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JOHN S. EWART AND CANADIAN NATIONALISM

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Canadian "nationalism" has provided a frequent theme for this country's historians, a theme generally expressed in terms of modest self-congratulation, though often in terms of a vague, aching disappointment. Yet the attempt to apply an essentially continental European concept to the Canadian context has seldom been questioned. Indeed, this alleged Canadian nationalism still awaits a concentrated analysis, an analysis which will investigate the peculiar circumstances of a settlement colony which has never really differentiated itself from the rest of the English-speaking world or defined the relationships of the several ethnic groups which compose its population. My purpose here is not so ambitious : I will merely examine one so-called nationalist, attempt to analyse his ideas, and to assess his influence within the "nationalist" or "autonomist" school. Hopefully the paper will also shed some light upon the larger problem of Canadian "nationalism."

I

Living from 1849 until 1933, John S. Ewart spanned, as Frank Underhill has reminded us, the years between the Rebellion Losses Bill and the Statute of Westminster. [1] He was born in Toronto of Scottish and Presbyterian stock, attended Osgoode Hall, and in 1881, after practicing law in Toronto for ten years, moved to Winnipeg. At this stage in his career he played little part in politics, devoting himself largely to law, though this did include a part in arguing the appeal of Louis Riel before the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench.

In the 1890s Ewart suddenly became a minor national figure through his role as chief counsel and outspoken defender of Catholic educational rights in Manitoba. For more than five years he absorbed himself in the legal and political struggle to retain for the prov-

[1] F. H. Underhill, "The Political Ideas of John S. Ewart," Canadian Historical Association, *Reports*, 1933, p. 23; for short treatments of Ewart, see also: D. M. L. Farr, "John S. Ewart," in Robert L. McDougall (ed.), *Our Living Tradition* (Second and Third Series; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), pp. 185-214; W. L. Scott, "John Skirving Ewart, K. C.: An Appreciation," *Canadian Bar Review*, XI (May 1933), 333-38; Roy St. G. Stubbs, "John S. Ewart – A Great Canadian," *Manitoba Law School Journal*, I (1962), 3-22; and John W. Dafoe, "The Ideas and Influence of John S. Ewart," *Canadian Historical Review*, XIV (June 1933), pp. 136-42.

ince's French and Catholic population the separate schools to which they seemed entitled. Before the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee, within the councils of the Conservative Government of Canada, in the columns of the press, and wherever he could find an audience to lecture, he pleaded the minority's case. In the end, the politicians, he felt, betrayed the national honor, and he retired, disillusioned, from public controversy.

Almost a decade later Ewart again departed from what he called his "usual course" of comfortable silence to take up the issue of Canada's political, military, and constitutional relations with the United Kingdom.[2] Moving to Ottawa in 1904, he began a campaign, which became the passion of his life, for an independent Kingdom of Canada. Again, he published books and articles, wrote frequent letters to the press, issued several series of pamphlets, spoke whenever given the opportunity, pressed his views upon Ministers and anyone else who would listen – all in a strenuous advocacy of Canadian independence and a campaign against all those who wished either to continue Canada's colonial subordination or to forge a closer unity within the British Empire.

Although Ewart strongly supported the Canadian effort during the First World War, he became, by 1917, angered with the nature of Canada's participation and embittered by the use which he felt the "imperialists" were making of the country's war enthusiasm. Those feelings, compounded by despair at the increased disunity of French and English in Canada, forced him to a frenzied denunciation of imperialist machinations and a logical acceptance of a Republic of Canada.[3]

The decade of the 1920s brought Ewart back to his idea of an independent Canadian kingdom. His study of the origin of the Great War, published in 1925, increased his conviction that Canada should remain isolated from a Europe that would "fight and fight and fight again."[4] He was pleased by the Canadian policy of avoiding international entanglements and by the continued progress of the country towards constitutional independence. The passage of the Statute of Westminster persuaded him that his own publicist work was essentially complete.

