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BRITAIN AND INDIA

The discussion of the relations between the British Empire and India before the Buffalo branch of the Foreign Policy Association on Saturday, was interesting. There were at least two points, however, which were not stressed by either speaker to the extent that would appear to be desirable. One of these relates to the nature and origin of the spirit of Indian nationalism, which must, of course, be taken as the foundation of any conception of an independent India. Much was said about this nationalism, but the assumption appeared to be that it was something which had always existed and had been suppressed by British conquest. As a matter of fact, the geographical area now mapped as British India had no existence as a political unit prior to British rule. The word Indian had as little national meaning as the word European has now. The country was divided among about as many different nations as now divide Europe, and there was usually less disposition to act together than

there is among the European states. The fact that the conception of an Indian nationalism is an outgrowth of the unifying influence of Great Britain certainly is important. The question whether it has yet developed sufficient to maintain a government without the help of Great Britain invites some speculation. Associated with this division among the people who now inhabit British India is the further fact that from the time of the mythical Aryans to the Mogols, who came in the sixteenth century, large parts of India were subjected to a succession of invasions from the plains of Central Asia. We know the political power that controls Asia now. We have in dismembered, strifetorn China an object lesson in its imperial aggressiveness. How far is Indian nationalism adequate to maintain itself against similar aggression? To what extent is Indian agitation itself merely an inspiration from the bolshevist rulers of Central Asia?—Buffalo Express.

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FIRE LOSSES

The report of the Dominion Fire Commissioner, J. Grave Smith, who is also the Honorary Secretary-Treasurer of the Association of Canadian Fire Marshals, as given at its annual meeting in Ottawa recently, showed that Canada's fire loss for 1925 was \$40,712,172. This worked out to \$4.39 per capita of the population and these figures are, in the opinion of the Commissioner, apparently accepted as a matter of course. During the year there were in the Dominion 31,757 fires, the largest of which was in the lumber yards at Hawkesbury, Ontario, with a loss, as officially stated, that reached \$3,400,000. In making some comparisons as regards fires and a national attitude of mind, Mr. Smith pointed out that in Great Britain there is this year a fire loss of 83 cents per capita. "This," he said, "and the increase by \$700,000 over the previous year caused the widest concern in the Old Country, and yet in Canada the \$40,000,000 annual loss, or \$4.39 per

capita of the population, still appears to cause very little concern."

The cost of first protection to the Municipalities was, Mr. Smith stated, \$23,103,248, whilst the total cost to the public of Canada was \$102,458,816. The fact that during the year 374 deaths were caused by fire, and 1718 severe injuries were received from fire, makes it evident that the total cost of fires is even greater than stated, enormous as are the sums entailed. The care of the injured; the fact that if crippled seriously they are deprived of an earning capacity, and are also unable to contribute fully to the man power of the community means a financial loss; death brings a total loss, not balanced by the removal of a consumer, as it also means the loss of a producer. These are items of considerable moment in the reckoning up of the financial toll demanded by fire. The whole matter comes back apparently, protective State agencies being adequate, to that most overcrowded of all things—personal responsibility.

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Correspondence is earnestly solicited from every part of this and adjoining counties, and must be sent in not later than Tuesday.

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SPRING

Spring, as the humorists says, has come. Doubtless young men's fancies are now lightly turning to this and that, buds are budding and April's showers have brought may flowers. Yet we are obliged to confess that we find the vernal miracle this year less thrilling than usual. It has been a particularly unpleasant pre-spring season: March roared in and out with undiminished ferocity; April wept her girlish tears with a consistency that would have made any girl a bear argument in the marriage market; May, in her course to date, has succeeded in handing us two first-class colds, due entirely to her fickleness and to our folly in discarding an overcoat. In fact, most of us this year have seen Spring darkly through a haze of influenza microbes. It is just one sneeze after another. Spring is not sheer rapture to those who, like ourselves, have passed it in an office, eating aspirin, even if we are reading the Kings County Record.

But of course there are compensations: Some of our prominent men are receiving Doctor's honors, our children are coming home with their B.A.'s, the ladies' spring suitings are unusually genial, and before long, perhaps, the lilacs will be in blossom, and, as Shelley might have said:

O Wind,
If Springtime come, can Summer be far behind?

FLORIDA BOOM

The boom in Florida has ceased reverberating. The wild speculation, the quick turnovers, the hectic bidding for any old piece of land at any old price are now happily things of the past. Happily, that is, for all except the wretched lambs who came in late, who plunked down their entire savings as a "first payment" on undeveloped lands, hoping to sell at a great profit before the second payment fell due. Such unfortunate are now facing the imminent day when the possible second payment will be demanded. There is no market for their land and no more money forthcoming from the home-town savings bank. They are out of luck, out of pocket—tragically so in many cases. In every real sense they are gamblers, ignorant gamblers, playing a game they understand as little as we understand Wall Street, or horse racing, or three-card Monte, and it is axiomatic that the majority of gamblers are bound to lose in the long run. However much one sympathizes with individuals, one cannot deeply sympathize with the victims of such herd psychology as a class. In the meantime the banks of Florida are sound and conservative. Building goes on. Legitimate real estate undertakings continue to do business selling land to people who want to live on it rather than resell it and the Florida sun still shines. Let us hope, if for no other reason, that we know who are interested, that the ending of the boom is the beginning of a more healthy and sane period where real values and real appreciations will replace feverish speculation in uncertainties.

