STATE LIBRARY OF N.S.W.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

DSM/
354.4201/
I

Digitised under the State Library of NSW's Digital Excellence Program. Due to the nature of the original material or digitisation process there may be instances where the digital copies are not exact matches of the originals. If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email collections.library@sl.nsw.gov.au

1884, 1887

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

Report of the Conference

HELD

JULY 29, 1884,

AT THE

WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL,

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER, M.P.,

IN THE CHAIR.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:
LONDON, PARIS & NEW YORK.
1884.

ERRATA.

Page 54, note, for "Mid-Somersetshire," read "Mid-Lincolnshire."

Page 62, nine lines from foot, for "T. Dennistoun Wood," read "J. Dennistoun Wood."

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF N.S.W. MITCHELL LIBRARY

List of the Provisional Committee.

Chairman.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER, M.P.

Committee.

FREDERICK YOUNG, ESQ.
CAPTAIN J. C. R. COLOMB. } *Vice-Chairmen.*

SIR DANIEL COOPER, BART.

W. J. COURTHOPE, ESQ.

R. R. DOBELL, ESQ.

W. GISBORNE, ESQ.

ALEXANDER STAVELEY HILL, Q.C., M.P.

J. B. WATT, ESQ.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON.

THE HON. HAROLD FINCH HATTON,
19, Bury Street, W.

J. DENNISTOUN WOOD, ESQ.,
82, Ladbroke Grove, S.W. } *Hon. Treasurers.*

F. P. LABILLIERE, ESQ.,
5, Pump Court, Temple, E.C.

H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER, ESQ.,
80, Eccleston Square, S.W. } *Hon. Secretaries.*

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF N.S.W. MITCHELL LIBRARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
List of Provisional Committee	iii
Preface	viii
List of those Attending the Conference	9
Letters Approving the Objects of the Conference	12
Extracts from Letters :—	
The Marquis of Lorne	15
Lord Wolseley	15
Sir Alexander Galt	15
Sir Henry Parkes	16
Sir Charles Gavan Duffy	16
Sir Thomas McIlwraith	16
Viscount Hampden	16
Sir Henry Barkly	16
Sir Leonard Tilley	17
The Hon. Lavington Glyde	17
Sir John Rose	17
Sir Daniel Cooper	17
The Earl of Dunraven	17
Bishop Perry	18
The Bishop of Riverina	18
Professor Seeley	18
The Right Hon. Lord George Hamilton, M.P.	20
Joseph Cowen, Esq., M.P.	20
James Bryce, Esq., M.P.	20
E. Heneage, Esq., M.P.	21
N. Story Maskelyne, Esq., M.P.	21
Alexander McArthur, Esq., M.P.	21
Thomas Archer, Esq.	21
The Hon. R. B. Dickey	22
The Hon. J. B. Watt	22
The Hon. Donald Smith	22
Kenric B. Murray, Esq.	22
R. Barr-Smith, Esq.	22
W. Walker, Esq.	23
A. J. Hunter, Esq.	23
Alfred Simmons, Esq.	23
J. Ferguson, Esq.	24
Speeches Delivered at the Conference	25
Names of Speakers :—	
The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P.	25
The Right Hon. W. H. Smith, M.P.	29
The Earl of Rosebery	35

PAGE

Sir Charles Tupper, G.C.M.G., C.B.... 42
Viscount Bury, K.C.M.G. 47
H. Bompas, Esq., Q.C. 48
Sir Henry Holland, Bart., K.C.M.G., M.P. 49
R. Dobell, Esq. 50
T. D. Wanliss, Esq. 50
Sir J. Eardley Wilmot, Bart., M.P. 52
Mr. Serjeant Simon, M.P. 52
The Hon. E. Stanhope, M.P. 54
The Hon. Oliver Mowatt 55
W. Gisborne, Esq. 56
The Marquis of Normanby, G.C.M.G. 59
James Cropper, Esq., M.P. 59
G. W. Rusden, Esq. 61
Admiral Wilson 61
J. Henniker Heaton, Esq. 61
F. Young, Esq. 64
Dr. G. Clark 64
Alexander McArthur, Esq., M.P. 65
Lieut.-General R. W. Lowry, C.B. 65
Sir Charles Tupper, G.C.M.G., C.B. 65
G. W. Rusden, Esq. 66
The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P. 66
Minute of the Views of the Committee submitted to the Conference 67
Resolutions Passed by the Conference 68
Opinions of the Press :—
"Times" 69
"Standard" 74
"Daily News" 78
"Daily Telegraph" 80
"Morning Post" 85
"Daily Chronicle" 88
"Scotsman" 90
"Pall Mall Gazette" 94
"Globe" 97
"Morning Advertiser" 100
"Spectator" 101
"Saturday Review" 104
"Liverpool Post" 108
"Liverpool Mercury" 108
"Manchester Courier" 108
"Manchester Guardian" 109
"Birmingham Post" 109
"Leeds Mercury" 109
"Yorkshire Post" 110
"Sheffield Telegraph" 110

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF N.S.W. MITCHELL LIBRARY

PREFACE.

A FEW words of introduction are necessary in placing this report before the public. The object of the conveners of the Conference was twofold. In the first place they desired to promote, as far as possible, the great end of Imperial Federation. In the second place they were anxious to record an effective protest against a belief which appeared to be prevalent to some extent at Home, and to a still greater extent in the Colonies, to the effect that there was a party, or important section of any party, in the United Kingdom which was careless of the Colonial Connection, and which looked forward with pleasure to an early disintegration of the Empire. That such a belief is happily erroneous will appear from a perusal of the names of those who attended the Conference, or who expressed their approval of its objects. It will be seen that among the number there are representatives of all parties and all shades of party. Being well aware that without the energetic co-operation of Englishmen beyond the four seas the objects they have in view are simply unattainable, the Committee have endeavoured to issue the present report in the form most useful and intelligible to Colonial readers. For this reason they have added short particulars of services

rendered to the State by the bearers of the names recorded in the various lists of sympathisers. By so doing they believe that the truly representative character of the meeting will be more fully realised.

It will be seen from the report of the proceedings that at the close of the Conference a provisional Committee was appointed, charged with the duty of publishing this report, and of arranging for an adjourned meeting to be held at a later date. This meeting is shortly to take place, and it is intended to include in its proceedings the formation of a permanent society, having for its object the promotion of Imperial Federation. All those who desire to become members of such a society, or to receive any information with regard to its methods and constitution, are requested to communicate with the hon. secretaries, by whom all documents will be forwarded to such secretaries as the Conference may appoint.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF N.S.W. MITCHELL LIBRARY

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

The following is a list of those who attended the Conference :—*

BADEN POWELL, GEORGE, C.M.G.
BARKLY, SIR HENRY, K.C.B., G.C.M.G.
BARLING, W. E.
BENNET, J. B.
BELL, SIR F. DILLON, K.C.M.G. (Agent-General for New Zealand).
BOMPAS, HENRY, Q.C.
BORLASE, W. C., Liberal Member for East Cornwall.
BOURNE, STEPHEN.
BRUCE, J. A. B.
BRUCE, The HON. R. P., Liberal Member for Fifeshire.
BRYCE, JAMES, Liberal Member for the Tower Hamlets.
BURROWS, PROFESSOR MONTAGU.
BURY, VISCOUNT, K.C.M.G.
CAMPERDOWN, THE EARL OF.
CHEETHAM, J. F., Liberal Member for North Derbyshire.
CLARK, G. B., M.D.
CLARKE, HYDE.
CLIFFORD, SIR CHARLES.
CLIFFORD, G. H.
CORNISH, J. W.
COLOMB, CAPT. J. C. R.
COOPER, SIR DANIEL, BART., K.C.M.G.
COURTHOPE, W. J.

* The Committee have endeavoured to include the names of all who attended the Conference; but fear that owing to the failure of some of those present to sign their names there may be omissions in this list.

Cowen, Joseph, Liberal Member for Newcastle.
Cropper, James, Liberal Member for Kendal.
Dickey, The Hon. R. B. (Senator, Dominion of Canada)
Dobell, R. R., (Canada).
Ebrington, Viscount, Liberal Member for Tiverton.
Errington, George, Liberal Member for Longford.
Finch Hatton, The Hon. Harold.
Forster, H. O. Arnold.
Forster, The Right Hon. W. E., Liberal Member for Bradford. Late Vice-President of the Council and Chief Secretary for Ireland.
Freeland, H. W.
Fulcher, Paget.
Gibson, The Right Hon. E., Conservative Member for Dublin University, Late Attorney-General for Ireland.
Gilliat, The Rev. E.
Gisborne, W. (New Zealand)
Gordon, J. W.
Graham, Cyril, C.M.G.
Greene, Molesworth (Victoria).
Gretton, George Le M. (South Australia).
Grey, The Hon. Albert, Liberal Member for South Northumberland.
Gzowski, Colonel, A.D.C. (Canada).
Henniker-Heaton, J. (New South Wales).
Holland, Sir Henry, Bart., K.C.M.G., Conservative Member for Midhurst.
Inglis, C., M.D.
Keep, Edward.
Labilliere, F. P.
Lester, H. F.
Lennard, Sir John.
Little, Stanley.
Lowry, Lieut.-General, R.W., C.B.
Malleson, Colonel G. B., C.S.I.
Man, Major J. Alexander.
Manners-Sutton, Hon. John.
Martin, A. Patchett.

May, J.
McArthur, Alexander, Liberal Member for Leicester
McCarthy, D'Alton (Member of the Canadian House of Commons).
McLean, R. D. Douglas.
Miller, William.
Mills, Captain Charles, C.M.G. (Agent-General for the Cape Colony).
Molineux, Gisborne.
Montefiore, Jacob.
Morgan, O. Vaughan.
Morgan, S. Vaughan.
Mouat, F. J., M.D.
Mowatt, The Hon. O., Premier of Ontario.
Murray, Kenric B.
Normanby, The Marquis of, G.C.M.G., late Governor of Nova Scotia, Queensland, New Zealand, and Victoria.
O'Halloran, J. S. (Secretary, Royal Colonial Institute).
Paton, G.
Preston, W. C.
Prince, J. S.
Potter, George.
Rae, John, M.D.
Redpath, Peter.
Rivington, Alexander.
Robinson, Admiral Sir Spencer.
Rosebery, The Earl of.
Rusden, G. W.
Samuel, Sir Saul, K.C.M.G. (Agent-General for New South Wales).
Shrimpton, John.
Silver, S. W.
Simon, Mr. Serjeant, Liberal Member for Dewsbury.
Simpkin, Captain.
Smith, Samuel, Liberal Member for Liverpool.
Smith, The Right Hon. W. H., Conservative Member for Westminster, late First Lord of the Admiralty.

Smyth, General Sir Selby, K.C.M.G.
Southey, The Hon. R., C.M.G., (formerly Administrator of Griqualand West).
Stanhope, The Hon. E., Conservative Member for Mid Lincolnshire (late Under-Secretary for India).
Summers, W., Liberal Member for Stalybridge.
Tupper, Sir Charles, G.C.M.G., C.B., High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada.
Tupper, J. Steward.
Wallace, E. A.
Wanliss, T. D.
Westgarth, William.
White, Captain.
White, Arnold.
Wilkinson, H. Spenser.
Wilmot, Sir J. Eardley, Bart., Conservative Member for South Warwickshire.
Wilson, Sir Samuel.
Wood, J. Dennistoun.
Young, Frederick (Hon. Sec. Royal Colonial Institute).

Letters approving of the objects of the Conference were received from the following :—

Aberdeen, The Earl of.
Anderson, Andrew A.
Archer, Thomas, C.M.G. (Queensland).
Arnold, Edwin, C.S.I.
Austin, Alfred.
Baden Powell, G., C.M.G.
Barham, A. H. Foster.
Barnett, The Rev. S. A.
Barns, Thomas A.
Busby, Hon. William, M.L.C., (New South Wales).
Binny, John (U.S.A.).
Bompas, H., Q.C.
Borthwick, Sir Algernon.
Bousfield, William.
Broadhurst, H., M.P. for Stoke.
Bunsen, E. de.

Burrows, Professor Montagu.
Caine, W. S., M.P. for Scarborough.
Campbell, William (late Member of the Victorian Legislative Council).
Chapman, John.
Cheetham, J. A., M.P. for North Derbyshire.
Cook, R. J.
Coode, Sir John.
Costelloe, Bernard.
Currie, Sir Donald, K.C.M.G., M.P. for Perthshire.
Duffy, Sir Charles Gavan, K.C.M.G., late Premier of Victoria.
Dunraven, The Earl of, K.P.
Elliot, The Hon. Arthur, M.P. for Roxburgh.
Forster, E. P. Arnold.
Foster, J.
Galt, Sir Alexander, G.C.M.G. (late High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada).
Gell, Philip L.
Goldsmid, Sir Julian, Bart.
Greg, Percy.
Hampden, Viscount, G.C.B. (late Speaker of the British House of Commons).
Hanbury, Philip C.
Heneage, E., M.P. for Grimsby.
Hicks-Beach, Right Hon. Sir Michael, Bart., M.P. for East Gloucestershire (late Secretary of State for the Colonies and Chief Secretary for Ireland).
Hill, A. G. Staveley, Q.C., M.P. for Coventry.
Hodgson, Arthur, C.M.G. (formerly Premier of Queensland).
Holton, R.
Jourdain, Henry J. (Mauritius).
Knowles, James.
Lee Warner, Henry.
Lethbridge, Roper.
Lloyd, Sampson.
Lorne, Marquis of, K.T. (late Governor-General of Canada).

Ludlow, John.
Macfie, R. A.
Macleay, Sir George, K.C.M.G.
Maskelyne, N. Story, M.P. for Cricklade.
McIlwraith, Sir Thomas, K.C.M.G. (late Premier of Queensland).
Marvin, Charles.
Merriman, The Hon. J. X. (late Member of the Cape Ministry).
Montgomerie, H. E. (Canada).
Napier, Professor (in the University of Gottingen).
Nicholson, Sir Charles, Bart.
Ossory, Lord Castletown and.
Pender, John, M.P. for Wick.
Plunket, Right Hon. David, M.P. for Dublin University (late Solicitor-General for Ireland).
Potter, George.
Reay, The Lord.
Rothery, G. C.
Rouquette, A.
Scotland, Thomas.
Seeley, Professor.
Shaftesbury, The Earl of, K.G.
Shand, Sir Charles Farquhar (late Chief Justice of Mauritius).
Simmons, A.
Simpson, J. W.
Smith, The Hon. Donald (formerly Member of the Dominion Parliament).
Smith, R. Barr (South Australia).
Stead, W.
Tottenham, C.
Turnbull, Alexander.
Walker, William (late of the West Indies).
Wanliss, T. D. (Victoria).
Watt, The Hon. J. B. (M.L.C. New South Wales).
Webster, R. G.
Wells, L. B.
White, A. Cromwell.

Wilson, E. D. J.
Wolff, Sir Henry Drummond, Bart., G.C.M.G., M.P. for Portsmouth.
Wolseley, Lord, G.C.B. (Adjutant-General of the British Army).
Youl, James A., C.M.G.

The following are extracts of special interest from letters received by the Committee bearing upon the subject of the Conference :—

The Marquis of Lorne, K.T., *Late Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada.*

"I much regret I shall be away in Scotland at the time of the Conference, or should certainly attend. Let me again mention to you my idea of the importance of ascertaining the views of the leading men in each of the great Colonies, as well as of the gentlemen who have been or are connected with them resident in England."

Lord Wolseley, G.C.B., *Adjutant-General of the British Army.*

"Had not the pressure of official business made it impossible for me to do so, I should certainly have attended the Conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel, as the closer union between this country and her Colonies is a subject in which I have always felt the deepest interest, and, in my opinion, is of great national importance, and well worthy of the earnest consideration of every serious statesman."

Sir Alexander Galt, G.C.M.G., *Late High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada.*

"I need not say that I sympathise most warmly in the object of the Conference, and will do all in my power to promote it."

Sir Henry Parkes, K.C.M.G. *Late Premier of New South Wales.*

"As I have to leave England early next month, it would be useless for me to take any part in your projected Conference, which has my best wishes for its success."

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, K.C.M.G., *formerly Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and Premier of Victoria.*

"The politics I have retired from are *party* politics. My interest in Australia, or in Ireland, has not at all diminished, and I will gladly co-operate in any way I can with colonists like yourself * in pushing the Federation of the Colonies into the field of practical politics."

Sir Thomas McIlwraith, K.C.M.G., *Late Premier of Queensland.*

"I would have willingly taken part in the Conference you refer to, but I leave for Australia next Tuesday. I thoroughly believe in the object of the Conference. I think it high time some action was taken in this country, and am glad to see so firm a statesman as Mr. Forster inclined to work. I believe he is in earnest in desiring the union of the Colonies with the mother-country on a more permanent basis.

* Mr. Dennistoun Wood.

THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT HAMPDEN, *Late Speaker of the British House of Commons.*

"The movement has my best wishes, and I hope that it will be guided to the end in view with judgment."

SIR HENRY BARKLY, G.C.M.G.., K.C.B., *Successively Governor of Jamaica, Victoria, Mauritius, and the Cape.*

"I have much pleasure in accepting the invitation you have addressed to me on behalf of the Committee for promoting the Unity of the Empire, to allow my name to be added to the list, and to attend the Conference."

SIR LEONARD TILLEY, K.C.M.G., C.B., *Finance Minister for the Dominion of Canada (formerly Premier of New Brunswick).*

"I am heartily in sympathy with any practical movement for the Unity of the Empire, and wish you every success."

THE HON. LAVINGTON GLYDE, *Recently Colonial Treasurer in South Australia.*

"I sympathise entirely with the principle that "the Unity of the Empire should be permanently maintained;" and I think I may venture to say that nearly all the prominent public men in South Australia share the same view."

SIR JOHN ROSE, Bart., G.C.M.G., *Formerly Finance Minister in the Canadian Government.*

"I concur very heartily in the principle of the important object you have in view."

Sir Daniel Cooper, Bart., K.C.M.G., *Formerly Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.*

"I think you know how strongly I advocate the Unity of the Empire, to promote which I would join in any movement."

The Earl of Dunraven, K.P.

"In my opinion there is no question of deeper importance before the country than that of Imperial Federation, and I shall at all times be happy to co-operate in any movement which will advance that object."

Bishop Perry, *Late of Melbourne.*

"I am quite willing to pledge myself to the principle that the Unity of the Empire should be permanently maintained."

The Bishop of Riverina (N.S.W.).

"Many thanks for your letters, and the card for the meeting. I quite agree with its intention."

Professor Seeley, *Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge; Author of "The Expansion of England."*

"Dear Sir,

"As I am absent from England, and as it is impossible for me to attend your meeting, I hope I may be allowed to convey to it by letter my warm sympathy with those who have convened it. I am in hearty agreement not only with their purpose, but also with those more particular views of the Committee which are expressed in the minute of which you have sent me a copy.

"I heartily agree that it is not desirable at the present

moment to raise a premature cry of Federation, or to discuss the details of a federal organisation. In such questions "ripeness is all;" discussed now, they might seem insurmountably difficult, but the difficulty will vanish if they are held in reserve till the proper time.

"I am also glad to hear that you receive support from both political parties. There is, indeed, no reason why politicians of every school should not meet in furthering an enterprise like this.

"Some, no doubt, of those who pride themselves upon being serious politicians will exclaim, 'Child's play!' but surely, on your Committee there are those who will not be denied to be serious politicians. Surely, too, if it be true that we may have too much even of a good thing, this is a moment when we have at least enough of party politics.