[2] Public Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Ewart Papers, Letterbook I, Ewart to Laurier, April 17, 1902 (copy).

[3] John S. Ewart, *The Kingdom Papers* (2 vols.; Ottawa: by the author, 1911-17), II, 263-393.

[4] John S. Ewart, *The Roots and Causes of the Wars* (1914-1918) (2 vols.; New York: George H. Doran, 1925); Ewart Papers, Clippings, XIII, 38-39, *Daily Star* (Toronto), March 22, 1923.

II

Ewart was of the generation of Canadians who adopted the leading political and social ideas of mid and late Victorian British liberalism. His ideas were in the tradition of Bentham, Mill, Cobden, Morley, and Morel, of the rational positivism of *The Fortnightly,* the social liberalism of *The Contemporary,* and the controversial catholicity of *The Nineteenth Century.* He believed in the hallow Victorian concepts of reason, progress, liberty, tolerance, the individual, and self-government.

In the 1890s, fervently battling for Catholic rights in Manitoba, he stressed liberty and tolerance. His plea was based upon the danger of forceful majoritarianism to liberty and upon the necessity for tolerance within a heterogeneous state.[5] Believing that diversity was a mainspring of progress, Ewart condemned the "fatal inclination for uniformity, dead-level, and drill-sergeants" which he perceived in the "national" school system. The idea of unity based upon uniformity of education embodied, in Ewart's eyes, the principle of intolerance, the inability of Protestants to understand the Catholic point of view. Moreover, the suppression of minority rights, permitted by "a slip in the drafting" of the Manitoba Act, was a political mistake.[6] Bitterness and discord, not unity, would follow that action.

Ewart's arguments constituted a plea and a policy for tolerance and liberty in Canadian cultural relations. He asked for a more embracing tolerance, a greater breadth of national unity, and a larger vision of a community freed from the turmoils of ethnic and religious controversy.[7] "Surely by this time," wrote Ewart in 1895,

> all Canadians ought to recognize that in a community in which three-fifths are English and Protestant, and two-fifths French and Catholic, concessions and accommodations; assurances and performances of them; toleration, friendliness and sympathy must characterize their political and social relations. . . .[8]

The assumptions behind Ewart's advocacy of Canadian independence were also in large part derived from the British and Canadian liberal tradition. He advocated independence because he

[5] John S. Ewart, *The Manitoba School Question* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1894), pp. 222-27, 232-33.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 222; Canada, House of Commons, *Sessional Papers,* 1895, No. 20, pp. 25-28; *Manitoba Free Press,* April 30, 1895; PAM, Manitoba School Clippings, I, 232, *The Nor'-Wester,* April 16, 1895.

[7] Ewart, *Manitoba School Question,* p. 219; John S. Ewart, "Mr. Armour's Dialectics," *The Week,* XII (July 12, 1895), p. 780; John S. Ewart, "The School Question in Manitoba," *The American Catholic Quarterly Review,* XX (October 1895), p. 854.

[8] John S. Ewart, *The Manitoba School Question: A Reply to Mr. Wade* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1895), p. 41.

believed in freedom, equality, and the right of self-government. An elevated conception of self-government as a fundamental right of free men was a basic and unquestioned assumption in Ewart's thought. Such a right was of universal moral significance, and it rested in turn upon Ewart's assumptions of the nature of history and political evolution. Canadian history as Ewart viewed it had but one chief theme – Canada's fight for freedom from imperial control. "Persistent progress towards political emancipation has been the most interesting and important characteristic of Canadian history," he wrote, and he considered the attainment of responsible government to be the greatest triumph of that superb struggle. Though contested every foot of the way, the path, followed with unswerving persistence, led inevitably to full self-government. There were heroes in this battle, but personalities were insignificant. "Very little importance," he wrote, "attaches or ever did attach to the desires of individuals respecting Canada's political growth. We can all now see that it could not have been arrested."[9] Canadian history was but an ineluctable process towards the independence that would be yet "another great victory in British constitutionalism, . . . the happy termination of another long line of developmental activity similar to that which produced the British parliament itself . . . ." It was the one subject upon which the logical lawyer's mind could become rhapsodic: "Epics, Homeric and all other," he wrote, "pale into absolute insignificance in the presence of these centuries-spanning conflicts . . . ."[10] To Ewart it was a universal process, almost a cosmic imperative.

