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THERE CAN BE NO ISOLATION

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When the nineteenth century was coming to its end, Prince Bismarck, who had lived through more than eighty of its years, was asked what he considered to have been its chief characteristic. He answered, "The fact that the North American nations speak the English language."

That was the answer of a statesman who was also a philosopher. Bismarck foresaw that as the Victorian era came to its end, a new series of social, economic and political problems were to confront the world, and that the center of gravity of the Western World was to cross the Atlantic. He foresaw that the English language would be the controlling and shaping influence of the progressive human spirit in attempting the solution of these new and far-reaching problems.

We do not stop to think, as we should, of the significance of language. A language is something much more than a mode of speech. It is a vehicle of experience and of achievement, of likes and of dislikes, of prejudices and of affections, of ideas and of ideals. One has only to look back at the Latin language of the ancient Romans, which controlled southern and western Europe for eight hundred years, to see how completely a language carries with it the point of view, the experience, the ideals, of those whose language it is. When the time came for the centralized power of that language to

break down and it was succeeded by languages Latin in base—the Italian, the French, the Spanish and the Portuguese—another chapter of the history of Europe began to be written in terms of the likenesses and the differences of those languages.

Meanwhile, in the northwest of Europe, the English language had been forming, chiefly from a Teuton root. Cut off from the rest of the world by the waters which surrounded the British Isles, it began speedily to take on its own individuality, to write its own literature, to develop its own reflective thought and to make its own contributions to history.

From the day of Magna Carta—the title of which is Latin, but the spirit and content of which are English—to the present day, that English language has become increasingly the organ of the advancing liberal, constructive outlook and spirit which have been marked by great historic events, one after the other, in the English-speaking nations.

Nothing is more extraordinary than the way in which the English language has, on this side of the Atlantic, conquered one stream of immigration after another, taken the place of its native language, and in very large part dispossessed the ideas and points of view with which those streams of immigrants came to this country. It substituted for them the outlook, the experience and the point of view which are those of the English language and of those who habitually use it.

It so happens that the English-speaking peoples have been, practically from the beginning, peoples of world-wide interest and world-wide influence. The Portuguese and the Spanish set out to explore and to

settle distant parts of the world. Their achievements and their results, important though they were for the time being, fall far short of those of Great Britain and the English-speaking peoples. The English language is now heard in every quarter of the globe. The characteristics which it reflects and represents are well-known and clearly understood, and as a result their conquering power grows almost day by day.

There is a curious superstition, repeated from time to time—with frequency just now—in the public press and on the floor of the Congress of the United States, that the traditional policy of the Americans is one of isolation from world affairs. That statement is flatly contradicted by one great series of events after another from the time this country was first settled. No people except the English themselves have ever been so completely and so constantly interested in world affairs, whether economic, social or political, and so eager to take some part in shaping them, as has the American people. We began long, long ago when William Penn founded the colony which was to become the State of Pennsylvania. He then brought forward the first plan for international organization to establish world peace. How many remember that Benjamin Franklin, ten years before the Declaration of Independence, was summoned to appear before the House of Commons and was cross-examined at length as to why it was that the American Colonies would not accept the Stamp Act, a form of taxation imposed upon them by the British Parliament? He presented in that testimony, recorded word for word in the minutes of Parliament, the argument for national independence and international co-

operation. Remember, too, the Olive Branch Petition, after Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill! That Petition, signed by the very men who nine months afterward signed the Declaration of Independence, was sent to the King proposing the precise relation between the American Colonies and the Crown which Canada and Australia occupy today. And that was in 1775. Remember that Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, sat in Paris when the Constituent Assembly was formulating its Declaration of the Rights of Man. They invited Jefferson to sit with them formally. He replied that he was not a Frenchman, but an American, and that it would not be becoming for him to take formal part in drafting such a document. However, he met with them time after time and hour after hour, and as a result the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights of the Federal Constitution are, in spirit, written into the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. Not long afterward, John Adams, in London and in Paris, interpreted the new American form of government to the English and the French with surprising clearness and emphasis. John Marshall, afterward Chief Justice of the United States, did the same thing during his brief service in France. Then there is the oft-quoted and much misinterpreted statement made by Thomas Jefferson in his first inaugural address: "Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none." It was Thomas Jefferson, also, who insisted upon the duty of the American government to protect the freedom of the seas from the Barbary pirates.

How many of us remember three of the greatest

speeches ever made in the House of Representatives of the American Congress which illustrate the interest of our great leaders of opinion and thought in international happenings and international relations? Daniel Webster, Representative in Congress from the State of New Hampshire, delivered a most vigorous and violent attack upon the War of 1812, which he denounced as absolutely unnecessary and as against the interest of the American people. He was in a minority at the time, but when the Treaty of Ghent was signed three years later, it contained no mention, direct or indirect, of the alleged causes of that war.