"I suppose it is the effect of party politics, making passion and discord almost the one motive force in public affairs, that has betrayed us into the unaccountable attitude which we assume towards the Empire. How else can it be accounted for that on the question of the Unity of the Empire the majority of Englishmen have actually no opinion?—and this not because they have considered it with anxious care, and have been unable to arrive at a conclusion, but because they have never considered it, have never studied it, and have no knowledge about it at all.

"To enlighten public opinion is the main object which the Committee propose that a Society should be formed to attain; and even if they had not the strong conviction which they have—which all of us have—of the desirableness of maintaining and strengthening the unity of the Empire, it would still be urgently necessary that public opinion should be enlightened upon the subject—that, at least, the *existence* of this vast Empire should be impressed upon the mind and imagination of every Englishman, rich and poor, whether in England or the Colonies, is urgently necessary.

"The idea ought to be popularised and diffused—a

whole literature ought to be devoted to it. The extension and vocation of the English race ought to be a subject of study to a whole staff of students, and of exposition to a brigade of popular writers; and so it ought to become familiar to all Englishmen alike.

"That this has not for a long time been the case is to me a matter of astonishment. I cannot understand the deadness of imagination which has made us remain, as it were, indifferent to the subject. I am sure that such melancholy narrowness and pettiness ought to cease. The main thing is to fill our imaginations with the great fact. Let this once be done, and I hardly think it will be necessary for the Society to inculcate any particular doctrine.

"If, when we have been once awakened to the question, and have learned to consider it with eager interest, we arrive at the conclusion that the Empire had better go, or at the still stronger conclusion that it should be left to chance to decide whether it shall go or not, be it so! In that case, we shall show ourselves a unique people! But it seems more reasonable to expect that some sort of *pan-Anglicanism* will spring up. In this century, when the idea of national unity has been everywhere so powerful—in Italy, in Germany—should we alone among nations remain insensible to it? But if we do, let us at least be sure that we resist the fascination from superior wisdom—that is, after due study of the subject—not from sheer dulness and indifference, not because the motions of our spirits are dull as night!

"Yours truly,

"J. R. Seeley."

Lord George Hamilton, *Conservative Member for Middlesex; Under Secretary for India,* 1874—1878; *Vice-President of the Council,* 1878—1880.

"I thoroughly approve of the object of the proposed Conference."

Mr. Joseph Cowen, *Liberal Member for Newcastle.*

"If I am at liberty, I shall be most happy to attend a conference for such a purpose as you indicate. I am in entire sympathy with your views."

Mr. James Bryce, *Liberal Member for the Tower Hamlets.*

"I am prepared to join in considering any schemes submitted by those who have given more attention to the subject, and feel very strongly the great advantages to the Colonies, as well as to Great Britain, in maintaining a political connection, and leading the various English-speaking peoples over the world to feel themselves even more fully one people than they do now."

Mr. E. Heneage, *Liberal Member for Great Grimsby.*

"I regret that my absence should have made me overlook your important meeting relating to the Federation of England and the Colonies. I shall be very glad to join your Committee or Association, and heartily agree with the object of your Association."

Mr. N. Story Maskelyne, *Liberal Member for Cricklade.*

"I have much general sympathy with the ends of the movement towards the consolidation of a greater England; and I hope, as time goes on, that the proposal may assume a practical shape. It is merely a truism to say that therein lies the difficulty, as is too often the case with the ideals of politicians. Is there heart enough for the thing on the side of Colonial as well as of Home England? Any way, it is a great purpose in our politics, and I for one bid it 'God speed' in its forward course."

MR. ALEXANDER MCARTHUR, *Liberal Member for Leicester.*

"I must only say I am, and always have been, strongly in favour of the 'permanent unity of England and the Colonies.'"

MR. THOMAS ARCHER, C.M.G., *Late Agent-General for Queensland.*

"I hope the time is not far off when we may see some practical means adopted for carrying out so desirable an object. Public opinion in the Australian Colonies is, I am convinced, highly favourable to the adoption of any reasonable plan that would draw closer and strengthen their connection with this country."

THE HON. R. B. DICKEY, *Senator of the Dominion of Canada.*

"Being strongly in favour of maintaining the union between the Colonies and the mother-country, I shall be happy to attend."

THE HON. J. B. WATT, *Member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.*

"The object of the Conference is a most important one, and one in which I feel a deep interest. I should be glad to take a part in the movement, either as a member of Committee, or of any general association which may be formed for the purpose of promoting this object."

THE HON. DONALD SMITH, *Formerly Member of the Dominion Parliament.*

"Being fully in accord with the views you give expression to—that the unity of the people of this country

and the people of the Colonies should be permanently maintained, I have pleasure in accepting your invitation."

Mr. Kenric B. Murray, *Secretary to the London Chamber of Commerce.*

"I am, as you correctly surmise, strongly desirous of promoting some scheme of unity or federation between England and her Colonies, and I shall for this reason have pleasure in following the action of the Committee."

Mr. R. Barr-Smith *(South Australia).*

"So far as my experience goes, the desire for unity with the mother-country is universal in South Australia."

Mr. W. Walker *(West Indies).*

"I regret that it will not be within my power to attend, but I shall be with you in spirit, and I earnestly hope you may have a most successful day.

"I am especially glad that you are to have such an array of distinguished men of different views on public matters, as this is a subject which ought to be lifted up far above the somewhat murky region of party politics."

Mr. A. J. Hunter, *Secretary of the Glasgow Liberal Workman's Electoral Union.*

"At a meeting of the above Union it was agreed to write to you on the objects of a society that you are much interested in for a closer union with the Colonies. You will see from the rules and principles of our society (which was instituted in February, 1876) that that is one of the objects recognised by us."

Mr. Alfred Simmons, *Secretary of the National Association for Promoting State-Directed Emigration and Colonization.*

"Thanks for your note and card of invitation to Conference. Having two engagements in town on Tuesday, I am not sure if I will be able to attend; but if I find it possible, will certainly do so. I have no doubt at all that I should find myself in full sympathy with you on the principle involved in the expression on the card, for I have long felt it to be a tremendous blunder that the Government of the mother-country should take such small pains to more securely attach to herself the various Colonies. The time will come when it will be difficult, if not impossible, to secure Imperial Federation, and this is essentially one of those cases in which delay is dangerous."

Mr. J. Ferguson *(Ceylon).*

"I trust that the outcome of the meeting to-morrow will tend to confirm the unity of the British Empire, fully convinced, as I am, that—at least in that part of the world with which I am best acquainted—the greatest evil which could befall the people of the Asiatic Dependencies of Britain would be their deprivation (from any cause) of the proud and happy title of 'British subjects.'"

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

On the motion of Mr. F. Young, seconded by Captain J. C. R. Colomb, the RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER, M.P.,* was elected to preside.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman said :—

I hope none of you will think, from my friend Mr. Young having moved that I should take the chair at this preliminary meeting, that I wish to put myself forward as the head of so important a movement as this. This is a preliminary meeting of gentlemen who feel interested in the matter, and I hope will be followed by other much more important, or at least much larger, gatherings when the object for which we have met to-day has been thoroughly discussed by the public. Short speeches are the necessary condition to a successful conference. (Hear, hear.) There are several gentlemen present from the Colonies, as well as others living at home, who, from their study and experience, are well qualified to give opinions upon this important matter. I am sure that you are, as I myself am, most anxious to hear them; and therefore I shall confine my remarks in opening the proceedings to the shortest possible introductory statement concerning the object and aim of our meeting.

We are here to-day because we wish to preserve the unity of the Empire (cheers) by binding the several parts together, and also because we think the time has come

* Liberal Member for Bradford, Under Secretary for the Colonies 1865; Member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, and Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, 1868 to 1874; Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1880 to 1882.

when those who have that wish should meet together to see how they can attain it. I will not take up your time with arguments in favour of this unity of the Empire, or against disruption. You would not be here to-day if you required convincing in that matter (hear, hear); and I think I may go further, and say that outside this room there are not now many Englishmen who believe that England would gain by the loss of her Colonies. (Cheers.) The question now is not is it well to keep the Colonies, but how we are to keep them. (Hear, hear.) It is quite true there have been some gentlemen, and there may still be a few gentlemen—but I believe they are becoming fewer every day—who try to persuade themselves we should be better off at home if we were left to ourselves, and who look forward with pleasure—perhaps I should hardly say with pleasure, but without pain—to Australians and Canadians and South Africans ceasing to be our fellow-countrymen. Well, to my mind that prospect is unbearable (cheers), and I believe it is to yours also. It means, in my opinion, the weakening of England, the increased probability of war among Christian nations, and—I do not think the words too strong—the throwing back of the progress of civilisation. (Cheers.)

It is sometimes said that England would be richer if she could get rid of her colonial responsibilities. Well, I believe that, as a rule, the material interests of a nation are not best served by making their promotion the sole, or even the chief, aim. (Hear, hear.) The result is national degradation, and with it the loss of power, and even the faculty of making money. But, putting aside this somewhat abstract consideration, there is no fact more proved by practical experience than that the trade does follow the flag. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, we may well believe that, if the flag be lowered, trade will suffer. So much for the English view of the matter, which I have endeavoured to express in a very few words.

There are influential colonists present who can—and I doubt not will—tell us that the prospect of separation is as

hateful in the Colonies as it is here (hear, hear)—that, in their opinion, it means danger to the Colonies themselves, and an arrest of their growth; and I believe they will also tell you that there is no colonial feeling stronger than the longing that there should be such treatment of her Colonies by England as will make separation improbable, or even impossible. (Hear, hear.) We Englishmen, both at home and in the Colonies, have a different future in our mind's eye in this matter than we had a generation ago, or even than we had nine or ten years ago, when I remember trying to impress what were then thought to be rather fantastic views upon the public. But you see the reason why that is the case. The inventions of science have overcome the great difficulties of time and space which were thought to make separation almost a necessity, and we feel now that we can look forward, not to the isolated independence of England's children, but to their being united to one another, and with the mother-country, in permanent family union. I feel certain that, to the public generally, as well as to you, that prospect is as pleasant as the prospect of separation is painful. (Hear, hear.) In private affairs—and I think it is the same in public affairs—plans or hopes for the future greatly modify action in the present; and therefore we naturally are now asking ourselves what can be done to avoid the calamity of separation and insure the fulfilment of this beneficent idea of union. We are met here to-day to answer this question. We want to see how we can make this desire for union a fact, and how we can realise this grand idea of unity. I believe we must not stand by looking on. We must not suppose that present ties are in themselves strong enough to bear straining; they require to be pulled and knit together. Difficulties may arise—intercolonial difficulties, and difficulties, perhaps, between England and her Colonies—which might lead to separation if we do not take care to prevent them.

In the words of the resolution which will be submitted to you—simply submitted for discussion—it must be clear that the relations of our Colonies with the mother-country

must ultimately end either in disintegration or in some form of Federation. We have given our Colonies—those of our own race—full self-government. We should have been acting with the greatest possible folly and injustice if we had not done so; but this self-government must, end in one or other of two ways—isolated independence, or some form of general union which is expressed in the common term Federation. (Hear, hear.) What will be the actual form of this Federation is not, to my mind, the question to-day. (Hear, hear.) The word does not necessarily imply a Federal Parliament. It may, for instance, be fulfilled by a council of representatives of the different Colonies. In fact, all that is implied is that there should be some combination together of the Colonies with the mother-country which would bind them so that separation would be felt to be a most improbable result. I think myself that they are the real foes of union—or at any rate the disbelievers or sceptics of its possibility—who would ask us to-day what should be the form of Federation, or demand at this moment a written Federal Constitution. (Hear, hear.)

As the population and power of the Colonies increase, both absolutely and relatively to the power and population of England, it will every day become more and more clear that the ultimate terms of Federation must in some manner or another be framed on the principles of perfect equality. (Hear, hear.) That will appear more and more clear as time goes on. In the meantime, what is wanted is this —that those who have power and influence in England or in the Colonies should be possessed by the Federal idea, that they should seize every opportunity of working together in good fellowship and sympathy and mutual self-respect; that they should strive to co-operate in common defence, and that they should take counsel together in all Imperial matters, and especially as regards each colony in any relations with any foreign Government. (Hear, hear.) I said persons in power and authority.

I do not by that expression mean simply the members of the respective Cabinets—either the Colonial Secretary in Downing Street, or the Prime Minister of any Colony—nor do I confine the remark to members of the respective Parliaments, but I include all who, by speech or by writing, can influence what now, in our English-speaking races, must be admitted to be the great governing force—the power of public opinion. (Hear, hear.)

The main object of our meeting together to-day, and of the society which we hope to form, will be to keep constantly the idea and aim of Union before all classes of the British public, both at home and in the Colonies—before the people both in Great Britain and in Greater Britain—and especially to show to the masses and to the workmen that it is to their interest as much as to the interest of the capitalists—that we should keep together, so that our rulers, both here and in the Colonies, should let slip no opportunity, as circumstances change from day to day, of developing this idea of union, and of hastening the realisation of this principle of Federation, than which, I believe, there is none more fraught with beneficence to England, and even to the world. (Cheers.)

MR. F. P. LABILLIERE, Hon. Secretary of the Conference Committee, read letters from several gentlemen who had been expected to attend.

THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH, M.P.:*

I have no claim whatever to appear at a Federal meeting like this, for my connection with the Colonies is exceedingly slight. It consists only of that connection which, I believe, almost all Englishmen have—a connection of interest, a connection of investment, and therefore I

* Conservative Member for Westminster; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1874 to 1877; a member of Mr. Disraeli's Cabinet, and First Lord of the Admiralty, 1877 to 1880.

can only speak from the point of view of an Englishman desirous of seeing the interests of his country and the interests of the Colonies, which are identified with England, promoted and advanced. But, gentlemen, I can quite understand why I have been selected to take part in this meeting. It is in order to show that politicians of this country of all orders, degrees, and parties have one common aim and purpose, and that is the security, the development, the advancement, and the prosperity of the Empire, that we regard our Colonial friends, our cousins, and our neighbours as Englishmen in the full and true intent of the word, and that they are entitled and should obtain as complete a place in the management and in the control of the affairs of the Empire as we Englishmen claim in our own little island. In saying this I do not wish to go an atom further than my friend, Mr. Forster, has gone. We are not here to discuss the details of any scheme of Federation. We are not here to prepare a scheme which shall be put forward for the acceptance of Great Britain or the Colonies. We are here to insist upon the principle to which your Chairman has given expression in the fullest and strongest terms—the principle of unity—a unity of sympathy, of common interest, of a common purpose, and of a common object. The resolution I am called upon to move is as follows:—

"That the political relations between Great Britain and her Colonies must inevitably lead to ultimate Federation or disintegration. That in order to avert the latter, and to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is indispensable."

It appears to me that that is a proposition which is absolutely incontrovertible. (Cheers.) In recent years, within the memory of those who are within this room, the progress of the Colonies has been so vast, their extension—to use the words of Professor Seeley—has been so enormous, that unless they become integral parts of the Empire, and unless they have a voice, a concern, a power of expression

in its policy in those matters which are common to the Colonies and Great Britain, disintegration appears to me to be inevitable. (Hear, hear.) We have heard recently of an event which has occurred in the Australian seas. Unless there was a cordial feeling of sympathy and interest binding together the mother-country with the Colonies, it would be possible to conceive a different course of policy pursued by the Colonies from that which the Mother Country would seek to pursue for herself; and I can conceive no circumstances which would tend more to the disadvantage of the mother-country and also to the disadvantage of the Colonies than that a separate and distinct course of policy should be pursued on matters of that kind and importance. (Hear, hear.) But I can only refer to that question as an indication of the questions which certainly must arise in the course of the next few years unless we can find some mode of expressing that unity in stronger and more complete terms than exist at the present moment —some system by which the voice, the policy, the interests of the Colonies shall be blended with those of the mother-country, and expressed in the mother-country itself more completely than they are at the present time. (Cheers.)

My friend, Mr. Forster, has referred to our position in England. We have a large population; we have a vast amount of capital. The Colonies have great opportunities and great means for the employment of the population and for the development of their resources by means of the capital which is found to exist here. There is a basis of common interest and common advantage which we at home at all events cannot afford to neglect or leave undeveloped or unused. There can be no doubt whatever, however men may cavil at the sentiment, that the circumstances in which this country is placed require that we shall advance, and in saying that I do not wish it to be understood that we are to advance by force of arms, to advance adversely to the interests of community at large, or to the world at large. We seek no such means of advancement, but I will ask you

to consider one question—that is the increase of the population of this country, which is something altogether independent of law, or of any system which exists at the present time, to bring under control.

Our population advances; but it is certain the actual material resources of the country cannot advance in the same proportion. The increase of our population is out of all proportion to the increased capacity of the ground, the land in which we live, to maintain that population. We trust to the development of our manufactures, of our commerce, and of our trade, and these undoubtedly afford vast resources for our population; but no statesman, no Englishman can say that with all these magnificent resources at our command we dare shut our eyes to the fact that emigration, the peopling of the earth, is a necessity of this country, a necessity which we must endeavour by all means to make as successful as we possibly can. How can we do so with greater advantage to this country, to those who remain as well as those who go, than in connection with the Colonies of Great Britain, in connection with those communities which are English-speaking, which have English habits and customs, and which are in deep and real sympathy with England at home as well as abroad? I cannot myself see why every boy, if he leaves this country to become a settler in Australia or in Canada, should forego his right to take an interest, and his duty to take an interest, in the prosperity of his mother-country. (Hear, hear.) I believe in both the duty and the right. And although we do not seek to express the particular mode in which that voice shall be exercised, let us at least assert the principle that unity is to be maintained, that some method shall be found, some course adopted which shall give our colonists all the rights, and the interests, and the advantages which belong to resident Englishmen in Great Britain and Ireland. (Cheers.) I believe it can be done. At the same time, there is no worse method than by at the present time endeavouring to frame a constitution or basis of a Federal

Council, or Federal Parliament, or anything of the kind. Federation means only at the present time an aspiration after union, and it means that those who have given their life to the interests of the Colonies—and I do not distinguish the interests of the Colonies from those of the country at large, but speak of them as one country and one people—should endeavour by discussion, by study, by application, by weighing of objections, by meeting them, to at last elaborate some system which will grow into the most perfect expression of the views and wishes and wants of our fellow-subjects and countrymen beyond the seas. (Cheers.) I read some time ago a paper by Sir George Cornwall Lewis, deprecating any attempt to give expression to the views and sentiments of the Colonists in England by anything in the nature of Parliamentary representation because of the enormous distance which separated the Colonies from this country. Well, what was the distance in time which separated Scotland and Ireland from the capital 100 years ago? (Hear, hear.) Was that distance less than that which separates England from Canada at the present moment? Is Australia more remote than many of the islands to be found on the west coast of Ireland and Scotland? For all practical purposes the electric telegraph and steam have brought the most distant and the most remote colony into nearer relations, and certainly into greater sympathy with the interests of Government in the capital of London than the distant and remote portions of Great Britain were some 100 or 200 years ago. (Hear, hear.) Government was possible then, and I believe Government will be possible under the altered conditions which I suggest may possibly arise. But let me say this, as an individual, that I do not contemplate any union, any federation, any system of any kind whatever which in the slightest degree interferes with the perfect domestic and local self-government of the Colonies. (Cheers.) I regard it as an essential condition of any arrangement or attempt at arrangement that entire independence, so far as

local self-government is concerned, should be thoroughly and entirely respected. (Hear, hear.) It is impossible for us here to venture to pass laws dealing with local affairs, with the difficulties of which we are only imperfectly acquainted; but there are questions on which undoubtedly union must exist.