This assumption of the inevitable progress of people to self-government and of the inherent value of that form of government led to Ewart's conclusion that Canadian dependence could not last. Canada would rise to the dignity of full nationhood.

From these assumptions, and this view of history, Ewart constructed his important contribution – the conception of an equipollent Kingdom of Canada – to the autonomist school of Canadian constitutionalists. The principle was itself very simple: he posited a Kingdom of Canada, fully equal to, and in all respects independent of, the United Kingdom. Canada would completely control all her own affairs, assuming full powers of self-government and ending all colonial ties and encumbrances. The sole remaining link would be the retention of the same person as monarch.[11] Such a

[9] Ewart, *Kingdom Papers*, II, 191; John S. Ewart, *The Kingdom of Canada . . . and Other Essays* (Toronto: Morang, 1908), pp. 135, 354; Ewart, *Kingdom Papers*, I, 164; Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada*, p. 43.

[10] Ewart, *Kingdom Papers*, I, 166; Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada*, p. 118.

[11] The introductory essay, "The Kingdom of Canada," in Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada*, pp. 1-30, is perhaps his best exposition of the idea, though it is found throughout his writing.

Kingdom, in Ewart's mind, was only an extension of the principle of responsible government and an elaboration of past Canadian development. In Canada's history he observed a ceaseless advance toward complete self-government, but only insignificant disloyalty to the Crown. While he did not rule out the possibility of deviation, the road which Canada had been travelling was obvious to Ewart; if persisted in, "the end of *that* road must be clear to everybody" – a sovereign and independent state under a British and Canadian Crown. [12]

Independence for Canada was the climax of an historic battle for liberty; it was also prerequisite for the unity that was a most essential feature of any state. Ewart had already demonstrated his concern for unity in his role in the Manitoba schools question. His attitude towards Canada's political status was, in part, only another aspect of this concern. He devoted a portion of a 1912 *Kingdom Paper* to the *Ne temera* controversy, writing that "everything that makes either for unity or discord among Canadians comes within the scope of the Kingdom Papers.... whenever occasion seems to require it, I shall do what I can to enable English and French, Protestant and Catholic, at least to understand one another a little better, and to sympathize with each other a little more." [13] His attitude towards Canada's constitutional position was closely intertwined with this concern for her domestic difficulties. A declaration of independence, Ewart maintained, would give Canadians a unity and cohesion they did not yet possess. He deplored the lack of a unifying sentiment in Canada, and, while he realized that the country was divided by ethnic, religious, and regional diversities, he felt that the real cause for a lack of national sentiment was Canada's continued colonial status. "We have," he wrote, "little national sentiment because we are not a nation." "We are terribly disunited now," he wrote in 1911; "we have to unify and nationalize a people – several peoples – whose geographic and ethnographic conditions make for separation." To Ewart, the only way to create a Canadian national sentiment was to make Canada a nation – in name and in fact. The French Canadians and the new immigrants in the West could not be made British and imperialist, but they could be made Canadian. "Nothing but Canadianism under a Canadian flag," he concluded, "can save us from disintegration and engulfment." [14]

If unity was a vital consequence of nationhood, the self-respect which would accompany independence was equally desirable.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 352, 40.
13 Ewart, *Kingdom Papers*, I, 121.
14 Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada*, pp. 74-80; Ewart, *Kingdom Papers*, I, 55, 19, 312.