SAYS BAD WRITERS ARE GOOD THINKERS

Do good thinking and poor handwriting go together? All poor writers are prone to believe so, and will be encouraged by a positive assertion from Dr. William T. Root, of the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. Those of a low mentality, he said, are usually good penmen. "Intelligent people," he proceeded, "think twenty times faster than they can write, and therefore muscular movement is so far behind the activity of the brain that the result is a poor scrawl. A person low in mentality has nothing to think about but the shaping of the letters." But it does not follow that because one is a poor writer he is a good thinker. He may be just one of those no-accounts, with not even the intelligence to write a legible hand. Dr. Root's observations may be considered as an interesting note to the so-called science of graphology by which experts undertake to read character from handwriting. We presume that from a scientific point of view graphology is on a par with phrenology.

Raphael Schermer, of Vienna, who has a reputation for solving crime that Sherlock Holmes might envy, whether deserved we cannot say, is a firm believer in graphology. It is said of him that he has detected murderers by their writing that he has even been able to predict, from various specimens of handwriting submitted to him, which of the writers would likely commit a murder in the future. In one authenticated case, a Swiss woman was accused of poisoning her husband, and Schermer, induced her to write the sentence, "I have poisoned my husband" and then the negative of

the sentence. By studying their minute difference he came to the conclusion that not only had the woman poisoned her husband, but that she would confess it. This she did, and generously threw in the additional information that she had also poisoned her first husband. Studying the handwriting of a girl of seven he detected that she would cause many tragedies, culminating in murder. When she was fifteen she caused a man to commit suicide, and four years later another man who had fallen in love with her shot himself. When she was twenty-three she killed a man. It is possible, that knowing the ominous prediction, she was influenced in this distressing career?

The idea that bad handwriting is an indication of genius was responsible not so long ago for an examination of some of the manuscripts in the British Museum, which failed to support the notion. It was discovered that on the whole the men whose manuscripts were treasured, that is to say the best writers, wrote a decent hand. Some writers who did not need the typewriter to make their words intelligible were George Eliot, Maria Edgeworth, Gladstone, Scott, Pitt, Henry James, Hume and Tom Moore. Among noted living writers who write clearly are Wells, Shaw and Chesterton. Horace Greeley is one of the classic instances of bad penmanship, and we suggest that one of the reasons was that he had so much to write that he hurried and became illegible. It seems to us probable enough that had he been writing editorials today when stenographers and typewriters are rife he would probably write as decent a fist as most people. There is a story that once he wrote a note to the foreman of the New York Tribune telling him to discharge a printer whose work was unsatisfactory. The discharged printer got hold of the note and applying for another job exhibited it as a testimonial from Greeley. Since it was indecipherable except for the signature it was trustfully accepted as a valuable certificate of efficiency.

Napoleon wrote a dreadful hand. Once in the midst of a bitter campaign he sat down and wrote an intimate and affectionate note to the Empress Josephine. It was then placed in the hands of a hard-riding courier, who rode desperately to deliver it to the next messenger, and thus by sweating relays it was taken to Paris. The Empress tore it open eagerly and strained her eyes and racked her brain to make out the important contents. She was unable to understand a word her husband had written. She thereupon summoned advisers familiar with his hand and also familiar with the situation at the front. At first they supposed it to be a love letter, but veered to the opinion that it concerned urgent military matters. Finally they adopted the view that it was a map of war, and they could not do anything about it except praise the map.

Rufus Choate, the great American lawyer, wrote a wretched scrawl. Once in having his home repaired he told the builder that he intended to have carved mantelpiece erected, and would forward him a drawing of it. But he

was unable to get the drawing and wrote the builder to that effect. The builder understood the letter to be the drawing and made a mantel on that model, which is said to have been a very striking one.

The graphologists, according to the Philadelphia Public Ledger, go into infinite detail in their study of handwriting. Every letter of the alphabet is examined for size, shading, position relative to the horizontal line; inclination relative to the vertical line; sharpness of the curves and angles; proportion and relative position of the different parts, and elaboration and extension of the extremities. In scarcely one of these particulars can a man make two letters so much alike that they cannot be distinguished by microscopic examination. The simplest punctuation mark under the microscope has its own individuality. It would be difficult, they say, to find two writers whose semicolons and quotation marks cannot be distinguished at a glance. The dotting of "i" and the crossing of "t" afford an infinite number of relations between points and lines, and in both of these the time element and the freedom of muscular movement play important parts. Even the health and self control of the penman, as well as the physical circumstances, show their influence on these little strokes. It has been asserted that a hereditary influence enters also into chirography.

BEWARE OF LEVEL CROSSING

The open season for motoring is now arriving and the timely warning issued by the Canadian National Railways may not be amiss. On the C. N. R. system there were 65 grade crossing accidents in 1925 and 40 people lost their lives, and all but 10 of the accidents happened to automobiles or motor trucks.

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At the Philadelphia International Exhibition one of the attractions is to be a trip across a miniature Canada, complete in all details—as to towns, cities, and natural features, on a miniature C.P.R. Imperial Limited. "Getting on the train at the model Palais station, Quebec." Quite so—but does not Canada stretch eastward as well as westward from Quebec? Halifax or Saint John would seem to us Maritimers the more appropriate starting point for a trip "across Canada."

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