Shortly thereafter came the epoch-marking speech of Henry Clay, Representative in Congress from the State of Kentucky—the speech which called the Latin-American republics into existence and led to their recognition by the nations of Europe. So powerful, so convincing and so influential was that speech that ten or fifteen years afterward Richard Rush wrote to Clay saying that he and he alone was responsible for the creation of the Latin-American republics.

Abraham Lincoln, Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois, voted against the war with Mexico and delivered a most convincing speech attacking the Government for having entered upon that war unconstitutionally and without reason.

Remember, too, that it was Commodore Perry of the United States Navy who, to all intents and purposes, discovered Japan and opened the ports of that nation to the trade of the world.

Then we come from one great event to another, until we find ourselves confronted by the influence of that

policy of economic nationalism which, however apparently beneficial in its immediate results, leads sooner or later to what this one led—the great depression which began in 1929, and those feuds between nations based upon economic ambition which are rocking the world today.

There was new hope and new promise when President McKinley struck the note which he did in the remarkable address made the day before he fell by the hand of an assassin. A few years later his successor in office, Theodore Roosevelt, having left the presidency, made an important speech at Christiana in accepting the Nobel peace prize. He outlined and strongly endorsed the plan for international organization to protect the world's peace in the form which came before the world in a very few years.

Hardly any American—apparently no one now in Congress—realizes that in June, 1910, nearly thirty-two years ago, the Congress by the unanimous vote of both Houses called upon the President to invite the nations of the world to organize for the establishment of international peace, to be protected by an international police force made up of the combined navies of the world. There was not a dissenting vote, Republican or Democrat, in the Senate or House of Representatives.

Then came the vision of Woodrow Wilson, the history of which we all know. But we do not remember the speech made by Warren G. Harding toward the close of his campaign for the presidency in 1920. He then said:

> The other type is a society of free nations, or an association of free nations, or a league of free nations, animated by con-

siderations of right and justice, instead of might and self-interest, and not merely proclaimed an agency in pursuit of peace, but so organized and so participated in as to make the actual attainment of peace a reasonable possibility. Such an association I favor with all my heart, and I would make no fine distinction as to whom credit is due. One need not care what it is called. Let it be an association, a society, or a league, or what not, our concern is solely with the substance, not the form thereof.

The platforms of both great American political parties in 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1932, endorsed American participation and leadership in the movement for world organization to secure prosperity and peace upon foundations of justice and liberal political philosophy.

Where has this notion of a traditional international isolation come from? It is invented by those who have no conception of the facts of our history or of the statements of our outstanding leaders. That isolation which they thought so admirable because it was protected by thousands of miles of ocean and of air, they now find to be made impossible by the two best-paved roads in the world—the ocean and the air. There are no roads in existence over which traffic or attack can be so sudden, so complete or, in many ways, so safe. As a matter of fact, the policy of isolation, which professes to avoid war and to seek peace, invites unwilling participation in every war of importance which may break out anywhere in the world. It invites that participation with the assurance of defeat, through lack of foresight or preparation for national defense. It is a policy of smug complacency.

It is time for us to face the facts—to face the responsibility which rests upon all the English-speaking peoples

and which is now being borne in upon us with convincing force by the happenings of the past few weeks. It is a far cry in years from Magna Carta of 1215 to the Atlantic Charter of 1941, but the steps from the one to the other are steady, continuous and unbroken.

We have seen the stirring spectacle of the Prime Minister of the Government of Great Britain as a guest at the White House and standing in person before the Congress of the United States and before the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada. Those acts of themselves are significant and revealing of the personal relationships which underlie and accompany the consciousness of common responsibility, common ideals, and joint and common power which rests upon our English-speaking peoples. We are looking forward—not to one generation or to one century—we are looking forward to a period which may be as long in time as the rule of ancient Rome, and in which those ideals of free and liberal democracy may be guaranteed to every nation, great or small, living in a world of peace and friendly economic relationships. It will go down into history a thousand years from now, and men will look back upon it just as we look back upon the rule of the Romans.

Remember that the ocean which once separated Great Britain and the United States, the United States and Australia, now joins them together. Remember that in Great Britain, in Canada, in the United States and in Australia, these fundamental facts are being grasped day by day by public opinion. When this dreadful attack upon all forms of mental, moral and political progress shall have been resisted and broken, then the Eng-

lish-speaking peoples, regardless of their apparent separation by ocean or by air, will be called upon to go forward as the leaders in those constructive policies upon which alone a new, a peaceful, a prosperous and a moral world can rise.