Everything short of independence was an inferior status of "squalid and ignoble colonialism" which deeply offended Ewart's pride. "I, for one," he wrote, "am sensitive about it, not only for myself but for my country. I detest the recognition of Canadian subordination." [15]

There is one further element in the pattern of Ewart's thought which made independence for Canada both natural and necessary. His views of international relations were postulated upon the basic premise that all countries were actuated by a concern for their own national self-interest. [16] This was a common enough idea, and Ewart went only slightly beyond it in his conviction that Canadians must look to Canadian interests rather than submerge them within those of "the Empire as a whole." In assessing the Canadian position in the world, Ewart had no doubt that Canada's interests were of a quite different nature from those of the United Kingdom.

Britain's geographic and strategic interests forced her towards a deep involvement in European and world affairs, while "Canada, more happily situated, had nothing to fear." [17] The United States, the least aggressive of all the great powers and quite as pacific as Canada herself, had, Ewart felt, no designs upon his country. Invasion from overseas was also quite impossible because of the oceanic distances and the coincidental interests of the United States in keeping the continent free of outside powers. The assumption of a North American environment that was pacific in nature and shielded by vast oceans from the militarism of the Old World formed the basis for Ewart's unfaltering antagonism to imperial entanglement. [18]

With Canada's military position secure, Ewart viewed the possibility of the country sharing in Britain's insecurity as "intolerably unsatisfactory." Canada, as he wrote applauding Laurier in 1902, "ought to keep herself well out of the European war-vortex. . . ." With the increase of European tensions before 1914, Ewart became greatly concerned with that "mighty maelstrom," and he shuddered at "its monstrous extent, its baneful effects" and "the anxious dread which its existence makes an increasing part of European life." [19] His

[15] Ewart, *Kingdom Papers,* I, 22; Ewart to *The Halifax Chronicle,* April 13, 1908, typescript in possession of D. M. L. Farr, Ottawa.

[16] The premise runs throughout Ewart's writing on imperial and international affairs. It is most explicit in his *Roots and Causes.*

[17] Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* p. 169; Ewart, *Kingdom Papers,* I, 313; Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* p. 171.

[18] Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* p. 171; Ewart, *Kingdom Papers,* I, 311; John S. Ewart, "Perplexed Imperialist," *Queen's Quarterly,* XV (October 1907), p. 99.

[19] Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* p. 364; Ewart Papers, Letterbook I, Ewart to Laurier, April 17, 1902 (copy), Ewart, *Kingdom Papers,* I, 307.

real concern, however, was with the implication which a British European war would hold for Canada in its existing constitutional and sentimental condition. Canada, unless her position was clarified by independence and a regard for her self-interest, would be drawn by British foreign policy into the European conflict. Independence under the single and simple relationship of a personal union of sovereigns would separate Canada from the United Kingdom and allow Canada to be at peace while Britain was at war.[20]

The Great War only served to strengthen Ewart's fear of Canadian involvements, and thereafter the danger of transoceanic embroilment was never far from his mind. He became increasingly convinced of the irreconcilability of interest between Britain and Canada. The continuous refrain of his writing was that "Canadian policy must be bound, as far as possible, upon abstention from foreign complications."[21] "Canada must make a choice between Europe and North America," between a Europe "super-heated with antagonism, hatred, and bitter jealousies," and a North America "united in interest and devoted to the pursuit of peace."[22] Ewart endeavoured, as he wrote in 1927, "to apply Cobden's policy to Canada's foreign outlook," and with Richard Cobden's dislike of any foreign policy, Ewart was in complete accord.[23] Dread of entanglement in another British war expressed itself in Ewart's appeal to a fervent North Americanism and a fearful isolationism. It lent urgency to his passioned advocacy of the severance of all ties with the United Kingdom. "To me," he informed Clifford Sifton, "the principal purpose to be obtained by resettlement of our constitutional position is freedom from British wars . . . ."[24]

These, then, are the major elements in Ewart's advocacy of an independent Kingdom of Canada : a reverence for self-government as the culmination of history and the destruction of humiliating dependence; a sanguine assumption that Canadian independence would foster Canadian unity; and a vivid perception of Canada's self-interest as distinct from Britain's and a great fear of involvement in European wars.

