

In answer to comment by THE JOURNAL upon a Toronto Laurierite resolution calling for the "absolute equality" of Canada "with every self-governing country in the world," Mr. R. P. SPARKS, of Ottawa, asks "why we abuse those who wish it." We do not abuse those who wish it. We wish it ourselves, subject to the same sort of co-operation between British self-governing peoples as will be necessary among all the chief peoples of the world if a successful world-wide League of Nations is to be formed. We argue that the existing British league of nations is a very fine thing, an excellent example for a world-league of nations, and that decent people in British countries should not be trying to kick it in the rear for petty partisan gain, as the Toronto Laurierites did last week. It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.

We remarked that the Toronto resolution was a dishonest one; we said that "Canada is already upon a basis of absolute equality with all other self-governing nations except as regards what a majority of the Canadian people have chosen to permit to continue to be the nature of their relations with other self-governing states." Is this true, or is it not? Mr. SPARKS says it is not true. At least, he implies it is not. In order to deny it, he quotes an English evening newspaper which complains that the London authorities are preventing Canada getting special representation at Washington (which we have actually had during the past two years). No sense could exist in Mr. SPARKS offering this proof of something if Mr. SPARKS did not claim the truth of the something. Mr. SPARKS, therefore, we may fairly say, does assert that Canada is not governed fully by her own people. Now, do you believe that? Or do you suppose that Mr. SPARKS himself believes it? We don't.

We proceeded to state that inasmuch as the Canadian people are fully self-governing, any phrases which imply that a campaign for "Imperial centralized control" is proceeding somewhere to our danger must mean that somebody outside Canada is aiming to hold us down. And, as this somebody could only be Britain, and as the whole recent course of British policy has shown that no such spirit exists in Britain, the Laurierite resolution looked to us to be an example of dishonest phrases implying slurs on the Mother Country and her statesmen. And Mr. SPARKS bells the cat for us. The Toronto resolution did not mention British statesmen. THE JOURNAL could venture only to use the word "imply" when we guessed that the resolution meant British leaders. But Mr. SPARKS completes the story. He specifies the British. He names Mr. LIONEL CURTIS, and Lord CURZON and Lord MILNER. His citation may or may not be a sufficient proof that the forty million people of England, Scotland and Wales want to keep Canada in chains, but it is assuredly a proof of what that Toronto Laurierite resolution had behind it—a pandering, as we phrased it, to the independentists, racialists, alien immigrants, Sinn Feiners and all the rest in Canada who disapprove in their souls of the British Empire, and whose votes the Laurierite party would like to collar.

"Imperial centralized control" is another of those elegant phrases which like democratization of industry, conscription of wealth, domination of the proletariat and the rest offer sometimes a refuge to mental chaos and sometimes a cloak for cunning misrepresentation. The latter was the Toronto case. To have passed a resolution asserting "the Unionists in Canada want to put Canada under Britain's thumb" would have been a losing game. Everybody would have known that the assertion was untrue and some people would have resented it. The language would have been aboveboard, and it would not have dragged Britain into our party squabbles; but it would have been bad tactics. And so instead came the lofty slogan denouncing "Imperial centralized control," megaphoned abroad regardless of what the roar might hit—the British league of nations or anything else.

Every British writer and political leader of today—and this includes Mr. CURTIS and Lord CURZON and Lord MILNER—has proclaimed time and time again, clearly, forcibly, warmly, that Great Britain recognizes absolutely the complete freedom of self-government of Canada. It is ten years since Mr. BALFOUR, then leader of the Tory party in England, addressing the Imperial Press Conference of 1909 in London, declared emphatically that "Englishmen had ceased to have any thought but that the self-governing overseas Dominions were equal partners with Britain in the Empire"; and Lord MILNER echoed the words a few minutes later. Such is the only thought of British leaders, whether Tories, Radicals or Laborites. If any of them have the aim—and it is a noble enough one—of a political alliance between the Mother Country and the overseas Dominions more close than at present exists, the aim is based upon their absolute acceptance of the equality and practical independence of the Dominions. But in any case, Canada has her fate in her own hands. She can do as she pleases. The will of the majority here will govern, and so we ought to be able to leave British names out of our party squabbles for party power.