I could not help being struck the other day with an expression of the objects of Federation in the Bill which, I believe, has passed through one or two of the Parliaments of Australia within the last few days. It says, by way of preamble:—"Whereas it is expedient to constitute a Federal Council of Australia for the purpose of dealing with such matters of common Australian interest in respect to which united action is desirable as can be dealt with without unduly interfering with the arrangement of the internal affairs of the several colonies of the respective Legislatures." Instead of Australian I would insert English, and say that, without unduly interfering with the internal management of the several colonies by their respective Legislatures, you should have a common executive and a common power for the purpose of dealing with matters of common interest, for the purpose of dealing, for instance, with a common enemy, whether he be a convict who seeks to obtain entrance on your shores, or whether he be an enemy who seeks to take advantage of your weakness. I will venture to use the words used by Professor Seeley, in a book which I have read with great interest. He says: "All political unions exist for the good of their members, and should be just as large and no larger than they can be without ceasing to be beneficial." That is a doctrine to which I entirely adhere. If this union is not to be beneficial to its members do not attempt it. It is because I believe the union will be most beneficial to its members that I most earnestly advocate it, and I advocate it as something which will tend to advance the prosperity and happiness and strength of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Forster made one remark of great moment. He said

he thought a union of this kind would have the effect of averting war. I believe that thoroughly. (Hear, hear.) There is nothing which tends to avert war so much as strength—strength exercised wisely and properly, and I believe when we see England bound in a league of defence with her Colonies that war, so far as regards the Colonies themselves, will be impossible, and that war, so far as regards England herself, will become much less probable. It is therefore in the interests of peace and of the advancement of the human race at large that I most earnestly press this resolution on your acceptance. (Cheers.)

The Right Hon. Gentleman then proposed the first Resolution, as follows :—"That the political relations between Great Britain and her Colonies must inevitably lead to ultimate Federation or Disintegration. That in order to avert the latter, and to secure the permanent Unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is indispensable."

THE CHAIRMAN :

I have now the pleasure of calling upon a nobleman present who is not only well known in our islands, but is now well known—personally known—on the other side of the world. I am very glad, indeed, that Lord Rosebery has consented to address us. (Hear, hear.) He shows by his willingness to take part in these proceedings what he has learnt by his visit to Australia. (Hear, hear.)

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY :*

My Lords and Gentlemen,—I regard this meeting as one of very prime and special importance in the history of the Empire of Great Britain. I regard it as important for the reason that it shows that public opinion is awakening in a very marked way to what must be one of the dominant

* Under Secretary for the Home Department, 1881, in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry.

questions of the future; and in the second place, I welcome it because the presence of the ministers and the ex-ministers, and the ministers to be, at this Conference, shows that the question has been taken out of the hands of some who had dealt with it rather as a crotchet, an idea, and has become a practical and living question in this country. (Cheers.) I believe we have now put our hand to the plough, and are not likely to look back till we have some tangible result, and I view this as the inauguration of a crusade of absolutely vital importance to the future of this country. (Cheers.) Now, I think this is a matter of vital importance now; and let me tell the meeting the one reason why I think it is so at this moment. It is so now because the time will come when we shall all recognise it as a matter of pressing and supreme importance; and when the time comes it will very likely be too late to do what we ought to do now. (Cheers.) We have occasionally seen accounts of two vessels coming into collision. They meet in mid-ocean, and nothing seems to occur to them as to any necessity for avoiding each other till all of a sudden one looms on the quarter of the other, and the catastrophe takes place. My lords and gentlemen, I confess myself very anxious to see all danger to the unity of the Empire postponed by timely action within the Empire itself. (Hear, hear.) Now, my lords and gentlemen, I have had occasion already to make remarks not indirectly affecting this subject, and I have put in the forefront of what I believe to be true policy in this matter one very simple and somewhat selfish consideration, and that is, that I do not care in the future to see these seething populations of ours, these increasing populations, shut up in two islands, one of which does not particularly care about the other. (Hear, hear.) And if you carry out the doctrines which are more or less identified with the names of Sir William Molesworth and Mr. Goldwin Smith, that is the position to which you reduce the Empire of Great Britain. (Cheers.) That is, as I have said, a somewhat

selfish view, but we have to take it into consideration as a practical view, and we can then, beyond the practical view, take what is a much higher view, which is this, that there is in these distant colonies a feeling of loyalty, which can only be described as a passion, which we are not ready to avail ourselves of now, when it is time, and which, when we are anxious to avail ourselves of it, it may be too late. (Hear, hear.) Of course, the question of cost may be urged against any project of this sort, and I can quite understand, with our annually increasing expenses, that the matter of cost is a very great one; but I venture to say, if this were a matter of expense, even that should not be allowed to stand in our way. As a matter of fact, it is no question of expense at all. We have seen, only the other day, the Australian colonists, when they urged a policy on the Imperial Government, which the Imperial Government was somewhat reluctant to adopt, cheerfully offer to bear the whole of the expense; and if there were any such expense involved here, which I do not believe, money would form no difficulty between the mother country and the colonies. (Cheers.) Suppose it did cost money, and this country had to find its proportion. You have had urged on you, very eloquently and impressively, by Mr. Forster and Mr. Smith, what we should get in exchange. We should get breathing space for the Empire, for we cannot say we have any breathing spaces in these islands, and direct this great tide of emigration—this nation which annually leaves our shores—to loyal and attached homes, instead of to countries which are not so attached. (Cheers.) As I believe it is better to-day—and this is a hint which I recommend humbly to the attention of the Conference—to put this Conference on as practical a basis as possible—because we have had discussions in which ideas have been too prevalent, and have been taunted with idealism—let me give two practical illustrations of what I believe the effect of the unity of the Empire will be. There are two questions, both of them

burning questions. One of them attracts much more attention than the other, but in my view both are of imperial importance. There is the question of the French recidivists. Do you believe, my lords and gentlemen, that if Australia had been as integral a part of Great Britain as Kent, it would have been seriously proposed to turn all the criminal refuse of France loose upon an island within a few days of her shores? (Hear, hear.) Do you believe, if Australia had been an integral part of this country, it would have been seriously proposed to poison with this criminal refuse not merely the islands of New Caledonia, but all the adjacent islands of the beautiful Pacific? (Hear, hear.) I believe that is a practical test. That point shows how this question affects the colonies. Let me allude to another question which affects the mother country. We are now all profoundly agitated about who is to have the paramount position in Egypt. I am not going to introduce controverted political matters. But does anybody here suppose if Australia and the colonies had the same position to this country that Scotland or Ireland have, that she would not claim to be heard to a very considerable extent as to who should have paramount influence on the banks of the canal, which is the nearest road between Great Britain and her Southern Empire? (Cheers.) I cannot touch any further on the subject; it is like dancing on hot coals. (Laughter.) But I do venture to point out that these two practical points do show the necessity of a united Empire. (Cheers.) Our being present admits the principle, I take it, of the necessity of federation; and therefore, anything said on that point, unless it was practical, would be so much surplusage. Therefore, I do not wish to dwell another moment on that point. One or two words upon a question which is always asked of the advocates of federation—"How are you to manage it?" We never meet with a man in private life who is not convinced of the necessity of imperial federation, but he almost always goes on to say that no scheme was ever propounded, and that

no scheme ever could be propounded No one expects that any scheme will be evolved by this Conference to-day. I should exceedingly regret to see any such scheme evolved, even if it were a practical and workable scheme, because it would have the stamp of haste upon it, and would not commend itself to the country. But there are certain points which no statesman, I think, who wishes to consider this question practically, can afford to disregard. One was stated clearly, and with the cordial assent of the meeting, by the last speaker. He said nothing could affect the local Government of Great Britain by its own Parliamentary institutions. I believe none of her colonies would wish to interfere with her domestic self-government, and I believe any proposition of that sort would be received with an outcry—and a just outcry—among the population of Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) But with regard to this point, I suspect that any proper scheme of federation would lead, not to a diminution of local self-government, but rather to an increase of local self-government. I am not sure that this is not an integral and vital part of any scheme. But in England, as I take it—certainly in the nineteenth century—there are two absolute necessities in any scheme of administrative reform. The first is that it should be preceded by inquiry, and the second—particularly in such a case as this—is that it should be tentative in its nature. (Hear, hear.) I am perfectly certain that if anybody were to introduce an absolutely perfect and complete scheme to the Parliament of Great Britain for the federation of the Empire, to which no possible objection of time or space could be urged, that scheme would have no chance of acceptance. The British Parliament would say, and wisely say, "We will go gently; we wish to see how this scheme works in minor matters before we proceed to any cut-and-dried Constitution of the British Empire." That has always been the way in the British Constitution, and I do not suppose that on this, the largest of all questions which could occupy Parliament,

they would wish to depart from the traditional rule. (Hear, hear.) In relation to the two points I have urged, I want to say, as regards inquiry, I do think the Government might do two things. I think the Government might appoint a committee, or a royal commission, to inquire into the practicability of any such federal idea. I think they might do so for more than one reason. In the first place, you would get the best men to sit upon such a council—statesmen of tried experience, colonial representatives, and persons who would sift all the claims presented to them, and report exhaustively on them to the British Parliament. In the second place, if it were not able to achieve results such as these, it would, at any rate, have this effect: it would show throughout our vast colonial Empire that the Government of this country are not showing a want of interest in those distant colonies. (Cheers.) And let me remark in passing, it might do one thing more. Even if there was a disinclination to issue a royal commission, or to nominate a select committee, the Government might send out invitations to the colonial governments to ask them if they could suggest any scheme, or what their predisposition towards the idea might be. I believe that would have a healthy influence on the governments of Australia and Canada, because no one can travel in those countries without being aware of the sensitiveness, and just sensitiveness, of the colonists to the attitude of the British Government in relation to their claims. (Hear, hear.) As regards a tentative experiment in the direction we are seeking, I may be considered to be a person of one idea on this subject; but I do believe it might seriously be considered by the House of Lords if delegates from the colonies might not be admitted to sit as do delegates in the Senate of the United States. Of course, that would be a large change, but not so large as it at first appears. The main objection always

urged is that of distance. I think that question has been conclusively dealt with by Mr. Smith, but I would point out an even more recent illustration. I refer to the state of California, which, when a territory, and a distance of weeks from the main seat of government, sent delegates to the Senate of the United States without the slightest difficulty. I do not believe in the difficulty of distance; and I believe a tentative experiment in the House of Lords would not interfere with the financial control of the House of Commons over the affairs of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) I invite consideration to these two or three points. I see it is proposed that a society should be formed with the direct object of bringing this question before the country. I think that a very good idea. There is another idea I have long wanted to lay before such a meeting as this. I cannot see why there should not be formed some sort of vigilance committee; that is a word which explains practically what I mean, although it is not perhaps quite correctly used on this occasion—of members of both Houses of Parliament with regard to colonial questions, for the purpose of ventilating them, and keeping an eye on them in both Houses. (Hear, hear.) At present anybody who wants to take any action with regard to colonial matters, has not much support, simply because he has no means of knowing who are the members of Parliament who are interested in such matters. The other point is of minor importance—namely, that this Conference, if it feels it has done good work to-day, should adjourn to some day during the autumn session, when there will be more leisure for members of Parliament to attend. (Hear, hear.) I have dealt entirely with practical points, and I now come to the most practical of all. It is that you should not postpone this question till it is too late. On both sides the world—across the western ocean and across the southern ocean—you have two

great countries—empires, if you will, stretching forth their hands to you in passionate loyalty and devotion to the country from which they spring. If you will not avail yourselves of that sentiment now, the time may come when you will bitterly repent it; and it is therefore from the timely and practical handling of this question that I hope to see the greatest benefit arise. (Cheers.)

SIR CHARLES TUPPER :*

I cannot express sufficiently the regret that I feel at having been compelled by imperative official duty to be absent at the opening of this most interesting meeting, and the more because I was most anxious to hear the remarks of our distinguished Chairman, whose name, I need not tell you, is a household word throughout the British Colonies—(hear, hear)—and whose opinions are known to be so entirely in favour of the perpetuation of the colonial connection with the Empire as to command a degree of confidence and respect that could not be exceeded by any other name. (Hear, hear.) No gentleman in this assembly witnesses with greater satisfaction and pride than I do a meeting like the present, embracing gentlemen occupying leading and distinguished positions in both the great parties of this country, brought together upon a common platform —a platform calculated to carry out the best interests, not only of these British islands, but of the colonial portion of the Empire as well. (Cheers.) No person can witness with greater pleasure than I do the growing feeling that is exhibited in this country among the statesmen of all parties in regard to this most important and vital question. I do not believe it possible to discover, in all the great questions that occupy the attention of the statesmen of

* High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada, and formerly Premier of Nova Scotia. Has held several important offices in the Dominion Cabinet.

this country, a question in which these British islands or the great colonial dependencies of these islands are more vitally and deeply interested than the consideration of the means by which the tie that now binds them together may be drawn still closer and perpetuated indefinitely. (Hear, hear.) So far I am entirely in accord with the views and the sentiments which have brought this conference together, and although I had not the good fortune to hear the explanations in regard to this first resolution offered by the Chairman or the right hon. mover of this resolution, I may be permitted to say that, in the light of the statements and explanations given by the distinguished nobleman who has just taken his seat, I can find very little to take exception to. (Hear, hear.) But in justice to my own views and opinions I may be permitted briefly to point out the grounds on which I ventured, before the meeting assembled, to suggest to the Chairman the desirability of a slight alteration of the wording of the resolution declaring that "the political relations between Great Britain and her Colonies must inevitably lead to ultimate federation or disintegration." I am not prepared to agree in the declaration of that abstract opinion in an unqualified manner. (Hear, hear.) I will briefly state why.

The great Colony, the great British Dependency with which I am more intimately connected—the Dominion of Canada—has recently undergone a radical change in her constitution. Seventeen years ago, at the instance of all parties in the country, the Imperial Parliament was approached with a proposition to enable us to unite the various isolated provinces of British North America under one Government. We obtained the hearty co-operation of the Crown and the Imperial Parliament, and a new constitution was given, under which one Federal Government was formed, extending from the little island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence—Prince Edward's Island—to Vancouver Island in the Pacific. It would be impossible, I believe, for the most sanguine promoter of that great constitutional change

to have anticipated the admirable results that have followed. The noble lord referred in fitting terms to the enthusiastic loyalty to the Crown and the devoted attachment to British institutions which pervade the Colonial Empire, and I have no hesitation in saying it would be impossible for any constitutional change to increase that sentiment of loyalty to the Crown or that love of British institutions which animates Canada from end to end. The same may be said, no doubt, of the great provinces of Australasia. Those who have been watching the progress of Canada for the last seventeen years know that, under the influence of that great change, her progress during that time will bear favourable comparison with the progress of any portion of the great Republic to our south, rapid as has been its growth. If, therefore, a degree of progress has been made that is almost unexampled—seeing the improved credit and development of the country, such that we have had the means of grappling with vast public works of an imperial character; and knowing, as I know, the marked growth and development of devotion to the Crown and British institutions—if, I say, under our constitution this is what has taken place, I can hardly subscribe to the proposition that these relations must be changed in order to prevent disintegration. So smooth have been the relations between the Dominion and the Imperial Governments, so little friction has there been, that we have never come to them without meeting with a hearty and zealous response to all our efforts for the development of the country. Under these circumstances, while I hail with delight anything which will more completely bind the two countries together, I feel some difficulty in declaring that those relations must be changed if we are not to separate from the Crown. (Hear, hear.)

The noble lord proposed, and I think the proposition an admirable one, that a royal commission should be issued—for what purpose? For the purpose of accomplishing federation? No; but for the purpose of ascertaining

whether federation is practicable. If it is necessary to inquire into the practicability of a federal connection between the mother country and her Colonies, it is, surely, too soon to say that federation is necessary to prevent disintegration, and I should not be doing justice to myself if, holding such strong opinions, I failed to express them. (Hear, hear.) It has been said, you cannot hope to devise a cut-and-dried scheme of federal organisation, but while it remains a controverted question whether you can devise such a scheme, I am unwilling to subscribe to the abstract proposition contained in the resolution. I go most heartily with the language and sentiments of gentlemen present in desiring to draw closer the tie which binds us to the mother country, and I should be greatly pleased if any slight modification of this resolution could be adopted, so as not to put us in the position of declaring to the world that the connection can only be maintained by a federal union, but that we do not know whether a federal union is practicable. The principle of perpetuating the connection between the Colonies and the Empire we have all at heart. It deserves our most zealous co-operation, and will be accepted, I believe, by the great dependency with which I have the honour to be connected. (Cheers.)

THE EARL OF WEMYSS:

I beg to move that the resolution be amended by striking out the first two lines, and that the resolution should then read:—"That, to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is desirable." I move that as an amendment.

MR. BOMPAS, Q.C.:

I do not like either the resolution or the amendment, and I would suggest that the first of the minutes that the Committee have placed on the table should be substituted. That would overcome the whole difficulty.

THE CHAIRMAN:

Perhaps I may be allowed to make one or two remarks. I am sure we are much obliged to Sir Charles Tupper both for his sympathy and criticism. What we want is that, agreeing as we do in principle, we should so express that principle as not to give rise to misconception here or in the Colonies. In using the word "Federation," we do not by any means bind ourselves to a particular form of Federal Parliament. It may be effected by representation in the Imperial Parliament, or it may be by a Council of representatives of the Colonies. We want to convey the notion that ultimately, hereafter, there must be a union, in some form or other, of England with her Colonies, on terms of perfect equality to the Colonies as well as to England; and I do not know any word which will better express that notion than the word "Federation." Sir Charles Tupper gave us an excellent illustration of how Federation does tend to prevent disunion or disruption by showing that the difficulty which years ago would have been thought quite as great, and even greater, than is the difficulty between England and her Colonies now, has been so successfully surmounted, and by that means differences which would certainly have arisen have been avoided. I quite understand, however, that it is undesirable to indulge in prophecy, and it is not necessary to do it. I think Lord Wemyss's suggestion is a good one, but I should be glad to hear the opinions of gentlemen present. The resolution would then read thus:—"That, in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is indispensable."

THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH:

So far as I am concerned, I am prepared, as the mover of the resolution, cordially to accept the suggestion made. There is no difference of opinion on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

MR. G. W. RUSDEN:

I had already written out a resolution to the effect that, "in order to promote the welfare of the Empire, it is desirable to establish some form of Federation of the Colonies with the United Kingdom." I prefer the word "welfare" to "prosperity." I hope Mr. Smith will adopt this resolution.

THE CHAIRMAN:

The resolution now before the meeting is in these words:—"That, in order to secure the permanent union of the Empire, some form of Federation is indispensable."

THE EARL OF WEMYSS:

Desirable.