[20] Ewart, *Kingdom Papers,* I, 148; Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* pp. 28-29; Ewart, *Kingdom Papers,* II, 202.

[21] John S. Ewart, *The Subsidiary Imperial Conference, 1921 : Preparatory Papers* (Ottawa: n. pub., 1921), p. 10; John S. Ewart, *The Independence Papers,* (2 vols.; Ottawa: by the author, 1925-32), I, 30; Ewart, *Subsidiary Imperial Conference,* p. 6.

[22] Ewart Papers, Clippings, XIII, 38-39, *Toronto Daily Star,* March 22, 1923; *ibid.,* XI, 69, *Ottawa Citizen,* May 16, 1922.

[23] *Ibid.,* Letterbook II, Ewart to W. H. Dawson, January 10, 1927.

[24] Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Sir Clifford Sifton Papers, vol. 210, Ewart to Sifton, March 2, 1923.

These ideas and assumptions were, for the most part, in direct conflict with the views of Ewart's "imperialist" opponents, men like G. R. Parkin, G. M. Grant, Stephen Leacock, and Sir John Willison. These men shared his reverence for self-government, though they believed that full self-government should imply participation in imperial decision-making. They shared a concern for Canadian unity, but felt that the British connection was a common link among Canadians. And, though they shared a concern for Canada's self-interest, they found it not only compatible with imperial interests, but essentially dependent upon the maintenance of Britain as a world power.

The single feature, however, which perhaps most distinguishes Ewart from the Canadian "imperialists" was his lack of ethnic consciousness. "One wonders," wrote a Canadian reviewer of his *Kingdom Papers,* "if Mr. Ewart ever thinks of himself as a 'Britisher,' as a member of a greater whole of which Canada is a part." [25] Imperialists like S. A. Cudmore might well be perplexed by the absence of this Britannic pan-nationalism from Ewart's thought, for it was, in many ways, the imperialists' most distinct and common characteristic. Ewart was not entirely unaffected by the idea that Anglo-Saxons were more dedicated than other peoples to the ideals of freedom and self-government, but he never thought of himself as a "Briton," as a member of a pan-Anglo-Saxon nation which should be solidified into a national state. He repudiated such an idea as based upon sentiment rather than reason, upon racial instincts rather than a community of interest. [26] Ewart, as a liberal of the mid-Victorian and rationalist traditions did not believe "in bonds of blood and speech, in the long, silent spiritual pressure of traditions hallowed by the ages. . . ." [27] He preferred, with Frederic Harrison, patriotism to "a practical unit in a manageable and localized commonwealth having common local sentiments and historical traditions," and he regarded devotion to the Anglo-Saxon race or the English-speaking peoples as mere insolence, leading to nothing real or good. [28]

Great difficulty is encountered in attempting to label these ideas as nationalistic. The "nationalism" of Ewart, as of most Canadians, does not easily harmonize with the standard definitions, is difficult to distinguish from patriotism, and would be defined out of existence by applying to it the ethnic conceptions offered by such theorists as Benjamin Akzin and Elie Kedourie. Ewart's ideas are, in a sense, not

[25] S. A. Cudmore, *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada,* XVI, 6.

[26] Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* p. 159.

[27] Sir John Willison, *Partners in Peace: The Dominion, the Empire and the Republic* (Toronto: Warwick Bros. and Rutter, 1923), p. 21.

[28] Ewart Papers, Notebook, "Patriotism."

nationalist at all, since they rely upon liberal assumptions of self-government, not upon ethnic or even cultural arguments. Ewart advocated independence, not from the basis of metaphysical conceptions of a distinct cultural nation, but from political ideals deeply rooted in British liberalism and the Canadian constitutional experience. [29]

On the other hand, Ewart's emphasis upon Canada as a political community with interests distinct from and even antagonistic to those of the Empire may, following David M. Potter, constitute one nationalistic strand in the fabric of his thought. Indeed, Potter's attempt to provide a basis for nationalism in common and distinct interests, as well as commonality of culture, may, for the historian of nationalism in settlement colonies provide a more fruitful conception than the attempt to find – or fabricate – a colonial cultural identity. [30]

