

Mr Miller is right to connect this change with a decline in British belief in the Commonwealth, though this has other causes also. This is not the place to discuss Britain's 'turning away from Commonwealth markets and supplies towards its traditional areas of interest in Europe' except that we may ask whether 'traditional' is quite the right word when the greatest achievement of the last four hundred years of British history is that some three hundred million people outside the British Isles speak English. After discussing many of these changes — the break-up of the sterling area, the development of the E.E.C. and Britain's relations to it, Commonwealth immigration, changes in Commonwealth machinery (notably the creation of the Commonwealth Secretariat) and other 'networks of custom and convenience' Mr Miller closes this massive and thought provoking book with a brief review in which he notes one distinguishing characteristic of the Commonwealth which perhaps deserves more emphasis than he gives it, that it is an association of peoples as well as of governments. That, as a recent visit to Europe reminded the reviewer, the E.E.C. at present is certainly not.

Maybe this work of 550 closely-printed pages and over a quarter of a million words will not be read from cover to cover by many. The price certainly seems excessive in view of the present relation of the New Zealand dollar and the pound sterling. But it will be an indispensable work of reference and those who dip into it for that reason will, we hope, read on, for it will reward their effort.

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*The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union.* By John Kendle. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 1975. xvi, 332 pp. Canadian price: \$17.50.

IN recent years there have been a number of articles, some by Professor Kendle, on various aspects of the Round Table movement, but its influence entitled it to the comprehensive and detailed study which he has given to it in the book before us. The subject is one for which private papers are more important than official sources, even Cabinet papers, and Dr Kendle has been able to draw on a variety of collections in many parts of the Commonwealth. As is well known, the movement originated with the group of able, dedicated young Oxford men whom Milner took out to assist him in the reconstruction of South Africa and who were collectively nicknamed 'the kindergarten'. They had an important part, though not perhaps so crucial as has sometimes been supposed, in bringing about the union of South Africa after Milner's departure; and this in its turn was the jumping-off point for the movement aimed at imperial union, which is the main subject of Dr Kendle's work.

The movement was one of propaganda, though on a higher intellectual level than one usually associates with that term. Much hard study was put into the work and the problems that were studied were real problems — imperial defence against the rising military power of Germany and the means of bringing the resources and manpower of the 'self-governing Dominions' to the aid of the United Kingdom and, at the same time, giving them a voice in the military strategy

and foreign policy which would determine the use of the men and the resources. But the weakness of the Round Table lay in the fact that they and in particular Lionel Curtis, their leading spirit, honestly could see no other conclusion to these studies than an organic federal union of the Empire, centred in London. They either ignored or closed their minds to inconvenient facts like the rising national feeling in the Dominions. Curtis was a man of great moral (rather than intellectual) force, based on deep religious convictions, intensely serious and most persuasive. The last time I saw him, at a Commonwealth Relations Conference in London early in 1945, he looked, with his shock of white hair, like an Old Testament prophet born out of time and dealing with objectors rather in the manner in which (one imagines) the major prophets dealt with errant kings of Israel.

The movement, as Dr Kendle shows, was securely established in Great Britain by early in 1910. Finance came from the Rhodes Trustees, Lord Salisbury, Lord Selborne, the South African mining magnate Abe Bailey and others. Curtis and Philip Kerr had already visited Canada and from then on until the outbreak of the first World War much time was spent by Curtis and some others in organizing 'Round Table groups' in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and, less successfully, South Africa. The aim was quality, not numbers, academics, bankers, business men, journalists, a few politicians. They did not know that such elites counted for much less in new countries than in old. The Round Table 'moots' in England met frequently, the ultimate end being the production of an authoritative study of the Imperial problem and its solution. There were regular meetings also in Toronto, Melbourne and Wellington. The premature leakage of an early draft to Sir Joseph Ward, who made it the basis of a speech to the Imperial Conference in 1911, did the movement harm. 'Ward made a shocking mess of his Imperial Council proposals,' wrote a senior Australian civil servant to Deakin. 'His resolutions were faulty in design and badly constructed, but his speech didn't even attempt to support them.' In any case the proposals were impracticable. The outbreak of war in 1914 put an end to the projected 'Round Table Studies' in three volumes. Many of the members of the London Group were involved in war duties of one kind or another. Curtis, who had at first considered enlisting in the army although over forty, decided to continue his activities for the Round Table and eventually, on his sole responsibility, published a very able 'popular' statement of the case for Imperial union, *The Problem of the Commonwealth*. He also continued his travels and visited New Zealand, Australia and, more significantly, India.

It was apparently W. S. Marris (a New Zealander) who converted Curtis to the idea that 'self-government was the only intelligible goal of British policy in India.' Not that this was a new idea: Macaulay had the same thought when speaking on the bill renewing the East India Company's charter in 1833. But this had been forgotten and certainly had not occurred to the Round Table groups. Here Curtis's role really was crucial. His idea of 'dyarchy', with some power in the province remaining with the Government and others passing to responsible ministers, was the key to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and the first injection of responsibility into the government of India. But in the main the trend of events in the Empire was away from the Round Table ideas. The Imperial War Conference and War Cabinet of 1917, under the influence of Borden and Smuts, launched the idea of a British Commonwealth of Nations, but this left closer co-operation rather than organic union as the only practicable line of advance.

This was in fact a clear indication that the Dominions did not want organic union. In 1920 the London group, under the influence especially of Edward Grigg, tried to re-define the role of the movement and to plan for the future. But it had really ceased to be an active political organization and became rather a group running, with others in the Commonwealth, a well-written and well-informed quarterly review. Curtis's interest had turned rather to the idea of a world commonwealth and this is not so surprising when one considers that religion played a central part in his outlook on life. There were new heart-searchings in the movement after a critical letter from the Australian F. W. Eggleton in 1932. But Dr Kendle is right to call these 'the twilight years'. The review still exists, but the movement has had its day.

Though the book is a good and scholarly one, it must be said that Dr Kendle never seems quite at home when he is dealing with New Zealand affairs. In his footnotes on pp. 82-84, he gives the wrong date of birth for Sir James Hight, omits his most important academic post, that of Professor of History and Political Economy 1909-1920 and of History and Political Science 1920-1948, and also his knighthood (K.B.E.). He also makes Patrick Marshall Professor of Geography instead of Geology (though the text is correct). No reader would gather that Mount Peel is only a sheep station and that there is no 'Mount Peel district'; if on the road to anywhere, it is to Erewhon. There are other odd slips: Lord Rosebery is referred to as 'secretary for European affairs' rather than 'foreign secretary' and the dates are wrong. But taking it as whole, the work is an important contribution to Commonwealth history and is unlikely to be superseded.

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