LORD BURY:*

We are to consider the substituted resolution as the one under discussion. I rise for the purpose of saying that, as a very old worker in this cause, I wish the cause every success. For the last thirty years I have taken very great interest in this matter. When we talked of the necessity of the Federation of the Empire only twenty-five or twenty-six years ago, we addressed deaf ears. The school of Mr. Goldwin Smith was very much in the ascendant in the country, and the general body of the population was not fully convinced of the necessity of preserving the integrity of the Empire. Look at the state of things now. The meeting that is assembled in this room represents all classes of thought, all political opinions; and men from every part of the world are met, not to affirm the necessity of the continuity of the bond between Great Britain and the Colonies (for that is a matter admitted by all), but to

* Under Secretary of State for War in Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry.

decide upon some practical way in which that continuity can be best secured and advanced. For twenty-five years past the subject we are now discussing has been making giant strides. It has been, in various parts of the Empire, tried and found a success; and this has inspired other parts of the Empire to try it. We are doing what our right hon. Chairman advised us to do—trying this matter in detail—knowing full well that it could have but one result—the eventual solid Federation of the Empire. The experience of the past years has shown that the colonising qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race are such that that race will eventually become the dominant race of the world, and we only require to be welded together in one homogeneous whole to hasten that very desirable event. (Hear, hear.) I do not want, at this moment, to enter into any details, but merely rise for the purpose of asking this meeting to allow me to express the deep sympathy with which I regard the movement here inaugurated. We are all agreed as to what is to be done, and we will all put our shoulders to the wheel when we are shown the way in which we are to proceed. Such a meeting is too large to discuss details. I suppose that, by subsequent resolutions, to a small committee will be committed the formulating of some scheme. The movement will, I feel confident, be a thorough success; and I think you are to be congratulated, Sir, on having assembled under your presidency such a very representative body, coming from all parts of the world. (Cheers.)

MR. BOMPAS, Q.C.:

Even as the resolution now stands, Sir, it seems to me that it is open to some extent to the objection raised by Sir Charles Tupper, whereas the first minute submitted by the Committee seems to me to exactly correspond to the wishes of the meeting. It does not definitely bind us on any point, but declares that the Colonies should have "an

adequate voice in the control" of the Empire. What that adequate control shall be is a matter for the Committee to decide. Surely, nobody will deny that they ought to have an adequate control, and a fair share in sustaining the responsibilities of the Empire. What that fair share shall be may be left for minute consideration. Federation, as I understand, means that and something more. I beg to move the first minute as an amendment.

SIR HENRY HOLLAND, M.P. : *

I hope the amendment will not be pressed. This is only a conference. I do not understand the learned gentleman to deny that "in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire some form of Federation is desirable." I myself would prefer the stronger word indispensable. However, I do not understand the learned gentleman to deny the proposition. Do not let us go into the question whether the Colonies should bear any part of the Imperial responsibilities. There will be plenty of difficulties when we enter that stage or case, and I earnestly hope the amendment will be withdrawn. Only one word more. With reference to procedure, I venture most respectfully to suggest that the Society should, if possible, keep clear of Royal Commissions, or Committees, and all sorts of Colonial Office inquiries. (Hear, hear.) I speak as an old hand at the Colonial Office. (Laughter.) We are a society composed of all classes of politics in this country and the Colonies, and I think we should, if possible, keep clear of these official or semi-official inquiries. (Hear, hear.) The Society, as Lord Rosebery has said, is one of great influence—quite sufficient influence with the Colonies and the statesmen of the Colonies to get their opinions thoroughly before us without resorting to official inquiries. (Hear, hear.)

* Conservative Member for Midhurst. Assistant Under Secretary for the Colonies, 1870 to 1874. Member of the Imperial Defence Commission.

MR. W. WESTGARTH,

As a further amendment, suggested the omission of the word "federation," and the insertion in its place of the words "some form of political union."

MR. R. DOBELL (CANADA):

Contrasted with the meeting held some four years ago, this gathering, really so harmonious and unanimous, shows at a glance what progress this question has made in Great Britain. I endorse very warmly all the last speaker has said. Avoid Royal Commissions and the Government. This question, if it is to be worked out at all, must be worked out by practical men in the Colonies and Great Britain. At the last meeting convened by the Dominion Board of Trade in Canada, an irresponsible and unofficial body, after three days' discussion, we could only arrive at one resolution, and that was to the effect that it was desirable to draw closer the political and trade relations between Great Britain and the Colonies, and that to secure the unity of the Empire some form of federation was the most desirable and practical means of furthering that end. I do not think we could adopt anything better than that. I am glad to see there is some hope of this question being put in a practical shape, especially after our Chairman and other distinguished men have taken a move in it. I can confirm what fell from the High Commissioner, that in Canada we would be one in favour of the movement. I think the simpler the resolution could be made the better, and I would suggest the one that I have just read.

MR. T. D. WANLISS (BALLARAT):

I think something practical should come out of this meeting, and that we should take a decided step. As an addition to the resolution, I would move:—"That this Conference is of opinion that, as a preliminary step towards

PUBLIC LIBRARY MITCHELL LIBRARY N.S.W.

the Federation of the British Empire, it is desirable in the meanwhile to recommend the Government of the United Kingdom to form a Colonial Council—to consist of the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner for Canada, and the Agents-General for the several Colonies, with power to the various Colonies to appoint an additional number in proportion to one member to one and a half million of the population." (Cries of "Question.") If such a Council were created, it would, in my opinion, be the beginning of something larger and better.

Mr. Wanliss was proceeding to refer to the origin of the British Cabinet and of the Indian Council as precedents, when

Mr. F. YOUNG, interposing, said:

I rise, Sir, to order. The statement may be very interesting, but it is, I venture to think, out of order to go into details at this meeting.

MR. WANLISS:

If this addition to the resolution meets with the approval of the meeting, it would, I think, be a practical step towards the object we have in view, and I beg to move it.

THE CHAIRMAN:

I would put it to the gentleman who has just spoken whether there is not some truth in the remark of my friend Mr. Young, that we do not wish to come to a decision upon these points to-day. It might come afterwards. I think there is a good deal to be said for the resolution he proposes, but it goes much more into detail than is necessary at a preliminary meeting.

SIR J. EARDLEY WILMOT, M.P.: *

I do not like the terms either of the resolution or the amendment, and I would respectfully lay before you a short resolution, which I think will obviate the objections that have been raised. It is:—"That it would be to the best advantage of Great Britain and her Colonies that a Federal Union between them should be established." I listened with great respect to the remarks made by Sir Charles Tupper, and I agree that we should endeavour to avoid any expression that would be regarded as showing that we had the least idea of doubting whether perpetual unity will be preserved.

MR. E. STANHOPE, M.P.:

Let us try to show ourselves unanimous. We are unanimous. (Hear, hear.) Each one of us might make some suggestion commending itself to our individual feeling, but let us try to combine upon the resolution which Sir Charles Tupper has accepted as amended, and which I believe is agreeable to almost every one in the room. (Hear, hear.)

MR. SERJEANT SIMON, M.P.: †

I hope, Sir, that on this occasion we shall not pass over a group of Colonies which have hitherto occupied a very important position, and which at this moment stand in great contrast to the Colonies to which more particular reference has been made. We have been speaking of Australia and Canada—countries of enormous size, great resources, and with a great future. It is with the view of retaining the allegiance of those Colonies that this meeting has mainly been called. But there is another group of our Colonies—our possessions in the West Indies—which are

* Conservative Member for South Warwickshire.

† Liberal Member for Dewsbury.

not in the same happy position, and cannot look forward to the same happy future that these Colonies can. They have passed under great trials and vicissitudes, through no fault of their own, but entirely under the operation and influence of Imperial legislation. These Colonies formerly had complete self-government; from some of them that self-government has been taken away. The island of Jamaica, for instance, which has been a Crown Colony for seventeen years, has had a partial restoration of self-government. ("Question.") This is the question. Let us consider, not only our great dependencies, which we cannot defy or displease; but let us give some attention and consideration to those Colonies which are not in this position of independence. They have not been mentioned in one of the resolutions that are submitted, and I beg to suggest that the terms of the fifth resolution, which provides that copies of the resolutions shall be forwarded to the several Agents-General, be extended so as to include the West Indies, which have no Agent-General. (Hear, hear.)

THE CHAIRMAN:

We do not wish to hurry the meeting, but I believe there is really an agreement. (Hear, hear.) I dare say words better than any that have been suggested might, if we thought long enough, be produced; but I cannot help thinking that with the alteration that has been made the resolution really meets the general feeling of the meeting. It is in this form:

"That in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation," not "is indispensable," but "will be indispensable."

THE EARL OF WEMYSS:

Is desirable.

THE CHAIRMAN:

Allow me to say one word about "desirable." I hope we shall not be content with that word. (Hear, hear.) Everybody desires it. We have got beyond merely wishing it, and we think that something bad will happen if we do not get it.

The resolution was then submitted to the meeting in the following form, and passed unanimously:—"That, in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is essential."

MR. E. STANHOPE, M.P.:*

I have so little practical experience in this matter that in reality what I have to say may perfectly well be summed up by expressing hearty concurrence with the general feeling of the meeting, and my desire to co-operate with the Committee to gain a practical agreement. I do not think any one can exaggerate the growth of this movement. Some nine or ten years ago those who have spoken in this room would have been criticised as being practically visionaries. We have got, I am glad to say, far beyond that. What we have got to do to-day is to get tight hold of the idea we have in common, and endeavour to give it practical effect by the steps we shall take hereafter. I do not think anything more true was said than has been said by the Chairman in his excellent speech in 1875, when he stated that the adoption of an idea sometimes tends to its realisation. I believe that is so in this case, and that if we get tight hold of the idea of Federation or Imperial unity we may proceed step by step to impress on the public opinion of the country the great and growing importance of this question, the very great difference the realisation of the

* Conservative Member for Mid-Somersetshire. Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade in Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry, 1875 to 1878. Under Secretary of State for India, 1878 to 1880.

idea would make to us and the world in general, and the cowardice which would consist in abandoning the idea of maintaining the unity of the Empire simply because the Empire is already very large. (Hear, hear.) The feeling is growing, I believe, among our fellow-subjects abroad even more largely than in this country. They do not like to have the political cold shoulder from this country, and they are entitled to have from us, as we shall give them to-day, our hearty sympathy and our assurance that in the policy we desire to adopt for the future towards our Colonies we are looking to the idea, not of separation, but of giving them, in some mode or another, a more real part in the Government of this great Empire. (Hear, hear.) It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I beg to move—

"That for the purpose of enlightening and instructing the people, both in the United Kingdom and the Colonies, as to the incalculable advantages which will accrue to the whole Empire from the adoption of such a system of political organisation, a Society be formed of men of all parties, to advocate and support the principle of Federation.

"That this Conference refers to a Committee all details connected with the establishment and organisation of such a Society, for a report thereon to be submitted for the consideration and approval of an adjourned Conference, to be held at a suitable period in the ensuing year."

I know a great many persons have a strong objection to the formation at the present time of any new society, but I am sure there is no object for which the formation of a new society is more desirable than the cause of Federation, which we are here to advocate to-day.

THE HON. OLIVER MOWATT:*

I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution. I came not for the purpose of taking part in the discussion,

* Prime Minister of Ontario.

but of hearing what was said and seeing who said it. It is impossible to exaggerate the feeling of loyalty and affection that exists in Canada. While that is the case I feel I would have had no difficulty in acceding to the resolution as it was proposed, and to which Sir Charles Tupper took exception. We feel in Canada that it is perfectly impossible for the present state of things to be permanent. We have all the feelings of British freemen, and we pretty generally feel that for a country numbering five millions of people to be permanently under an authority in which they have no representation is a thing that cannot be. But we rejoice in the connection as it exists now. It has been one of unmixed good, and I believe will continue so, even should no constitutional change be found practicable. We have felt great difficulty, many of us, in perceiving how any scheme can be suggested which would answer the purpose. A scheme which was thought practicable here might not be practicable abroad. I do not think any scheme has been propounded which our people have thought to be a really practicable one. We do not, however, abandon the idea in despair. (Hear, hear.) What are statesmen for, imperial or colonial? For the purpose of resolving difficulties. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) It has been found possible, both here and in the Colonies, to solve difficulties that seemed insolvable. (Cheers.) While I am not as sanguine as some as to our finding some satisfactory scheme for promoting the permanent unity of the Empire, I am as anxious as anybody for such a scheme; and would rejoice as much as anybody if the solution could be found. That is the feeling which I am sure animates the breasts of $\frac{19}{20}$ths of the people of Ontario, whom I represent. (Cheers.)

MR. W. GISBORNE (New Zealand): *

I feel a considerable interest in this question. I have passed many years of public life in the Colony of New

* Formerly Member of the New Zealand Ministry.

Zealand, where the question of the relations of the United Kingdom to her Colonies has elicited much discussion, and where it has, I think, presented more puzzling problems than in any other part of the British dominions. I am glad to hear from you, Sir, that we start from a common principle—the unity of the British Empire; and aim at a common end—the permanence of that union. I am only expressing my own individual views—I have no right to speak on behalf of any one—but I see two great anomalies in the existing state of the relations between the United Kingdom and the Colonies. These difficulties will only come into prominence when England goes into war with a great naval power. (Hear, hear.) What will then be the case? The strength of a connection lies in the weakest part, and I wish to point out that in the state of things which will some day happen there will be a most defective link between England and her Colonies. (Hear, hear.) On the one side the United Kingdom will be paying for the naval defence of outlying parts of the Colonies without any assured or regular contribution from those Colonies (I am speaking of self-governing Colonies), although in those Colonies the average taxpayer is in a better position than the average taxpayer in the United Kingdom. (Hear, hear.) But what will be the state of the Colonies? The state of a Colony would be much worse. The Colony would not, like the United Kingdom, have had any voice in the origination of the war. It would have no voice in its prosecution, or in bringing it to a speedy and honourable termination. And yet the Colony must, under any circumstances, be a serious sufferer. Trade would suffer, and in the event—a very possible event—of any sudden attack by an enemy on the Colony the damage inflicted must be very grievous, and a great loss incurred both in life and property. (Hear, hear.) I would not say one word against the loyalty and the patriotism of Englishmen either at home or abroad. They are unquestionable. But I say there are hard, practical questions—(hear, hear)—which

must not be left altogether to be regulated by an impulse of feeling. There are duties and responsibilities involved attaching to all parties, which must be determined and adjusted each in its due proportion. What is the remedy for these anomalies? I say the confederation of independent groups of Colonies, however useful for certain purposes, is no remedy for these anomalies. (Hear, hear.) It may be questioned whether this confederation of independent groups is even an aid to the Imperial confederation to which we wish to attain. The only remedy consists in some sort of Imperial confederation—some kind of Imperial confederation for the external defence of the whole Empire. (Hear, hear.) I believe in that will lie the true remedy for the anomalous state of the relations between England and the Colonies if England went to war with a naval power, and that in that lies the only approach to a permanent unity of the Empire. I believe, if that could be effected, anything which must be required to supplement or perfect that unity could be attained afterwards with perfect ease. Let us approach the question, if possible, in that direction. Let us try by some means to put prominently this question of Imperial confederation for external defence before the public, so that it may elicit public discussion throughout the Empire, with a fair prospect of arriving at some practical conclusion. Once accomplish some such kind of confederation, and I believe the danger of disintegration of the Empire would at once cease, and the process of incorporation would at once begin.

This vast British Empire would never then become a disjointed or dissolving mass, but would become a living and coherent whole—an Empire, at unity in itself, and around which the course of time would only wrap closer and closer the bonds. (Cheers.) I hold that the existence of such an Empire would not only be of incalculable advantage to its own inhabitants, but would also be a material guarantee for the peace, order, and good government of the world, and the advancement of the whole human race. (Cheers.)

THE MARQUIS OF NORMANBY: *

In coming to this meeting to-day, I did so simply for the purpose of hearing the discussion which would take place, and without the least intention of addressing the meeting. It is the feeling that possibly, considering the position I have so long held in the Australasian Colonies, and also in Nova Scotia, my absolute silence might be misinterpreted, which has induced me to address you. I yield to no man in my anxiety for the union of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) I am anxious to see the bonds which connect the mother country with her Colonies strengthened as much as possible. (Hear, hear.) I rejoice, therefore, to see this movement which has taken place, for during the long years I have spent in the Colonies I have year by year learnt to respect, to admire, and to love those Colonies more and more. (Cheers.) I know how slow great movements of this kind move in England, and I think, in the words of the resolution, that the time has come when some step should be taken towards strengthening the union between the mother country and her Colonies. I only rise now publicly to say that this object has my entire and hearty support. (Cheers.)

MR. CROPPER, M.P.: †

As far as I know the people of this country, the object of this meeting is one that will have their hearty support. The feeling of unity with our Colonies is not lacking among the humbler part of the population, but they would have the heartiest sympathy with a society formed to carry out such an idea. (Hear, hear.) I would venture to support the suggestion just put forward by Lord Rosebery, that the meeting should be adjourned to some day during the forthcoming autumn

* Has been Governor, in succession, of Nova Scotia, Queensland, New Zealand, and Victoria.

† Liberal Member for Kendal.

session. I was very much struck with the speeches made by the gentlemen from the Colonies, especially with that from my friend on my left. (Mr. Gisborne.) They show that the feeling in favour of this movement exists in other countries, and I am convinced that if those present could go among the meetings which will be held in sufficient numbers, no doubt, during the next three months, they would find a very general feeling in support of a movement of this kind. I trust the resolution will not result in lecturing and instructing the people merely, but that we shall meet together as soon as possible to take a further step. (Hear, hear.)

MR. W. C. BORLASE, M.P.: *

I venture to make a suggestion. The object of the Society to be formed is "to enlighten and instruct the people." I think nothing has done more to enlighten and instruct the people upon this subject than the admirable lectures of Professor Seeley. My suggestion is that one of the first works the Society should take in hand is to print and circulate these lectures, if it could be arranged, in a cheap and popular form, both in England and her Colonies. (Hear, hear.) I doubt whether there are very many present to-day who have not read and benefited by those lectures.

THE CHAIRMAN:

The suggestion is well worth the consideration of the Executive Committee, but I would remind the meeting that no large subscriptions are wanted to this movement. Our great object is to let the public know what we are aiming at, and ask for their assistance. We believe all that is required is that it should be known such a Society is at work, and we believe it will get abundant support. (Hear,

* Liberal Member for East Cornwall.

hear.) There will be certain expenses for printing, advertising, &c. I myself have subscribed £10, and perhaps other gentlemen present will make contributions.

MR. G. W. RUSDEN:*

I venture to think that people generally, and especially people in the Colonies, do not like to be told they want "enlightening and instructing," and I suggest that for those words should be substituted "influencing public opinion." People in the Colonies have thought over this subject for many years. They have felt the shoe pinch much more than in England.

ADMIRAL WILSON:†

I think the word "Federation" in the first resolution will be misunderstood both at home and abroad, and may be made use of by the enemies of the meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN:

The word is contained in the first resolution, and I hardly think we can alter it.

MR. J. HENNIKER HEATON (New South Wales):

It is said that all flesh is grass, and if that is so there must be a great deal of Australian grass in England at the present time. (Laughter.) I wish to take advantage of the opportunity of saying that all true Australians believe in an Imperial union, which we believe would be a guarantee for the peace of the world and for our own safety. I think the words "Imperial Union" would be better understood than "Federation" in Australia.

* Member of the Civil Service in Victoria.

† Late Commodore on the Australian Station.

The resolution, with the words "influencing public opinion" substituted for "enlightening and instructing the people," was put to the meeting and agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN:

We have got through the resolutions affecting the principle, and we now come to the details. I think the suggestion that has been made, that we should not adjourn till next year, but that we should adjourn till the autumn, is a very good one. It is quite true the Government have only got one thing to do, but it is no reason why everybody else should only have that to do. The reason why next year was mentioned was to enable us to get answers from the Colonies, but I think we all feel that this is a matter which will have to be done step by step, and I dare say by the autumn even we shall be glad of further suggestions. The next resolution relates to the appointment of an Executive Committee. It should be clearly understood that that Committee is not appointed to fix the objects of the Society, or to produce a plan of Federal Union. We have not yet come to that. (Hear, hear.) The duty of the Committee is to consider the question of organisation.