III

The importance of John S. Ewart lay partly in his continuous publication of the case for independence and partly in the material which his sedulous research made available to others of similar mind. [31] Beyond this, Ewart made a significant contribution to Canadian thought upon the imperial connection by laying a theoretical foundation upon which Canadian aspirations for self-government could be grounded. By 1904, after the Boer War and the Alaska boundary award, many Canadians began to reject the imperial idea and to seek increased autonomy, but they still lacked a principle upon which this desire could be implemented. The sharp Gallic minds of Henri Bourassa and his band of Ligue Nationaliste intellectuals were able to come to grips with no more suitable a formula than "la plus large mesure d'autonomie politique, commerciale et militaire, compatible avec le maintien du lien colonial." [32] John W. Dafoe, only beginning his editorial career at the *Manitoba Free Press,* was seeking a change in Canada's status, but had still not abandoned the old, tired

[29] See Akzin, *State and Nation* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964) and Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1961). Ewart's own definition of "nation" was legalistic and political in the narrow sense. He selected as "most authoritative" those definitions which referred "to its political rather than its ethnographical signification," using three jurists of international law, Grotius, W. P. Johnston, and D. D. Field. Ewart, *Kingdom of Canada,* p. 5.

[30] Potter, "the Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," *American Historical Review,* LXVII (July 1962), 924-50.

[31] Ewart Papers, Letterbook III, Ewart to W. B. Moffatt, August 15, 1928; PAC, John W. Dafoe Papers, M74, Dafoe to Sifton, February 12, 1923 and Dafoe to Sifton, September 12, 1923; Dafoe, *Canadian Historical Review,* XIV, p. 142.

[32] *Ligue Nationaliste Canadienne: programme adapté à une assemblée générale tenue le 1er mars 1903* (Montréal, 1903) quoted in Michel Brunet (ed.), *Histoire du Canada par les textes* (rev. ed.; Montréal: Fides, 1963), p. 63.

formulas.[33] Laurier might be gradually seeking independence, but, lacking any idea of how to accomplish it, was defensively clinging to the formula that Canada was quite satisfied with existing arrangements.[34] The "liberal nationalists" were in search of a principle, a theoretical basis upon which autonomist sentiment could proceed without doing violence to the history of the country.

Ewart's speculations helped to provide this principle for the autonomists. He pointed out what he felt to be the past tendencies, the present consensual basis, and the incomplete features of the evolution. He then erected a theory of sister kingdoms under a common crown, in which Canadian independence would be reconciled with the determined desire of most Canadians to retain a connection with the Crown and to continue cooperation with the mother country. It was an idea grounded firmly upon the perceived Canadian experience and the prevailing Whig views of Canadian constitutional evolution. John A. Macdonald had spoken of a Kingdom of Canada, the "liberal nationalists" of the 1870s and 1880s had had recourse to the same phrase, "imperialists" of the 1880s and 1890s had occasionally voiced the mystique of a Canadian monarchy, and by the early years of the new century it was one of those ideas quite close to the prevailing climate of opinion. John A. Cooper rephrased the concept within an imperialistic framework early in 1904, and Richard Jebb was soon to ascribe to all "colonial nationalist" theory a logical conception of the Crown as common to co-equal legislatures.[35]. Ewart grasped this idea, worked out its principles in terms of accepted views of Canada's past, developed its logical and constitutional consistency, and propounded it with a tenacious advocacy reaching into the mind of the concerned public and its leaders. He thus supplied a program for the inchoate aspirations and sentiments of autonomists and provided them with a conception of independence palatable to their continued Britishness. Few accepted the theory in all its details, or even fully understood it, but the incompleteness of their conversion should not obscure the part played by the idea itself.

The influence of ideas and arguments can never be traced with any precision, but there is an indication in the writing of the period,

[33] See Ramsay Cook, *The Politics of John W. Dafoe and The Free Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), chs. II and III.

