surplus energy and resources of that country will be seeking further outlets. No channel would be better*

*than that leading to the development of countries aligned with her in the struggle against Communism and other forms of tyranny.*

4. There is need for the formation here and in Britain of an organisation of first-class minds to consider all aspects and advise the respective Governments.
5. No doubt broad-scale planning will be necessary, but while some of the questions involved will be for Governments to handle; every possible help and encouragement should be given to private enterprise to engage in and to push the scheme to fulfilment.
6. Time limits should be fixed for consideration and action.

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