MR. ALBERT GREY, M.P., moved: *

"That the Committee consist of Frederick Young, Esq., Chairman; Captain J. C. R. Colomb, R.M.A., Vice-Chairman; Francis P. Labillière, Esq., Hon. Sec.; T. Dennistoun Wood, Esq., H. O. Arnold-Forster, Esq., and Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton, Hon. Treasurers; Sir Daniel Cooper, Bart.; W. J. Courthope, Esq.; Alex. Staveley Hill, Esq., Q.C., M.P.; Roper Lethbridge, Esq.; Sir Samuel Wilson, with power to add to their number; and that, pending further notice, all communications be addressed to F. P. Labillière, Esq., 5, Pump Court, Temple, E.C."

I would like to move an amendment, which will have

* Liberal Member for South Northumberland.

the cordial goodwill and approval of every gentleman in the room, and will, I trust, receive the ready and willing assent of our Chairman also. It is, that the Committee referred to in Resolution No. 4 be presided over by our Chairman of to-day. (Hear, hear.) If he will kindly give us his approval to that suggestion, I am sure it will be cordially adopted by every one in this room. It is exceedingly important we should have as Chairman some one whose name is a household word in the Colonies. These resolutions will be printed in every Colonial newspaper. They will be eagerly scanned and hotly discussed by people whose loyalty Lord Rosebery has described as passionate. It is most important, I think, that the Chairman of the Committee should be a gentleman of the position of Mr. Forster, whose knowledge of Colonial matters is so great, and whose name is so well known beyond the seas. (Hear, hear.)

ADMIRAL SIR SPENCER ROBINSON:

I beg to second the resolution. I have attended the meeting with the greatest possible satisfaction and delight, and I am sure everybody who has listened to the various speakers has felt as I have felt—that this is an important point in the history of our country. We have before us a prospect—and a not distant prospect, I hope—of working out the designs contained in the resolutions which have been so well and ably discussed. I hope with all my heart that we shall follow the advice of our Chairman, and refuse to enter into details which are not proper to a preliminary conference. (Hear, hear.)

THE CHAIRMAN:

One word about the alteration in the resolution. I do not think that the actual names are of great importance, but I shall be glad to give any time I can to the matter. (Hear, hear.) If I am to be there, I shall have to get the assistance of Mr. Young; and I cannot mention the name

of Mr. Young without saying that, through bad report and good report, and through no report at all—which is by far the most disheartening thing—my friend, Mr. Young, has stood by this cause of the permanent unity of the Empire for many years past. (Cheers.)

MR. F. YOUNG :*

Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word or two. I did not intend to take any part in the discussion on the present occasion; but as my name has been prominently mentioned in connection with the resolution, I may say that I think the suggestion of Mr. Albert Grey is a most admirable one, and I shall rejoice very much to have Mr. Forster to preside over us. (Hear, hear.) I shall be most happy to render any assistance in my power in carrying out the work of this great conference, either as deputy-chairman when Mr. Forster is unable to attend, or in any other way. (Hear, hear.) It should be perfectly understood that this Committee is not intended to have any power to formulate a scheme. It is intended simply to organise the Society, and to suggest something to a future conference, which it will be for that conference either to accept or reject. I hope you will quite understand that I cordially agree to the proposition of Mr. Albert Grey. (Hear, hear.)

DR. CLARK:

I would like to suggest that the Committee be termed a Provisional Committee. There will probably be an appeal to the country very soon, and we ought to do all we can to bring this question before the people in the meantime, in order that the next Parliament may be in a position to deal with it. I have lectured a great deal amongst Liberal and workingmen's clubs and associations in London and the provinces, and I

* Hon. Secretary of the Royal Colonial Institute.

can testify that public opinion is much more advanced on this subject than many people would believe.

With the addition of the name of Mr. Young as one of the vice-chairmen, and the insertion of the word "Provisional" before "Committee," the third and fourth resolutions were adopted.

On the motion of Mr. ALEXANDER McARTHUR,* M.P., seconded by GENERAL LOWRY, it was also resolved—"That copies of these resolutions be transmitted to her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioners for Canada, and the Agents-General for the other Colonies, with a request that they will forward them to their respective Governments; and that copies also be sent to the Governors of such Colonies as are not represented by Agents-General."

It was further agreed that, by way of amendment, the word "political" should be omitted from the second resolution, the Chairman explaining that the word might be misunderstood abroad.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER:

Without taking up time unnecessarily, I venture to move a resolution to which you will unanimously agree, and that is, that we pass a hearty vote of thanks to our Chairman for the able manner in which he has discharged his duties to-day. (Cheers.) His duties have been discharged not only with ability, but with tact, which is so important on occasions of this kind. Let me further say, and I can speak especially for the Colony from which I come, that there is no name which could be placed at the head of a great movement of this kind which will command such hearty support and confidence among all classes as that of the right hon. gentleman. (Cheers.)

* Liberal Member for Leicester. Formerly Member of the Legislative Assembly, and also of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.

MR. G. W. RUSDEN:

I beg to second the resolution, and to assure Mr. Forster that as Sir Charles Tupper has answered for Canada, so I, who have spent half a century in the Australian Colonies, can say that there also his name is regarded with the same kind of feeling. We know that he does not give up to party what was meant for mankind, and the identification of his name with this movement will inspire confidence among Englishmen in all parts of the world. (Cheers.)

The resolution was passed with acclamation.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Forster):

I cannot too warmly thank the mover and the seconder of the resolution for the kind words they have expressed. They are far too kind. But they are spoken with some authority, and I shall remember them as one of the bright spots in a political life which has not been bright altogether. Of course, every one who tries to do his duty must occasionally meet with what is unpleasant as well as what is pleasant; but this day will hereafter be remembered to me on a much stronger ground than this. I think I have now seen—and I think we all see—the beginning of a movement than which I believe there has been none of more importance to the world. We know there are difficulties, and we shall not endeavour to shirk them; but we believe it lies in the English character, and in English determination, to get the better of them, and that we shall eventually see—even I, I believe, shall see—the beneficent fact of the world encircled by self-governing English communities in a firm bond of friendship and permanent alliance one with another. (Cheers.)

The proceedings then terminated.

The following Minute of the views of the Committee was submitted to the Conference :—

The Committee would submit to the Conference :—

1. That in order to maintain the permanent unity of the Empire some extension of its political organisation will be indispensable, so that the large and rapidly increasing population of the portions of the Empire beyond the seas may have an adequate voice in the control of Foreign relations, defence, and all other common interests and concerns, and may take a fair share in sustaining Imperial responsibilities.

2. That the time has arrived when those who feel the need of some political organisation for this purpose should openly advocate such a policy.

3. That, whilst there should no longer be any hesitation on the part of the advocates of the unity of the Empire in pointing to Federation as the end they have ultimately in view, they should at present avoid embarrassing the question by attempting specifically to lay down the details of a Federal organisation for the Empire; neither should they prescribe the time within which the establishment of such a Federation should take place.

4. That, in order to attain the end in view, it is only necessary to bring home to the minds of the people of this country, and of the Colonies, the advantages of the permanent unity and ultimate Federation of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australasia, South Africa, and other British Colonies, as our great national aim in the future, the details being left to be adjusted by those authoritatively empowered to arrange them on behalf of this country and the Colonies, when the time shall arrive for the formation of such Federation.

5. That if the permanent unity of the Empire be kept clearly in view, and the nature of Federal Government be well considered, its adoption will not be difficult, even if

the growth of the Colonies or the circumstances of the Empire should require it to be carried out sooner than may be anticipated.

6. The Committee recommend the formation of a Society for the special object of enlightening public opinion throughout the Empire as to the advantages of permanent unity, and as to the nature and different forms of Federal Government; so that the people of the Empire, both in these Isles and beyond the seas, may be the better able to decide as to the exact form of that Government which they may prefer whenever they shall feel that the time has arrived for its adoption.

The following is a copy of the Resolutions as finally adopted and unanimously passed by the Conference :—

1. That, in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is essential.

2. That, for the purpose of influencing public opinion, both in the United Kingdom and the Colonies, by showing the incalculable advantages which will accrue to the whole Empire from the adoption of such a system of organisation, a Society be formed of men of all parties, to advocate and support the principle of Federation.

3. That this Conference refers to a Provisional Committee all details connected with the establishment and organisation of such a Society, for a report thereon to be submitted for the consideration and approval of an adjourned Conference, to be held at a suitable period in the coming autumn.

4. That the Provisional Committee consist of the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., Chairman; Frederick Young, Esq., and Captain J. C. R. Colomb, Vice-Chairmen; Francis P. Labillière, Esq., Honorary Secretary; J. Dennistoun Wood, Esq., H. O. Arnold-Forster, Esq.,* and

* Subsequently to the Conference, the Committee resolved that Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster be appointed joint Hon. Sec. with Mr. F. P. Labillière, instead of continuing one of the Hon. Treasurers.

Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton, Hon. Treasurers; Sir Daniel Cooper, Bart., W. J. Courthope, Esq., Alex. Stavely Hill, Esq., Q.C., M.P., and Sir Samuel Wilson, with power to add to their number; and that, pending further notice, all communications be addressed to F. P. Labillière, Esq., 5, Pump Court, Temple, E.C.

5. That copies of these Resolutions be transmitted to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner for Canada, and the Agents-General for the Australasian and Cape Colonies, with a request that they will forward them to their respective Governments; and that copies be also sent to the Governors of Colonies not having Agents-General.

6. That this Conference do now adjourn to a date to be hereafter named.

The preceding Minute and Resolutions were subsequently forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada, the Agents-General for the Australian Colonies and for the Cape, and also to the Governors of all Colonies not having Agents-General.

With very few and unimportant exceptions, the Press, both in London and in the Provinces, took a most favourable view of the Conference and its objects.

A few extracts from some of the leading journals of the United Kingdom are given below:—

Times.

"The Conference which assembled yesterday at the Westminster Palace Hotel to consider the question of Imperial Federation is a remarkable sign of the times. It included representatives, official and unofficial, of all the more important

colonies, and conspicuous members of both political parties at home. Mr. Forster was in the chair, and was supported by Lord Rosebery, Lord Wemyss, Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Stanhope, Sir Henry Holland, Mr. Cowen, Mr. Bryce, and other public men of every shade of political opinion. Ex-Governors of the principal dependencies of the Crown, such as Lord Normanby and Sir Henry Barkly, were there, as well as military and naval officers of distinction to whom the defence of the Empire is a problem of the highest practical interest, and Colonial High Commissioners, Agents-General, and Ministers in large numbers. Mr. Forster's earnest and energetic speech at the opening of the proceedings was followed up by Mr. Smith and Lord Rosebery, who respectively proposed and seconded the first resolution, affirming 'That the political relations between Great Britain and her Colonies must inevitably lead to ultimate federation or disintegration,' and 'that in order to avert the latter and to secure the permanent unity of the Empire some form of federation is indispensable.' It is no exaggeration to say that a dozen years ago such a movement as that initiated yesterday would have been absolutely impossible. The ideas of Mr. Cobden were then in the ascendant. The dominant party in the State was powerfully influenced by the ingenious and passionate arguments of writers like Mr. Goldwin Smith, and by a reaction against the policy of Lord Palmerston. There were some even then who contended for the principle of a federal union between the mother country and her Colonies, but the question was not regarded as a practical one, and it would have been difficult to induce any politician of mark to identify himself with a project which seemed likely to remain a splendid but impracticable Utopian dream. To-day the conditions are very different. The Colonies are no longer looked upon with cool indifference or ill-disguised dislike. We are proud of them, and we have confidence in them. We have no excuse for treating them as poor relations, importunate and exacting and not to be trusted in time of need. Our Colonial fellow-subjects, with few exceptions, have developed and given ample proof of a self-reliant and manly temper which, instead of leading, as Mr. Goldwin Smith anticipated, to a demand for political independence,

has been concurrent and incorporated in its growth with a spirit of devoted loyalty to the British Crown and the British Flag. Whenever danger has threatened, or seemed to threaten, the Empire the Colonists have been forward, not, as 'sophisters and economists' had calculated, to shelter themselves from risk by separating their fortunes from the mother country, but to offer—nay, to press upon—the Imperial Government their moral sympathy and their material support. Social intercourse between Great Britain and Greater Britain has become closer every year; trade, letters, arts, even sport, have been incessantly forging new links between them, and it would now be impossible to sever the connection without a wrench which would be felt in every part of the body politic. So it happens that in the present day the problem of Imperial Federation presents itself to the minds of statesmen, not only as a practical, but as an urgent one. Those who have been and will be again Ministers of the Crown, Liberals as well as Conservatives, have been convinced that the difficulties of action—and no one who understands the question underrates those difficulties—are outweighed by the dangers of inaction.

"The Conference agreed yesterday, very wisely, to drop from the first resolution the statement that unless federation in some form be adopted, disintegration must ensue. That proposition is argumentatively defensible, and probably the conviction underlying it is among the strongest of the motives which brought the promoters of the movement together. But as Sir Charles Tupper, the High Commissioner for the Canadian Dominion, pointed out, to affirm that disintegration can only be averted by the adoption of a federal scheme must, if such a scheme be long delayed, only tend to strengthen the advocates, at present few and feeble, of separation. It would be rash to predict that a federal union of the Empire will be carried into effect without hesitations and controversies, or that even those associated at the Conference can be brought easily to an agreement on the bases of the project to be offered for the acceptance of the people of the mother country and of the Colonies. While the federal policy remains in abeyance the Separatists must not be allowed to argue that, by the admis-

sion of the Unionists themselves, the existing state of things cannot endure.

"We have no doubt that, inconvenient and unsatisfactory as the present system is, the loyalty of the Colonists is capable of bearing even a greater strain, though it would be inexpedient as well as unfair to subject them to it. The Conference, however, has been content to affirm the general principle of federation and to appoint a committee with a view to future inquiry and discussion. The vagueness of the question in this form provides a security against divisions of opinion within the movement, but it weakens the force of the appeal made by the Conference to public opinion. Still it is clear that the subject must pass through the present phase before any particular scheme of federal co-operation, such as that which Lord Wemyss suggests in a letter we print elsewhere, can be usefully considered in its details. When the English people have made up their minds—as we believe they are fully prepared to do—that it is worth while entering into close relations with the Colonies, the practical qualities which are characteristic of English statesmanship will surely be able to overcome the superficial difficulties of the problem.

"The obstacles to union interposed by distance and extent of territory have vastly diminished, and are diminishing from day to day. Steamships and railways, postal organisation and, above all, the electric telegraph, have brought the most distant provinces of our Colonial Empire at the present day into intimate connexion with the mother country. Australians and Canadians are, in every real sense of the word, nearer to the centre of English social life and political activity than the country people of Scotland or Ireland, or even of England, a century and a half ago. Moreover, we must reckon with a new distribution of population and of power in the next or the succeeding generation. France and Germany, if the present movement of population continues, will then have fallen back into the second rank as compared with Russia on the one side and the United States on the other, and if England is satisfied to remain a purely insular State she, too, will have to recede before younger and stronger communities.

"But it will be her own fault if she breaks the ties which

bind her daughter nations to her. No doubt there are and will be points of difference between the mother country and the Colonies, and a premature and ill-considered scheme of federation would be specially dangerous for this reason, because, unless the machinery worked well, it would inevitably lead to friction and irritation. As Lord Rosebery, however, observed in his interesting speech at the Conference, some supposed difficulties are imaginary rather than real. The Colonists are quite prepared to pay their fair share of any expenditure incurred for the common benefit, if they be allowed by some means to have a voice, however limited, in determining the policy of the Empire. There is no fear that federation will be made a pretext for diminishing the local self-government of the Colonies; on this both Mr. Smith and Lord Rosebery were very decided. It is no less clear that Colonists cannot intervene in the domestic concerns of the United Kingdom. But there is a wide circle of interests common to the mother country and the Colonies. Lord Rosebery mentioned the Egyptian question, which is one of paramount importance to the people of Australia, though in determining what the policy of the Empire shall be in regard to it they have no voice. Another subject on which the Australians have effectually, though somewhat irregularly, made themselves heard is the conduct of France in exporting her 'incorrigible criminals' to the Pacific, disregarding its overflow upon the shores of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. We welcome, in the answer given by the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, on Monday night, to a question whether the Colonists would be allowed to legislate for their own protection, a proof that Lord Derby's frigid indifference has been thawed by demonstrations the warmth of which cannot be ignored. Mr. Ashley said that if the necessity arose the Imperial Government would not interfere with well-considered legislation by the combined Colonies against the intrusion of criminal aliens. At the same time, the Foreign Office has been using its utmost endeavours to induce the French Government to prevent the question from becoming a serious one, as it might well become if the Colonists were driven to act for their own protection. We understand that

Lord Lyons has urged most strongly that the objections of the Australians to the Recidivist Bill would not be removed by any code of regulations or restrictions to be enforced in New Caledonia. The only assurance which will satisfy the Colonists is that no Recidivists are to be sent out to the Pacific at all. M. Ferry's reception of the representations of the British Ambassador was considerate and encouraging. The progress of the Bill will be almost certainly delayed till after the recess; the report of the Committee was only laid before the Senate yesterday, and in the existing state of French politics it is improbable that much business will be done before the close of the Parliamentary session. The chances of the ultimate abandonment of the Bill are increased by this delay. It is quite certain, however, that, as Lord Rosebery put it, if Australia had been an integral part of the British Empire, it would never have been seriously proposed, even in France, to poison the country with 'criminal refuse.'"

Standard.

"The remarkable gathering that assembled yesterday at the Westminster Palace Hotel to discuss the propriety of Imperial Federation was in itself the best evidence that this question has emerged from the regions of patriotic dreamland to the sphere of actual politics. It is rare in these days to find representative men of all parties uniting in the promotion of a political movement, and though probably an attempt to give practical application to the views propounded at yesterday's Conference would disclose many diversities of opinion, the absolute unanimity which has now been obtained as to the principle of the scheme will prepare the way for a solution of the problem when a suitable time arrives. The advisability of retaining our Colonies is a question which, as Mr. Forster remarked, has been finally disposed of. We have now to consider how we can best organise that union which both the mother-country and the Colonies are resolved to maintain. It was no part of yesterday's proceedings to suggest any plan, nor is the scheme yet ripe for practical elaboration. Nevertheless, the supporters of this movement have no reason to be dis-

satisfied with the progress of their views in the public mind. A dozen years ago the idea of Imperial Federation hardly existed except in name; or, if it did, it was subscribed to only by some hardy patriots and a few supposed crotcheteers. The Government of the day was known to be resigned to disintegration, and some of its prominent members were strenuous advocates of separation. The world was still oppressed by the idea of remoteness, and but imperfectly realised that by the scientific achievements of our own era distance had been virtually abolished. Dissolution was accepted as the inevitable fate of empire, and we were supposed to be exhibiting our enlightenment by promoting our own dismemberment. Moreover, Federation—the then doubtful experiment of the United States apart—was somehow associated with Centralisation, with "Imperialism," with military despotism, and with a host of other more or less obnoxious doctrines, and was, therefore, supposed to be inimical to liberty. The conception of free States combining for self-protection on a grand scale was not yet understood. A great Party was dominated by parochial notions, and a Federation of the Colonies was, in spite of the development of political organisation, as inconceivable to many people as a Kingdom of the Middle Ages would have been to the Municipal Statesmen of Attica. To equally erroneous, if more excusable, sentiments, was added a perverted notion of our material interests, which, from its very selfishness, inspired a popular reaction that sensibly facilitated the progress of the Imperial idea. But even a more important agency than a growing appreciation of our national duty was the centripetal influence of the Colonies themselves. In Australia, in South Africa, in America, our kinsmen caught up the Imperial tradition with all the fervour of national youth, and not only refused to separate individually from the mother-country, but collectively interdicted the dislocation of an Empire in which they claimed an inheritance. This movement in the Colonies demolished at once the foundation of all the theories of Separatists. It was found that a tendency towards disintegration was not inevitable; that the action of our North American Colonies last century, which, till then, was held to govern all similar connections, was due to special and temporary causes;

and that the force of cohesion in politics might, under certain circumstances, be more powerful than that of dissolution. Nor has the selfish notion of a burdensome connection been less effectually controverted. The incidence of Imperial liability may not be yet scientifically adjusted, but the indirect advantages accruing to us are now admitted to compensate for much of our direct outlay, and the recent action of the Australasian Colonies respecting the administration of the Pacific proves that they would be by no means unwilling, under an organised Federation, to contribute their quota towards Imperial expenditure.