[34] O. D. Skelton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* (2 vols.; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1921), II, 290; Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1897, LIX (C. 8596), in Maurice Ollivier, (ed.), *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences from 1887 to 1937* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1954), I, 140; Norman Penlington, *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 56.

[35] Cooper, "Self-Government and Imperialism," *Queen's Quarterly*, XI (January 1904), 243-46; Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), p. 300.

and in Ewart's own correspondence, of some measure of influence. Among academics he was read sympathetically by A. R. M. Lower, Frank Underhill, W. Y. Elliott, G. M. Wrong, Norman Rogers and O. D. Skelton. In government circles, Skelton was undoubtedly influenced, while at least an indirect influence upon T. A. Crerar seems likely.[36] Charles Murphy, an important Liberal figure, was a long supporter, and he and Senator Raoul Dandurand were sympathetic enough to contribute to the *Independence Papers*. Prime Ministers Laurier and Mackenzie King were friendly, but shied away from any close identification with Ewart's views. Other Members of Parliament, like A. R. McMaster, C. H. Cahan, J. S. Woodsworth, Henri Bourassa, and C. G. Power, were in contact with Ewart's ideas and used them in parliament, while R. J. Manion was a long-time reader.[37] Bourassa's *Le Devoir*, Dafoe's *Manitoba Free Press*, Harry Southam's *Ottawa Citizen*, and J. E. Atkinson's *Toronto Star* usually gave Ewart sympathetic coverage and frequently adopted his arguments.

A. Gordon Dewey thought Ewart's influence upon "parliamentary Nationalism" portentous in South Africa as well as in Canada, and South African political leaders like J. B. M. Hertzog, editors and politicians, like F. W. Beyers, and Members of Parliament, like A. J. Stals, were familiar with Ewart and his writing.[38] As Richard Jebb wrote in 1926, Ewart's *Kingdom Papers* "have been studied and quoted not only in Canada but throughout the Dominions." Political leaders might disavow the guidance of Ewart and others of "the autonomist school," but they adopted forms of national self-assertion which implied complete separation from the Empire.[39] It was as a member of this "autonomist school" — made up of men like Laurier, King, Skelton, Dafoe, Sifton, and Bourassa — that Ewart played a role in moulding events along an independent line. Dafoe, writing to Ewart in 1931, was not far off the mark:

> I think we can take satisfaction that in our own way and in company with a relatively small group of men of like mind, without organized effort, we have turned this country upside down — i.e., constitutionally speaking in about 25 years. I don't know but what the chief credit goes to you. . . ."[40]

[36] W. A. Macintosh, "O. D. Skelton," in Robert L. McDougall (ed.), *Canada's Past and Present: A Dialogue* ("Our Living Tradition, Fifth Series"; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 71; see *Grain Grower's Guide*, XV (November 15, 1922), p. 3-4, 23, Crerar to T. W. Caldwell, November 9, 1922.

[37] Ewart Papers, Letterbook I, Manion to Ewart, May 29, 1919.

[38] Dewey, *The Dominions and Diplomacy: The Canadian Contribution* (2 vols.; London: Longmans, Green, 1929), I, 6.

[39] *The Empire in Eclipse* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1926), p. 311.

[40] Ewart Papers, Letterbook II, Dafoe to Ewart, January 16, 1931.

It was this small group of Canadians, joined by South Africans and Irishmen, whose idea of autonomy carried a significance "out of all proportion to the numerical weight of its exponents" because they "formulated the content of Nationalist doctrine." [41] Ewart's greatest contribution to that doctrine was an almost continuous advocacy of the constitutional position of an independent Kingdom of Canada. It was this position which was eventually adopted in some form by all autonomists, and which provided the theory by which independence could be tempered with imperial sentiment. That theoretical unity of symbols, combined with practical independence of action, provided the almost perfect ambiguity of the Balfour Report and the "British Commonwealth of Nations."

[41] Dewey, *The Dominions and Diplomacy*, I, 5-6.