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# THE EVOLUTION OF INTER- NATIONALISM<sup>1</sup>

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THE evolution of internationalism is an interesting and very important study which will engage the attention of some of the best minds in the world more and more as time goes on. The interdependence of people and races of people is showing itself in new ways every year. The world is not yet overpopulated. In a strictly biological sense it will never be overpopulated by the human species or any other species. The old principle of "the balance of nature" is sure to prevail. The word *overpopulation* implies something unnatural—something beyond nature's laws—something that nature herself will correct; in other words, it is an impossible happening. Remember distinctly, please, that this is simply a broad biological deduction!

Yes, nature's restoration of the balance is inevitable. The species that have passed the great inexorable limit law must be reduced; the surplus must starve for lack of food. If the offending form should be the human species, with its wonderful intelligence, with the culture it has laboriously gained, with its high ideals, with its misty sense of spirituality, it will make no difference to nature; she will grind on and restore the balance.

The human species is utterly selfish, like any other species; but this selfishness tends to become more broadly a *species* selfishness as the years go by and conditions are more broadly understood, having passed through the stages of the selfishness of the individual, of the family, of the community, and, let us hope, of the nation—all successive stages, and all fundamentally based on the self-preservation instinct or desire of the individual, placed there by nature.

Love of kind is a late development, and love of kind in its purest form has been a powerful advocate leading forward to internationalism. But, just as the desire for continued existence with the individual has led to the evolution of the present social complex, to the growth of nations, so the continually increasing difficulties of existence lead onward to the species selfishness—the desire to maintain the human species in control of all resources of the planet on which it finds itself.

Thus, conservation of the world's resources, the movement which is expressed by this conference, attended as it is by many men of many nations, is an

<sup>1</sup> Opening remarks of the chairman of the First Pan-Pacific Conservation Congress, Honolulu, Hawaii, July, 1924.

idea based upon what may be termed *species* selfishness. The human species has a collective mind, and thus has an immense advantage over the other forms that have come into this world, and so, finding itself at war with its surroundings, it has an enormous advantage over other animals in being able to work out plans for the subjugation of nature, in being able to modify many forms of plant and animal life, in being able actually to domesticate many of them, as against the immensely slow working of the forces of adaptation acting with other species.

It is quite true that in the course of ages this evolutionary adaptation has given the vastly older forms of life a very great advantage over the human species. Hundreds of thousands of species of insects, for example, are far better adapted to continued existence upon the earth than is the human species; but the birth of intelligence, of the human mind when it is put to collective use, places man in control and enables him, in spite of his poorly adapted physique, to assume the commanding place.

There are, of course, regions where the war against nature is less strenuous than in others, regions in which the fighting and resistant qualities have not been demanded as in other regions. Compare the conditions which were met by my own ancestors, when they landed on the frightful coast of New England three hundred years ago, with those met by the first visitors to some of these friendly islands of the Pacific. With the former, life was a keen struggle; with the latter, the environment of nature was friendly, smiling, welcoming.

The time has never been, however, when the interests of man everywhere have not been theoretically interdependent; and in the later years we have seen the great coming-together movement, the mutually helpful movement, take form and grow more and more rapidly. It is a movement which is daily becoming more necessary for the well-being of the human species. Just how important this is—just how necessary it is for the best minds of all nations to come together in international conservation conferences like this—becomes more appallingly obvious year by year as the world's population continues to increase at such a rate that ninety years hence it will have reached four billions.

In my own country, the United States, out of a total land area of 1,903,000,000 acres, 478,000,000 acres were in cultivation in 1910. One hundred million people are supported comfortably now, and 135,000,000 can be supported eventually if our agriculture is efficient. With the steadily increasing population (even without immigration) the present productivity must be increased 50 per cent. if our people in the very near future are to have the present food stand-

ard. This may be brought about by the irrigation of 30,000,000 acres of desert, by the drainage of 60,000,000 acres of swamps, by the utilization of 82,000,000 acres for dry farming; and part of our 150,000,000 acres of forests may have tillable land. Then, too, the food resources of our lakes, streams and ocean coast waters can be increased. The enormous loss to our agriculture from injurious insects and plant diseases can be and must be very greatly decreased. To-day we are planting thousands upon thousands of acres for the benefit of the insects rather than of ourselves. And the appalling waste that is still going on! That largely can be stopped.

Professor E. M. East, of Harvard, in a recent book entitled "Mankind at the Crossroads," points out that in a little over a century the earth may be inhabited by 5,200,000,000 people, and in such a case, he prophesies, "the world would be filled with a seething mass of discontented humanity struggling for mere existence." East argues that the fertile regions of temperate Asia and the major part of Europe are already overpopulated; that "North America is entering a stage when exportation of food is no longer possible; Australia will reach the same stage within a few decades, and temperate South America will follow Australia before the present generation passes on." His conclusion is, "Within half a century presumably, within a century certainly, each country must prepare to live upon the fruits of its own agricultural efforts."

Is this too dismal a picture? If so, what can be done to prevent this future? Scientific birth control has been advocated. To the biologist, that is a plan of many merits, which, could it ever generally be agreed upon and enforced, without doubt would make for the improvement of the human race and greatly would retard the arrival of the dreaded years of disastrous overcrowding.

But, aside from birth control, the sum of human intelligence, the cooperation of the best brains, the pushing of human inventiveness, will result not only in better conserving the world's resources for the benefit of humanity, but in increasing them in ways that are not dreamed about as yet. This is the idea that must be stressed from now on. This is the controlling idea of this conference. This is the idea which will bring the thinkers of many nations together with increasing frequency in the years to come. This is the idea which, in its fullest action, will preserve for the human species its present commanding place on this planet, let us hope for many centuries to come.

L. O. HOWARD

HONOLULU, HAWAII