"Although the Conference avoided a formal discussion of details, and left over these matters till the means and the opportunity arose for profitably entertaining them, it was impossible to avoid reference to what might be the real outcome of the movement. Several suggestions were hazarded, notably by Lord ROSEBERY, who, fresh from his visit to the Antipodes, rather shares the impatience of the Colonists for participation in Imperial affairs; but no one cared to anticipate the solution to be provided by the growth of public opinion and the force of events. It is contrary to the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race to project cut-and-dried Constitutions. An experiment in the present case would be the less happy, because the circumstances cannot be governed by any historical example. Not so long ago commercial intercourse was supposed to precede political unity. Experience has shown that, however excellent fiscal freedom may be, its political influence has been over-estimated. The German Customs Union was certainly the forerunner of the Empire, but it was little more. The Latin Monetary Union, which, in the imagination of NAPOLEON III., was to have been the basis of an undefined political and commercial superstructure, has produced no effect whatever, beyond the restricted purpose to which it was originally applied. On the other hand, we find in America an ill-assorted Customs Union maintained only by the intense political sympathy of the Federated States; and in India the commercial relations with the foreign settlements are closer than with native States, such as Indore and Gwalior, whose fiscal methods are altogether at variance with the system obtaining in the Empire, to which

they are united by the closest political, religious, and social ties. But whatever may be the effects of a Zollverein—and at one time it was supposed to be the only possible bond in the British system—its application is now admitted to be out of the question. Not only are the Colonies at issue with the mother-country on this subject, but they are hostile to one another. Since, however, it has been proved that a Customs cordon between Victoria and New South Wales as rigid as that along the Pyrenees is no barrier to cordial political co-operation in inter-Colonial matters, there is no reason to believe that a mere conflict of tariffs—much as this might be deplored by sensible people on economical grounds—would impair the sentiment of Imperial unity. Nay, so little importance is placed upon the reaction of different political and economical unions, that both the French and Portuguese have united their Indian Possessions to the fiscal system of British India, and some strictly loyal Canadians are now found advocating a commercial union with the United States. If a Zollverein is harmless for discord, it is evidently useless for political union. Other expedients must be found—or, rather, allowed to declare themselves. Any interference with our insular Parliamentary system would at this moment be repugnant to the people of the United Kingdom. Our political system in its present development offers no room for an Imperial Senate. But possibly the germ of a Federated Administration will be found in a representative Colonial Council to advise the Secretary of State on matters of common interest. The materials for such a body are already at hand, and its influence would develop in the ratio of its usefulness.

"But the Colonists and supporters of Federation generally will have reason to be satisfied if yesterday's Conference should lead to no more visible result than the affirmation of the principle contained in the Resolution moved by Mr. W. H. Smith, that "some form of Federation is indispensable," and to the formation of the Committee suggested by Mr. Stanhope, for the purpose of influencing and enlightening public opinion on the advantages to be derived from a closer union with our Colonial possessions. They have already to congratulate themselves on the conversion of all Parties in this country, and on

obtaining material concessions from their old opponents. It is something to have extorted from the Liberal Party, which so ostentatiously offered them the cold shoulder when last in power a sincere recognition of their "manifest destiny." The result is due not only to the prevalence of more enlightened ideas at home, but in an especial manner to the energy of the Australian Colonies themselves. The persistency with which these Colonies have asserted their right to be heard in Imperial matters connected with their own regions has secured them a footing in Imperial Councils that scarcely requires the formal recognition of legislative enactment. The creation of an 'Australasian Dominion' will almost necessarily involve the transfer of the direction of the affairs of the Pacific to Sydney or Melbourne, as matters connected with the North-American Continent are now practically concentrated at Ottawa. With this acquisition, the Colonies may reasonably allow the project of an elaborate Federal Constitution to stand over. The Federation, like our own national institutions, will probably exist in fact long before it is admitted in theory. Its influence may be already traced, and in due course provision will be made for a fuller allocation of Imperial responsibilities. It is something to have destroyed the disintegration theory; it requires only a continuance of the efforts of the past few years to convince the population of every possession of the Crown that a Federated British Empire would be an immense material advantage to ourselves, and a guarantee of peace and progress to the world."

Daily News.

"The Conference on Imperial Federation, which was held yesterday at the Westminster Palace Hotel, shows that the divisions of party among Englishmen, even when they are most keenly edged, are compatible with community of national feeling. Mr. Forster and Lord Rosebery on the one side, and Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. Stanhope on the other, are illustrations of the interest which Liberals and Conservatives alike take in preserving the unity of the Empire. We do not think that there is any danger of its being disturbed. It is impracticable to divorce those who wish to remain united. In discussing the question of nationality Mr. J. S. Mill said that it

was impossible to define in what its essence consisted. A common race, religion, and language are strong bonds. But they do not always preserve national unity, and they are not essential to it. Switzerland is a nation, and the Swiss patriotism is as ardent and steady as that of any European country. Yet in Switzerland the Cantons are not only divided in matters of religion into Protestant and Catholic, but also by language and race into German, French, and Italian. Mr. Mill came to the conclusion that nothing more could be said on the subject than that a nation was one which felt itself to be one. In the same way we may say that the British Empire is one because it feels itself to be one. The testimony borne yesterday to this community of sentiment by such men as Mr. Forster and Mr. Smith on behalf of England, and by the representatives of Canada and the Australian colonies, is a witness to a fact which makes predictions of separation as futile as theories of federation are premature. Our Colonial system has passed through several phases. Little more than a generation ago the unity of the Empire was maintained by the almost despotic rule of the mother-country over what were truly called her Dependencies. Since self-government was conceded to the Colonies the British Empire has consisted of an association of free States with a certain primacy and authority on the part of England often little more than nominal and titular.

"This condition of things has been attended with a certain amount of inconvenience. There has been occasional discord, now and then threatening conflict, and there have been hostile tariffs, but the sentiment of union has been stronger than these difficulties; and without forecasting any scheme of Imperial Federation, we believe that one will gradually shape itself with a little aid from human wisdom as opportunity and necessity suggest. Such a system may be something new in human history; but history has not yet exhausted itself, and the living being may be trusted to create for itself an organisation suitable to its character and needs. We do not believe that the dominion of England will within any time, or under any circumstances, which it is reasonable to contemplate, be restricted to these two islands, still less to one of them. Possibly, under stress of events, this or that colony may separate itself. But

the English are still an expanding and emigrating nation, and others will be formed, the growth of which will maintain the Empire undiminished. Cut and dried schemes of deliberate separation, such as that which Lord Rosebery connected truly enough with the name of Mr. Goldwin Smith, and quite erroneously with that of the late Sir William Molesworth, are powerless against old historic traditions, common sentiment, and the conviction of common interests. The opening speech of Mr. Forster, whose hold upon his countrymen is largely due to the strong fibre of old English patriotism which runs through his character, and which redeems occasional errors, as we think them, of opinion and conduct, struck the keynote of the meeting yesterday with a vigour and clearness which elicited prompt and hearty response. Our only doubt is as to whether the Conference was not in itself superfluous, except in so far as manifestations of a feeling strengthen the feeling itself. Otherwise it might seem to be giving reality to a fictitious danger. This at any rate is, we think, certain. When an Empire or any other organisation, political, social, or physical, begins to fall in pieces, it is because its life is decaying. While there is still a vigorous principle of vitality within it, it will continue to maintain itself, and growth or expansion in one direction will atone for loss or decline in another. This branch may be lopped off, or that shoot may be transplanted, but there will be other shoots and branches so long as the roots are vigorous and supply sap to the trunk."

Daily Telegraph.

"At last it would seem that, if a great idea can be brought to realisation, we are within measurable distance of a federated Anglo-Saxon Empire. The project of uniting all our colonies to the mother country in some more visible and tangible form than at present is not a new one, but it has never been so prominently brought forward as at the meeting called together yesterday morning in London to welcome and support the general scheme of Federation. We have already dwelt by anticipation with the pregnant and Imperial topic which was there discussed, and the fact that it is a subject above party politics is sufficiently evidenced by men like Mr. Forster, Mr.

Smith, and Lord Rosebery uniting together in support of the same views. Really and truly the question which was debated by the earnest speakers at the Westminster Palace Hotel was, What are we to do with our Empire? Is it to be retained as a priceless legacy from times gone by, or is it to be got rid of, piecemeal, with the utmost degree of speed consistent with Radical convenience? It is noteworthy that the first resolution declared 'that the political relations between Great Britain and her colonies must inevitably lead to ultimate Federation or disintegration.' Thinkers who are not afflicted with what Mr. Spencer calls the 'bias of patriotism' might demur to these terms. Professor Goldwin Smith, for example, had he assisted at yesterday's gathering, would probably have moved to omit the words which make it appear even possible that the Empire may not ultimately be broken into fragments. But it is noticeable that the Colonists, or those most capable of speaking on their behalf, do not take this gloomy view of the future. Thus Sir Charles Tupper objected to the resolution we have referred to because it breathed the base notion of disintegration as the alternative to Federation. There is, in the opinion of the greatest Colonial authorities, no reason in the nature of things why our Imperial children should not go on in their present state of affectionate unity with the mother country till the end of history. Mr. Forster, we believe, was perfectly correct when he said that 'influential Colonists would tell them that the prospect of separation was as hateful to the Colonists as it is to us at home.' But there is no doubt that the existing tie is loose, irregular, and so far unsatisfactory. It does not bring home to the popular imagination either of England or her colonies the fact of the kinship between distant communities and the reality of our Imperial relationship. To numbers of our countrymen the first idea of the vastness and the grandeur of the Empire and of the reality of the newer Englands across the ocean comes with a sense of surprise as a result of travel; and those who do not make the trip to Canada or Australia often fail to receive the impression at all.

"Yet our Colonial friends would be making a real mistake if they supposed that there is one whit less of pride in the power and prosperity of those distant possesions now than in

any previous period of our annals. It is possible, of course, that some day a colony may drift away from us; Lord Rosebery's warning that we may delay Federation till it is too late to federate is not at all unnecessary; but if that evil hour ever arrives we may be sure that we shall never realise so vividly the value of our Colonial Empire as when we are on the point of losing it altogether.

"Specific plans for Federation between all the component parts of the British Empire may possibly be premature. Mr. Forster, the chairman of the meeting of yesterday, stated that the ultimate form which Federation should take was not the main question for the audience to consider. Mr. Smith also deprecated hasty counsels at what was practically only a preliminary Conference. Yet some practical outcome ought to result from the efforts of those who have organised the new movement, or the subject will inevitably sink back into the region of aspiration and hope where it has so long lain. We ourselves have suggested the scheme of a Federal Council which might carry on its labours side by side with the Imperial Parliament. Lord Rosebery, whose interest in the Colonies must have been quickened by a recent visit to Australia, proposed the appointment of a Committee or a Royal Commission to examine into schemes of Federation, and to report to Parliament upon the best working plan presented to them. There would be a double advantage in such a course being adopted: in the first place, the evidence taken would serve to show how and in what direction the first experimental attempt to federate might best be made; and, besides this, there would be the solid benefit of the interest which would be excited, and the fresh tie which such an inquiry would constitute between Great Britain and the 'Greater Britain.' At the present moment, nothing could well be looser than the formal bond between England and Canada, for example. In all internal matters the Canadians manage, and ought to manage, their own affairs; they possess what a hundred years ago would have been considered a most dangerous institution—a Parliament of their own. The presence of a Governor, sent out periodically from England, to represent the paramount authority of the Crown, and the existence of a power of appeal from legal decisions to

the Privy Council in England, are about the sole indications that Canada is not at this moment possessed of the independence which some philosophers wish to force upon her.

"Such are the formal bonds. But we have, of course, omitted the strongest of all possible ties—the feeling of attachment to the mother-country and her institutions which does practically make us and our most remote Colonial kinsmen portions of one large 'family party.' That bond, albeit sentimental, is one which is more valuable than any other; but we must remember that in future the Colonists will unavoidably lose something of the personal fondness for the 'green fields of England,' as generations arise which know them not except by the tales they have heard from their fathers or from what they read in books. There is also some danger lest a race-relationship of which there is no outward manifestation perpetually recurring will gradually and insensibly be weakened. Our colonies are loyal and patriotic to the core; but it is only human nature to think of that which is seen, and to forget what does not bring itself constantly before the imagination. These are undoubtedly the sentiments which are entertained by the most patriotic of our Colonial statesmen, and which found expression at yesterday's Conference. We believe that no greater or nobler work was ever inaugurated than this of drawing together Great Britain and her insular and Continental offshoots into a federated partnership, in which all shall participate in the benefits, and of which the power will be infinitely greater for mutual good and mutual protection than in a loosely-bound congeries of atoms, such as is the British Empire of to-day. We must take account of the expansion of the Colonies. We shall soon have to do with peoples as numerous and as industrious as our own. Our Colonial children will outgrow their parent; they number already as many as all the population of this kingdom at the time of the American War of Independence; and we must think of them already as powerful kindred nations, soon to become still more powerful, whom it is alike our interest and our glory to join with us in directing the future course of our Imperial history.

"One objection which is sometimes heard to the plan of Colonial representatives in either House of Parliament is that

the distance is so great that, at election time, it would be difficult to make the machinery work. But the answer which the senior Member for Westminster gave yesterday to this argument is conclusive. Canada is not so far off now as Londonderry or Aberdeen in last century. The mail-coaches which were in vogue up to the introduction of the railway system hardly brought Edinburgh into closer communion with London than is Montreal or Quebec at the present day.

"It used to be considered a wonderful feat when letters were brought in four days from the capital of Scotland; while Mr. Smith truly remarked that Australia in point of time is hardly more distant now than were the islands on the west coast of Scotland or Ireland a century ago. Then the telegraph has joined England with the Antipodes in a manner which renders Melbourne or Sydney really much nearer for purposes of commerce and business than was Dublin or Glasgow sixty years back. With Australian cricketers coming over every summer to England, and with English scientific men rushing off to hold the meeting of the British Association in Canada, space is already annihilated. The Empire is brought close together, and the desired Federation would be only the formal ratification of a change induced by the marvels of steam and electricity. It is now scarcely more than a hundred years since Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks first set foot in Australia; yet what a mighty revolution has supervened since that date! 'No missionarising,' once wrote Dr. Arnold, 'is half so beneficial as to try to pour sound and healthy blood into a young, civilised society—to make our colony, if possible, like the ancient colonies or like New England, a living sucker from the mother-country, bearing the same blossom and the same fruit.' To some the topic of Federation may appear uninteresting because it is not a 'burning question,' or because it would be difficult to manufacture out of it any political capital worth speaking of at the polling-booths. We trust that no such sentiments will prevail in the consideration of this noble and far-reaching project, but that there may be sufficient patriotism still left in these islands to understand the vital importance of a real union of the Empire, and enough statesmanship to carry it out."

Morning Post.

"The movement which was inaugurated yesterday at the Conference held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, with a view to the Federation of Great Britain and her Colonies, is calculated to be followed by results the magnitude and importance of which cannot be exaggerated. Even the least observant must have noticed that of late years the relations between the mother country and the offspring she has called into existence in various parts of the globe have assumed a character which points at no distant period either to a much closer union than at present exists between the two or to a complete separation. The Colonies form, it is true, so many distinct portions of the British Empire, and those who inhabit them are, we are rejoiced to say, no less loyal to the British Crown than the inhabitants of the United Kingdom. But in the necessity of things a conflict, or, perhaps, more correctly speaking, a want of unity of interests, occasionally arises, which imperceptibly raises the question whether it is worth while to maintain a connection which to a greater or less extent hampers the action of both. On the one hand it is urged that England does not gain so many material advantages from the Colonies as to justify her in accepting onerous engagements and liabilities on their account, whilst on the other the Colonies, finding their peculiar interests threatened by a state of things which, save in the most remote degree, does not affect the parent country, are naturally indignant if, in the vindication of their rights, they do not obtain the sympathy and support to which they consider themselves justly entitled. A case in point arose a short time since, and for that matter is still pending, when the Australian Colonies protested against the deportation of French criminals to islands in close proximity to their territories. Their protests met with but a half-hearted support from the Home Government, and, though their loyalty to the Crown and their desire to maintain the existing connection with the parent country are undiminished, they are by the mere force of circumstances compelled to consider whether, with a view to their own self-preservation, they ought not to take independent action.

"At the Conference which was held yesterday it is especially gratifying that those who took part in it were statesmen entertaining the most diverse opinions on questions of domestic policy. The chair was taken by Mr. Forster, and the first resolution, which affirmed the necessity of adopting some form of federation between Great Britain and her Colonies in order to avert the disintegration of the Empire, was moved by Mr. W. H. Smith and seconded by the Earl of Rosebery. The important issue raised is in no sense a party one, because every British subject, whatever his special political predilections, must be equally interested in maintaining the integrity of the Empire in which he takes a pride. And it is impossible for any one to study attentively the relations which at present exist between the parent country and her dependencies without agreeing with Mr. Forster that sooner or later there must be disintegration or federation. The question is not, as the Member for Bradford put it, whether we shall keep our Colonies, but how we shall keep them; and, although it would be premature to ask in what manner this end is to be accomplished, it is none too soon to invite discussion as to the best way of solving this problem. It is, further, to be taken into consideration that the inventions of modern science have gone far to annihilate those difficulties of time and space which only a few years ago might have been supposed to raise insuperable obstacles to the realisation of such a scheme as is now advocated. It is not too much to say that our Canadian, South African, and Australian dependencies, not to speak of our Indian Empire, are now much closer to England than was Ireland at the commencement of the present century; and if it was then found not only possible, but expedient, to effect a union between the latter country and Great Britain, how much more so should it be now to establish a federation between the United Kingdom and her various Colonies, however scattered over the face of the globe, which would have the effect of creating such a community of interest as would enable all to present a solid front to the rest of the world. The first object should be, as Mr. Forster expressed it, to effect so close a combination that separation should be felt to be a most improbable result.

"Taking for granted—and we presume the proposition will not be disputed—that the unity of the British Empire is preferable to its disintegration, the question necessarily presents itself whether we should not take advantage of conditions which at present exist, but which may possibly soon disappear, to effect that combination by which all will equally benefit. This was specially dwelt upon in the speeches of Mr. Smith and Lord Rosebery. We have now a strong feeling of loyalty and attachment subsisting between the Colonies and the United Kingdom, but no one can say how long it will last if the Home Government adopt the selfish policy of declining to allow the Imperial policy to be affected by the wants of the Colonies. Let us take for example our dependencies in the Australian Continent and the adjacent islands. They have assumed a magnitude and have acquired a power which unquestionably supply to them a temptation to refuse to confide their interests to the keeping of the particular statesman who for the time being happens to preside at the Colonial Office at Whitehall. This temptation should be removed by enabling them, as an integral portion of a great empire, to employ their due weight and influence in securing due protection for their interests. It is no little advantage, as Mr. Smith pointed out, that England should possess Colonies to which her surplus population should be sent, which, whilst founding new fields of industry, would still feel that they continued British subjects, with unabated interest in the maintenance of the British Empire. If the parent country manifests indifference, these Colonies must perforce take measures for their own protection, and disintegration must be the necessary result. The unjustifiable intervention of Great Britain a century ago brought about the revolt of the American Colonies, and her apathy may now lead to a practically identical result as regards dependencies which are only too anxious to maintain their allegiance to the British Crown. This point is apparent to many, both in this country and in the Colonies, but until now no attempt has been made to avert it. The Conference of yesterday very properly abstained from propounding any scheme of federation. That can only be the outcome of long and anxious deliberation, in which the representatives of the Colonies must take a part. What-

ever form it assumed it would, as Lord Rosebery observed, necsssarily leave intact the existing Government and Constitution of the United Kingdom. But there certainly seems to be no insuperable obstacles to the creation of such a 'bond' or union between Great Britain and the Colonies as, whilst leaving the domestic institutions of each and all unaffected, would nevertheless, in respect to the external relations of the whole with foreign States, create a bond of union with a singleness of purpose and identity of interest as would conduce to the security of what under those conditions would be an undivided empire.

Daily Chronicle.

"For men capable of taking an extended view of the future of this country, the Conference held yesterday under the presidency of Mr. W. E. Forster has a deep significance. Indeed, it can hardly be doubted that the outcome of the resolutions unanimously passed on that occasion will lead in the fulness of time to the serious consideration by Parliament of what Lord Rosebery, in the course of his remarkable speech, called 'the largest of all questions' that can occupy a legislative assembly. It was neither expected nor desired that any scheme for the federation of Great Britain and her colonies should be propounded in the course of the proceedings yesterday. The objects of a gathering including men of widely different political creeds were to elicit the opinions of those present as to the importance and practicability of such a federation as that just indicated, and to found a society for the purpose of promoting that union of interests between the mother-country and her colonists, which is really essential to the continued stability and prosperity of the Empire. Both these objects were accomplished, and with a heartiness that speaks well for the energy which will be devoted to promoting the new undertaking. It is impossible to conceal from ourselves the fact that sooner or later the great communities which live beyond the seas will in succession, as they develop in population and in power, seek to rid themselves of any trammels which we have imposed upon them, unless we can confer upon them advantages

more than commensurate with the control we would exercise over them. As was said yesterday, either federation must in course of time take place or 'disintegration.' To allow immense populations of the same race and language as ourselves, and living under the same laws, to separate themselves from us for ever would be to bring about ultimately the isolation of England to an extent which would not only be fatal to her great influence among nations, but would seriously affect our commercial prosperity; for, as Mr. Forster observed in the course of his remarks on this aspect of the question, 'no fact is more clearly proved by practical experience than that the trade follows the flag.' The power of a country among the nations of the earth does not depend solely upon her wealth, and even if it did there are clear grounds for believing that if this Empire were reduced to 'two islands, one of which did not particularly care about the other,' that wealth would soon be seriously decreased. Fortunately, there is yet the warmest attachment to their native land existing on the part of the multitudes of people who have gone to Australia, to Canada, and elsewhere in search of that which they could not find here. The testimony is overwhelming on this point, and it is one of the most encouraging facts that can be cited in proposing to seek for the means of uniting this country and her colonies into one great Power. How this desirable end is to be achieved remains to be considered, but that it is practicable we are fully convinced. This country would be weakened, beyond all doubt, by the loss of her great colonies, but so, too, would they for many a year after that separation was effected. Where there is still a community of interest the task of formulating a scheme of federation, whatever its difficulties, is one which may, as time goes on, be successfully accomplished. That no undue delay should take place in advocating federation as a general principle, is made apparent by that 'rapid and vast' progress of our colonies alluded to by Mr. W. H. Smith while proposing the first resolution submitted to the meeting. We have seen what America has become since she shook off the yoke of this country; and thoughtful men have not failed to note the effects of letting our emigrants go forth to live under another flag instead of under our own. The population of this

country is steadily outgrowing its material resources, as was pointed out by the late First Lord of the Admiralty yesterday, and the tide of emigration must therefore go on. But it is to our interest that the great bulk of it should go to lands the people of which have a loyal sympathy with us and our institutions. If the increase in our population is constantly checked, as it must be under the present condition of things, by the drain of emigration, and if the people who thus seek their fortunes become lost to us as part of the nation, together with those who have preceded them to our great colonies, then we say without hesitation that this country must certainly decline in power, while others, with areas capable of sustaining much larger numbers of people, will develop in influence and in wealth. Time will show what the constitution of the proposed federation should be, and the views of the colonists themselves must be consulted on that subject, but the necessity for the steps taken at the Westminster Palace Hotel yesterday are unquestionable."

Scotsman.

"Meetings like that held last night, in support of the principle of the Federation of the Empire, widen the horizon and purify the atmosphere of British politics. The smoke and dust in which our party struggles are carried on seem to be lifted for the moment, and men are enabled to see clearly, not on what points they differ, but those matters in which, as citizens of a great country, their desires and objects are the same. Attempts are indeed made from time to time to represent patriotism as the perquisite of one party in the State, and to attribute to the other designs for the degradation and dismemberment of the Empire. Such charges or insinuations are, as a rule, brought only by politicians of the baser sort; they are shabby and shallow as well as untrue; and they do harm only to the side that makes use of them. Whig and Tory agree heartily in their pride in the splendid fabric of Colonial Empire bequeathed by their fathers, though they may disagree as to the extent to which particular principles and actions may have contributed to building it up. They are at one, also, in their fixed and ardent resolve to hand it on intact to their sons, however they

may dispute regarding the best method of preserving and improving their inheritance. If ever there was a time when it could be said of any influential party or section in British politics that it favoured the idea of getting rid of the undoubted burdens and responsibilities attached to the possessions of a Colonial Empire by getting rid of the Colonies themselves, that time is long past. The current of public opinion, on which such an idea never could have a real hold, has been setting strongly the other way. The changed conditions of commercial intercourse and of political thought have modified the whole aspect of the question of union between the mother-country and its family of Colonies. The facilities, and with these the desire for holding them closely bound to us by ties of sympathy and interest, have vastly increased. The Colonies themselves have grown enormously; they have become a possession such as no other nation in the history of the world could boast of; but with their growth in wealth and population there has been no corresponding development of impatience at the continuance of the Imperial connection, and of a longing for independent existence, as many had looked to see. On the contrary, the spirit of loyalty to the Crown and the desire to remain part and parcel of the British Empire were probably never stronger throughout the Colonies than at the present moment.

"The solidarity of feeling and warmth of interest excited by the question of preserving the unity of the Empire were well reflected at the Federation Conference held last evening, under the presidency of Mr. Forster. They were manifested in the speakers and in the speeches. The former embraced men representative, in the best sense, of both the great parties in the State, of both Houses of Parliament, of the mother-country and her principal Colonies. The addresses, also, were worthy of an occasion which not improbably may become historic. They were the utterances of ardent patriots who were at the same time practical statesmen. Paradoxical as it may seem, their practicality was shown not least in declining to propose or to suggest any definite plan of Federation as a means of knitting into closer and more durable unity the several parts of the Empire. In this the cautious and conservative qualities of the national character were exemplified. At a conference of

Frenchmen held for such a purpose, the chances are that a score of cut-and-dry schemes of Federal union would have been propounded. But it was felt by those who took part in yesterday's meeting that it was wholly premature to bring forward any proposals of the kind; that, as Mr. Forster expressed it, he would be no friend or helper of union who would seek to press the merits of particular plans regarding which there has been neither experience nor sufficient inquiry to guide them to any useful conclusion. The real object was to cultivate and ripen the Federal idea; to prepare the public mind for dealing with a great subject, that promises at no very distant day to become, as Lord Rosebery said, the dominant question before British statesmen, but which as yet has not emerged into the field of practical politics. Advocated in this spirit, no possible objection can be taken to the holding of conferences, the establishment of societies, and the adoption of other means for awakening interest in the question of Colonial Federation. Rather these promise to be of the greatest possible service in preparing public opinion to give a wise decision when the time shall call for dealing with the subject. Lord Rosebery had valuable suggestions to make that were not included in the programme of the Conference, but that show the care and thoroughness with which his Lordship has studied this subject. He proposes that the Government should appoint a Committee or Royal Commission to pursue inquiry into the feasibility of a scheme of Colonial Federation. He also throws out the idea that a 'tentative effort' in the desired direction might he made by admitting delegates from the Colonies to a seat in the House of Lords. To the request for full and authoritative investigation such as would be obtained by a commission or committee constituted as Lord Rosebery desires, it is probable that no serious obstacle would be raised. What the present Government, or any future Government, would ask for would be proof that such an inquiry would be welcome and useful to public opinion at home and in the Colonies; and such proof is likely to be forthcoming. The task of recommending his 'experiment' to the approval of the House of Peers will test all Lord Rosebery's powers of persuasion. The Second Chamber is not fond of experiments, especially experiments on itself. It has

already emphatically refused the appeal made by Lord Rosebery to institute an inquiry whether its constitution as a legislative and representative body does not stand in some need of revision after the wear and tear of seven hundred years. It may think that it has already enough on its hands without opening the door for the admission of delegates from the Colonies, and also for questions as to whether, in other respects, its machinery might not be capable of remodelling and improvement. It must be feared that the prospects of Colonial Federation being substantially forwarded in the way of experimental trial in the House of Lords are not very promising; and this is a great pity, for in theory and in accordance with the practice of other States, a Second Chamber is naturally the place where Imperial questions would be best discussed and settled.

"It may be assumed that the organisers of the Conference are perfectly well aware of the difficulties that must be overcome before their hopes can take tangible shape, and are prepared to possess their souls in patience. These difficulties are very formidable; they may prove insuperable. At all events, no scheme has yet been broached that could be accepted as a practical solution of the problem of safe-guarding and reconciling the various rights and interests that must be considered in framing a fabric of Federal Government. It might be contended that the Conference has been hasty in declaring that there is no ultimate alternative between federation and disintegration. As an abstract political dogma it may be true. But the British Empire has flourished in the teeth of abstract rules; it is one great political anomaly, which has grown up and been pieced together as the practical necessities of the day have required. Such as it is, its organisation, or want of organisation, has, at least, not prevented our Colonial Empire from growing great, or the colonists from remaining loyal. We might thus find an argument from experience that the Empire will continue to hold together without the assistance of federal bonds; and that at least there is no immediate danger of disintegration, so long as the Colonies where British blood and British institutions prevail, are left free in the exercise of their self-governing functions, and as the mother-country is strong

enough to protect them against outward aggression. Anomalous or not, such an arrangement as now exists has been and may continue to be for the mutual advantage of the Great Britain and "Greater Britain." But undoubtedly new questions are arising as these young nations advance rapidly towards manhood, which the existing arrangements do not in all respects cope with satisfactorily. At all costs, the risk of estrangement, perhaps of armed collision with the Colonies, such as once before befel in history, must be obviated. If it can be avoided by federation, to federation we must strive to find a way. The meeting of the Conference will at least draw greater attention to the vast importance of our Colonial Empire, and to the problems in connection with it which are approaching for solution."

Pall Mall Gazette.

THE FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH REALM.

"Rapid as is the rush of events, still more rapid is the ripening of public opinion. It is not five years since it was the fashion among those who regarded themselves as the thoughtful Liberals to postulate as inevitable the disintegration of the empire. In those days, when the most important Liberal newspapers were directed by men who seemed to think they owed Providence a grudge for making them citizens of a world-encircling State, such a Conference as that which assembled yesterday under the presidency of Mr. Forster would have been overwhelmed with denunciation and ridicule. To-day, when we take up newspaper after newspaper, we ask in amazement, The advocates of a little England, where are they now? Without one solitary exception, the whole of the English press bursts forth in an unbroken chorus of approval of a project which in 1880 would have been derided as visionary if it had not been denounced as mischievous. Judging from the comments of the newspapers the journalist of the school of Mr. Goldwin Smith is as extinct as the megatherium. The contraction of England has not one articulate advocate left in the daily press, and Liberals and Radicals vie with Conservatives in professions of enthusiastic patriotism, in that larger sense, which regards all the English, whether they live at home

or are dwellers beyond the seas, as the fellow-citizens of a common realm. The old school has passed away, giving place unto the new, and it is one of the most hopeful auguries for the future that this remarkable revolution of English opinion has taken place simultaneously with the rapid progress of the English democracy towards that position of supremacy which it is ultimately certain to attain.

"The meeting yesterday was a portent of better things to come, but the reception which it has met this morning is a gratifying proof of the extent to which the new Liberalism has outgrown the decaying traditions of the so-called Manchester school. No English public man with any regard to his future will now speak of colonies as incumbrances, or allude to the possible disruption of the empire except as a national calamity. Six or seven years ago there was a danger that the reaction against the bombastic Imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield might lead to a revival of the fallacies of the extreme non-interventionist school. From that we were happily rescued by Mr. Gladstone and the Bulgarian agitation. In that great popular movement the democracy was taught the value of the European Concert, and the lesson was fatal to the hopes of the advocates of a policy of national abdication. In the popularisation of the principle of the European Concert, that germ of a federalised Europe, it will probably be found that we gained more than was lost even by the Jingo fever. The Afghan and Zulu wars gave great opportunities to the party of retreat, but fortunately the Beaconsfield Cabinet fell in time to impose upon the Liberals the duty of facing the responsibilities and realising the opportunities of empire. For some time after our advent to office the reaction from Jingoism rendered it almost impossible for the advocates of a reasonable Imperialism to gain a hearing. Time, however, and experience have done their work. Imperialism is no longer tainted with the foul associations of a swashbuckler Jingoism, and the most advanced Liberals can now take part without reproach in a movement avowedly intended to maintain and consolidate the unity of the empire. It is a great and happy change, and one which, it is to be hoped, will be duly noted by those highly-placed officials who, although at present in positions of power, represent the ideas

and prejudices of an age that is fast vanishing away. Never again, we hope, will a distinguished Colonial statesman return to the Antipodes declaring that Liberal Ministers did not care one penny piece if all the Colonies were to cut the painter to-morrow. But that such an impression was ever produced sheds a flood of light upon the extreme unwisdom of some of those who have acted as Colonial Secretaries in our time.

"Professor Seeley strongly condemns the extravagance of those who speak of the British Empire as if it were a miracle; but probably if the eloquent author of 'The Expansion of England' had had a more familiar acquaintance with the Colonial Office in recent times he would have modified his condemnation. Nothing but a miraculous interposition of a kindly Providence could have ensured its maintenance intact to the present time. It has, however, fortunately held together, and what we have to do is to take anxious thought for its preservation. We have at least gained a great point in having it recognised, almost without one dissentient voice, that to the English at home as to the English beyond the sea the idea of separation is abhorrent. Whatever may befall us, that must at all cost be averted. Whether we should ever be able so far to overcome the *vis inertiæ* of the established order of things as to federalise our empire of our own mere will and motion we do not know. But events stronger than ourselves will force our hands. 'Home Rule,' said a distinguished Colonial administrator after a careful survey of the situation at home and abroad, 'will save the empire yet,' and he was right. At present it is premature to discuss details of federalisation. We are not yet in committee on the subject. But it is a great thing, so to speak, to have carried the second reading *nem. con.*

'Before very long it will be almost incredible that any patriotic Englishmen ever contemplated with complacency the disruption of this 'world-wide Venice with its ocean streets.' But at present leading statesmen continue to cherish the old delusion that the sea is an element of division instead of a bond of union. As a matter of fact, for all purposes of communication we are nearer to New Zealand than we are to Khartoum. Six hundred miles of land are a more formidable barrier than

sixteen thousand miles of sea. Day by day the world perceptibly shrinks before our eyes. Steam and electricity have brought all the world next door. We have yet to readjust our political arrangements to the revolution that has been wrought in time and space. But at this stage it is probable that an English Arndt, who would accustom the masses of our people to the thought that the English Fatherland, the true country of the English patriot, is as wide as the whole range of English-peopled lands, would be politically more useful than any Siéyes, however able he might be at devising systems of federal government."

Globe.

"The great meeting which took place yesterday at the Westminster Palace Hotel was not more remarkable for the diversity of political creeds represented by the speakers than for the occasion of the assembly. As Mr. Forster and others pointed out, scarcely a decade has elapsed since those who favoured the idea of Imperial Federation were regarded as fantastic dreamers and impracticable visionaries. They were credited with the very best intentions, of course, but the Goldwin Smith school was then dominant, and it had come to be very generally accepted that our colonies and dependencies were becoming unmanageable and should be cast adrift as quickly as might be. This nervous shrinking from Imperial responsibility naturally begot a feeling of contempt and almost aversion in Greater Britain, and there, too, all the talk was about separation. It is truly noteworthy, then, to see in the British metropolis an assembly of leading politicians, both English and Colonial, met together to discuss and promote the very object which only ten years ago was scornfully dismissed as too Utopian for serious consideration. How has this marvellous change been wrought? To what cause or influence is due the resuscitation of the Imperial sentiment which used to characterise the English people more than any other nation in the world, until it was undermined and nearly destroyed by the timid teachings of the economical school? While most anxious to keep this immensely important matter free from party spirit and party bickering, we unhesitatingly attribute the revival to

the wholesome awakening which the people of England received from the Beaconsfield Government. Whatever view they may take of the foreign policy of that Cabinet, in some particulars, all candid Liberals must now acknowledge that it dissipated the dream that England could retain her place among nations without accepting the responsibilities due to her Imperial position. It was some vague idea that the colonies might be safely left to shift for themselves, while the mother country devoted herself to purely insular affairs, which lay at the back of the general acceptance given to the doctrines of the Goldwin Smith propaganda. If Imperial disintegration resulted, what matter? Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand would still be as open to our trade as ever, while we should save a great deal of money by withdrawing from their protection. It was the Beaconsfield Government which shattered those mean and craven notions by breathing life into the dormant instinct of Imperialism, and yesterday's gathering demonstrated that, although England has changed her rulers, there is no change in her determination to strengthen rather than weaken the bonds which keep her mighty Empire together.

"That the federation of the Empire on such a footing as will insure the due representation of each part, is beset with difficulties, is a truism. But now that it is recognised by thoughtful politicians of all parties as an object well worth striving for, we may look forward hopefully to some practical solution of the long-standing problem. There has been too much of a disposition during recent years to leave difficult matters alone, merely because of their difficulty; an excuse which necessarily leads to public apathy and indifference. All that yesterday's meeting affirmed, after exhaustive discussion, was that, in order to secure the unity of the Empire, some form of federation is essential. Lord Rosebery suggested that this end might be attained by allowing colonial delegates to sit in the House of Lords. In a letter to a morning contemporary, Lord Wemyss recommends that a consultive body should be formed in London, composed of the Secretaries of State for the Colonies, Foreign Affairs, War, and India, the first Lord of the Admiralty, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to repre-

sent England, and the Colonial Agents to represent Greater Britain. Apart from other objections of a more or less grave kind, we do not think that either of these plans would commend itself to the colonists. Even as matters stand at present, there are frequent consultations between individual Ministers and the accredited Agents, so that very little would be gained by the adoption of Lord Wemyss' proposal. Nor would it be of much use to give colonial delegates *ex officio* seats in the Upper House, since it is in the Commons that their local knowledge and experience would be the more profitable. This, however, is a matter of detail which will engage the attention of the society that is about to be formed for the purpose of keeping Imperial Federation before the public. Lord Rosebery would prefer to have the matter relegated to a Royal Commission or Select Committee, but the idea found little support, the general feeling of the meeting, with which we entirely agree, being in favour of independent action and investigation. There is always a good deal of red tapeism about Royal Commissions and Select Committees, not to mention the inordinately long time they generally occupy with their deliberations.

"It is curious that this movement for the Federation of the Empire should have come to a head at a time when the Colonial Office is filled by Lord Derby. He cannot be suspected of feeling very sympathetically towards an endeavour which has for its object the strengthening of the ties which subsist between the mother country and her lusty offspring. Yet so great is the force of circumstances, that he has even been compelled to move in the direction of annexation. It has fallen to him to sanction the establishment of a limited British Protectorate in the southern part of New Guinea, and to him also the Fates allotted the duty of extending the ægis of England over the unfortunate Bechuanas. Basutoland has also been brought back under the Crown during his administration of the Colonies, and matters are fast tending to make the Reserve in Zululand an integral portion of the British Empire. Lord Derby thus stands forth as an annexationist *malgré lui*, and it may be hoped, therefore, that the society which is about to be formed will be able to move him in the direction even of

Imperial Federation. That, indeed, will be one of the most important provinces of this long-required organisation—to keep unwilling Ministers abreast of the requirements of the Empire, by bringing public pressure to bear upon them whenever they show apathy. At the present moment there are, as Lord Rosebery reminded the meeting, two great questions which the English people should not lose sight of for a moment if they wish to prevent colonial discontent. The one is the exportation of the very cream of French rascality to the Pacific; the other, the maintenance of British supremacy in Egypt. We are apt to forget that Australasia has quite as great an interest in the latter question as ourselves, and until lately, we have also been too apt to make light of Antipodean sensitiveness in the matter of convict neighbours. But the time has now come when it is recognised that in these affairs Greater Britain has a right to make her voice heard, and it will be the duty of the forthcoming society to impress that fact on any Colonial Secretary who desires to "rest and be thankful." There are happily some signs that a more sympathetic if not more vigorous policy has already come into favour with Lord Derby. It was a step in that direction when he consented to place the southern littoral of New Guinea under British jurisdiction, and another was indicated by Mr. Ashley when he declared that the Colonial Office would not interfere if the Australian Governments jointly took legislative action against the importation of criminal aliens. This is a wholesome change, so far as it goes, but there are some Ministers who require to be kept up to the mark by persistent "pegging away," and for such as these a powerful organisation to watch over colonial affairs will be a most useful means of coercion."

Morning Advertiser.

"No loftier idea, no more inspiring purpose has ever animated a number of statesmen than that which came yesterday before the meeting of English and Colonial public men at the Westminster Palace Hotel. And when the Committee reports in October to the adjourned Conference, we believe it will enable the country and the Colonies to see at once what is

PUBLIC LIBRARY MITCHELL LIBRARY N.S.W.

practicable in the present, and what for the moment would be visionary. We trust that the result of yesterday's meeting will be as warmly welcomed at home as it is sure to be by our children everywhere over the blue waters."

Spectator.

"The meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel, on Tuesday, was in every way a success. It was comprehensive and it was practical. Had it not had the former quality, it would not, as English politics now stand, have been a success at all. The knitting England and her Colonies more closely together is too big a task to be undertaken by either Liberals or Conservatives alone. Liberals can do many things without any aid from without; but they must be things that appeal strongly to immediate interests or emotions. If a closer bond with the Colonies were made a Liberal cry, the professional Opposition would naturally be enlisted on the other side; and it would be found in the long run that the force required to overcome the professional Opposition was always appropriated in advance by questions of a more popular kind. In addition to this, the invention of some closer bond with the Colonies is singularly unsuited to become the exclusive property of any party. It has many and great difficulties, and difficulties of a kind which can only find their solution in the future. At present, it is impossible not only to devise a working scheme, but to foresee on what lines such a plan will ultimately be framed. It is quite easy to discover fatal faults in everything that can be suggested; and the basis of the conviction which we nevertheless entertain, that, somehow or other, something workable will one day be suggested, is the double fact that the faults of the theory opposed to a closer union—the theory which would turn the Colonies out of the Imperial nest so soon as they are fully fledged—are far more fatal; and that science has already done so much to bridge over the space which divides the mother country from her children, that we may confidently look to it to do more. The idea of some closer union was born on the day that the first submarine cable was laid. Without the telegraph it would have been not so much difficult as in-

conceivable ; with the telegraph it remains difficult, but it has become conceivable. Still, possibilities of this kind are not a proper subject for the successive stages of a great party measure. Abstract resolutions, amendments on going into Supply, Bills introduced by private Members, and finally, Bills introduced by the Government of the day, have their use in Parliamentary procedure, but the fortunes of this particular question are not likely to be furthered by resort to them. What is wanted is a kind of consideration of which Parliamentary procedure seldom admits,—the consideration that allows a subject to simmer, that is content to leave it alone for long intervals, that is always ready to take it up again whenever some new incident, whether at home or in the Colonies, seems to open up fresh possibilities of useful action,—the consideration, in fact, that belongs to statesmen rather than to politicians. The comprehensiveness of Tuesday's assembly goes some way to secure for the question this kind of treatment. All shades of political opinion were represented there, and every one was disposed to raise the object of the meeting to the high place it deserved. The decision whether England and her Colonies shall remain united is, in one sense, more momentous than any decision about institutions or forms of government. It is concerned with the issue, not how the English Empire shall be administered, but what empire there shall be to be administered. The whole future of England is bound up with the answer given to this inquiry. There is no place among the Great Powers of the world for the England of the sixteenth century. But the greatest of those Powers may well be the England of the twentieth century, provided that she does not let slip the marvellous chances which the dispersive energy of Englishmen has reserved for her. To guide her to take full advantage of these chances is the object of those who have some closer union with the Colonies at heart. It is an object that appeals equally to all parties, and will, as we hope and believe, remain the common property of all parties.

"The value of the practical good sense that marked the proceedings of Tuesday is a natural corollary of what has been said. Nothing could be so injurious to the ultimate solution

of this great problem as the adoption of a premature solution. Once let a plan be determined on, and its success becomes identified with that of the object to the attainment of which it is really but one means among many. When it fails—and in the nature of things it is bound to fail—the end itself easily comes to be despaired of. If the meeting had had a scheme for the creation of a federal empire submitted to it, had adopted this scheme in principle, and had appointed a Committee to settle details, we should have thought the day not wasted merely, but misspent. We should have been further removed from a really united empire at the end of it than we had been at the beginning. The plan would at once have become a target for hostile criticism, both in England and the Colonies, and it is morally impossible that it should not have succumbed under the converging fires. All that it is expedient to do at this moment is to define the goal to which a growing public desire points, and to accustom men's minds to regard that goal as one which must somehow be attained. As to the means chosen for its attainment, those will be best in the first instance which are most modest and most tentative. Lord Rosebery's idea of admitting delegates from the Colonies into the House of Lords may hereafter offer a way out of more than one difficulty, but even its time is not yet. By-and-by it may be possible to provide machinery for giving the Colonies a voice in the decision of questions in which they, equally with the mother country, will be interested. But as yet such questions are still future, and a good deal remains to be done in and by the Colonies before they can become present. The Colonies must have more federation among themselves ; they must have taken effectual steps towards the creation of their own land defences ; they must have given some indication of the proportion in which they will be ready to bear their part in Imperial burdens incurred for their protection. But though questions of this kind are still future, there are others which are already present. The relations which the Colonies will bear to foreign Powers, as part of a single empire, cannot yet be determined. The mutual relations between the Colonies and the mother country have to be determined every day. Something can and ought to be done without loss of time towards putting these

relations on a better footing, and in the Agents-General of the several Colonies we have the machinery ready to our hand. These high and representative officers might constitute a Colonial Council to which the Secretary of State should be bound to communicate his decisions on Colonial policy, and from which he might receive assistance somewhat similar to that which the Secretary of State for India receives from the Council of India. It would be a substantial gain for the Colonies if Lord Derby were bound to listen to and answer the arguments of such a Council before overruling them. It would be a greater gain still if Lord Derby's successors were thus bound."

Saturday Review.

"The meeting of the Conference on Imperial Federation last Tuesday was one of the few hopeful things which have happened in connexion with colonial affairs for some time. Even if it could be shown that the formation of a good working Federal Union of a simple and flexible kind, and it is probable that nothing more is aimed at, was impracticable, the meeting would not the less have served a very useful purpose. The noisy little clique of economic pedants who were fond a few years ago of preaching to the mother-country and the Colonies on the text, "Let them go," have of late been less successful in getting themselves listened to. They are not, and doubtless never will be, perfectly quiet; but when a body of responsible statesmen work together to forward that friendly union with the Colonies which is certainly desired by the great majority of Englishmen, they stand a fair chance of being reduced to the melancholy necessity of preaching to one another. The formation of a Committee to promote an Imperial Federation will do something to make the belief that the Colonies are of vital importance as universal as it was in the times before Mr. Cobden. On every consideration, both of interest and sentiment, the connexion is so valuable to Great Britain that, unless we are to fall wholly under the influence of a so-called practical idea of politics as stupid as it is ignoble, the union will be jealously guarded. It is of equal value to the Colonies themselves, to whom it gives security from attack by foreigners.

From a purely military point of view, a close and friendly union has become indispensable in the interests both of the mother-country and the Colonies. Nobody who is capable of looking facts in the face can hope that England will again possess the unquestioned naval supremacy it enjoyed at the beginning of this century. That supremacy was the result of a century of wars ended by twenty years of unbroken victory at sea, and could never have been won without the help of the disorganisation of some of our rivals and the decadence of others. The balance of power has altered to our disadvantage, and the Empire has become far more vulnerable. In any future naval war we shall stand in need of effectual assistance from the Colonies. One of the objects of the Committee formed to forward an Imperial Federation will doubtless be to construct some machinery by which this mutual help can be rapidly and effectually given. A great step in advance has been made from the moment that responsible statesmen set themselves to try and find a means of supplying some practical organisation. What Lord Rosebery calls "the inauguration of a crusade," and what less eloquent persons would describe as the beginning of an attempt to do a good piece of work, is in itself a subject of unmixed satisfaction.

"It is all in the favour of the ultimate success of the movement that its promoters have resisted the strong temptation to commit themselves to a cut-and-dried scheme. At this early date a programme is unnecessary, and it would almost certainly attempt to do too much. A moment's consideration will show that any possible scheme of federation must have very strict limits, and that very formidable difficulties must be met in trying to carry it out. The advocates of a closer union with the Colonies who have hitherto published their ideas have generally proposed to form a new Imperial Parliament, or some kind of general Council with powers and functions which have never been very clearly defined. Some among them have suggested that representatives or delegates of the Colonies should be admitted to one or both of the Houses of Parliament. Such plans are mainly fantastic. It may be taken for granted that this country would never allow its Parliament to be swamped by colonial representatives, and the speakers at Tuesday's

meeting were agreed that there must be no tampering with the perfect freedom of local government. A federation for purely Imperial purposes presents difficulties almost as great as a general Parliament. It is certain that the Colonies would expect to have an equal vote, and in a body of that kind it is not easy to see where the ultimate authority would be found. No one of the members would allow a majority to impose upon it a sacrifice of its vital interests. Hitherto the necessary work of supervision has been done by England alone, and the discussion of irritating questions has been avoided. The real lion in the path, however, will be the difficulty of deciding how far the Colonies would be entitled to interfere in the purely European political troubles of England. They would have to share the risk of a war, and might well be unwilling to approve of it if undertaken for something which did not immediately interest them. It is, however, obvious that this danger exists already, and that nothing would be lost by providing some means of concerting common action. The habit of acting together may also be found to develop a general patriotism in all the Colonies. Australia has lately given proof that, like the American plantations in the last century, they would be ready to bear a share of the expense and danger of military operations undertaken in defence of its known interests. Meeting the Colonies half-way on occasions of this kind is the best argument to persuade them to return the service at some future time. For the present it is a hopeful sign that a serious attempt is to be made to provide some organisation which will facilitate united action. When the means for gaining this desired object are known it will be time to criticise them. For the moment it is enough to praise the spirit which has inspired the attempt. Without being unduly hopeful as to its chance of success, we may feel reasonably sure that the mere existence of the movement will have a good influence on the present hap-hazard fashion of managing colonial affairs.

"The Ministry and the House of Commons have made haste to supply Mr. Forster and the other speakers at the meeting with an admirable argument in favour of Federation or anything else which shall be as little like the present system

as may be. By far the most pressing colonial question of the day is the condition of Zululand; and yet, when Sir Henry Holland brought forward a motion on the subject some time ago, neither the Ministry nor the Opposition thought it worth while to make a House for him. When the debate was forced on in Committee of Supply on Wednesday, the speakers only proved that the uniform practice of the Colonial office is, and has been for years, to do as little as possible, to do it too late, and to take it for granted that the duty of a good colony is to cause no trouble in Downing Street. Mr. Dawnay, Sir Henry Holland, and Mr. Forster showed again, for the fiftieth time, that Zululand has been reduced by us to a state of indescribable misery. The Ministerial speakers had nothing to answer except that it would be very troublesome to put it right, and would, moreover, cost money. Mr. Chamberlain descanted on the blessings brought by the Boers to the Zulus; and Mr. Gladstone was indignant when strong language was used about our worthy friends in the Transvaal who have torn up their treaty with us and repudiated their promises to pay. Neither party cared to face the necessity of occupation, the one effectual remedy, and then a majority of fifty-six decided to leave things as they are, Lord Derby is to continue to enjoy the congenial spectacle of anarchy produced by a long course of impartial half-measures and temperate makeshifts. To get rid of Lord Wolseley's settlement, which was not exactly a masterpiece of statesmanship, and for the sake of Cetewayo, a general overturn was brought about. When the historical partial restoration of that unlucky chief ended, as every observer of any common sense foresaw it would, the Ministry decided to allow Zululand to stew in its own juice. It has been doing so ever since. The chiefs massacre one another's followers, and Boer adventurers shoot all parties freely as a matter of business. All this is going on in the immediate neighbourhood of the most vulnerable of English Colonies, and a little handful of British troops stands there to keep the Colonists from putting things straight under pretence of defending them. It is a most characteristic feature of the whole business that the British Government carefully keeps such a stake in Zululand as serves to engage its responsibilities

while it throws every possible obstacle in the way of a real settlement. To scuttle out of the muddle, to leave Zululand to the Boers, whom Mr. Chamberlain admires, and Natal to itself, would not be a magnanimous policy, but it would be thorough, businesslike, and comparatively humane. When once the Boers were masters, they would stop the tribal wars in their own interest, and the people of Natal would probably be able to do the necessary shooting on their own account. Our policy is to remain there without settling anything, but hampering the natural development of things, and sedulously stirring the witches' cauldron."

Liverpool Post.

"Among the political movements of the day, few command more sympathy or seem less likely to be realised than the project for the federation of the Colonies with the mother country. To form a grand federation of English-speaking countries under the Sovereign of Great Britain is an idea that commends itself to the imagination, and as emigration from the British islands must necessarily continue, and perhaps increase, it is pleasant to think that those who quit their native shore will still remain citizens of the Empire and retain an interest in its prosperity and a sympathy towards those who remain at home."

Liverpool Mercury.

"Of late years it has become increasingly evident that at some future period we shall have to choose between allowing our Colonies to take care of themselves or providing some link which, without fettering their freedom, would mutually bind them and the mother-country in one vast commonwealth. It is beginning to be understood that, without imposing any restriction upon their laudable desire to grow strong and self-reliant, an arrangement might be feasible which would ensure a grand imperial union consistent with the fullest liberty of all the parts."

Manchester Courier.

"Every Englishman who is proud of the history of his country will welcome this tardy awakening of politicians to

the necessity of strengthening the bonds that unite it, and will wish every success to this new society."

Manchester Guardian.

"The proposition that it is of the highest importance to the Empire that the Colonies should be kept in union with the Kingdom, and that 'some form of federation is essential' to prevent disintegration, may safely rely on the assent of all by whom the injurious consequences of losing the Colonies are duly recognised. Where there is a will, such as is shown in this instance, there is generally a way; and while complete federation must be rejected as futile, it is still possible greatly to improve the official methods and instruments of communication between the Colonies and the Imperial Government."

Birmingham Post.

"It hardly admits of dispute that, in respect both to strength and prosperity, the country is deeply concerned in retaining its colonial connections. It is confidently asserted that there is in Australia, in Canada, and in South Africa, as cordial a desire for amalgamation with England as there is in England for the incorporation of those dependencies. If such be the case, we must agree with the Conference that it only requires time and consultation to bring about a definite plan. The colonists are ripe for Imperial federation, but we are not so certain that the same can be said of the English. There is infinite trouble and delay in introducing reforms into our limited Constitution. But, fortunately, the promoters of that kind of reform do not at present invite us to discuss it in the form of a practical measure. They only ask for assent to abstract principles, and that assent we believe they will command."

Leeds Mercury.

"The day is happily past when anybody who had the smallest chance of being regarded as a politician of importance could look with equanimity upon the prospect of a possible separa-

tion between England and her Colonies. The whole tendency among both political parties is now the other way. It is the object of every man with the slightest pretensions to statesmanship to bind the Colonies more closely than ever to the mother-country."

Yorkshire Post.

"Here is the shadowing forth of a policy which is in the highest and truest sense Conservative, and which may fitly occupy a prominent place in the programme of the Conservative party. The consolidation of the British Empire is a conception grand enough and beneficial enough to occupy the mind of a great statesman and an historical party. If ever a confederation of nations under the British flag were to become a practical, working reality, it would involve an Imperial Parliament, whose greatness and power would dwarf into insignificance the national Legislature as it exists at present. One thing, at any rate, is certain, that the Radical faction in England, little though they realise it and little as they may desire it, are steadily preparing the minds of the English people for such a change by their persistency in lowering the tone of one House, and disparaging the other."

Sheffield Telegraph.

"Yesterday saw not perhaps the inception but the formal public inauguration of a movement which is destined to mark a momentous turning point in the history of the British Empire. Which are we to choose? A fairly drafted and practicable scheme of federation would consolidate, perpetuate, and expand the proud position to which we have attained in the world. To drift down stream to the cataract of disintegration is to decide upon the act of suicide which nations employ to extinguish an effete and paralytic dotage."

10558786

THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1887.

REPRINTED, BY PERMISSION, FROM THE "LEEDS MERCURY."

WITH A PREFACE.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE,
43, *ST. MARGARET'S OFFICES, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.*

CONTENTS.

PAGE

PREFACE 5

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE 7

I.—THE WHY AND THE WHEREFORE 9

II.—THE DELEGATES AND THEIR WORK 14

III.—PERILS BY SEA 19

IV.—"WHO WILLS THE END WILL FIND THE MEANS" ... 22

V.—THE WORK WAITING TO BE DONE 26

VI.—A SUMMARY 29

PREFACE.

THE following articles, which appeared at the end of April in the present year, are reprinted, by permission, from the *Leeds Mercury*. In the opinion of the Committee of the League they furnish an accurate and sympathetic account of the work of the Imperial Conference.

The present pamphlet may be considered as the proper supplement to that issued by the League under the title of "The Record of the Past and the Promise of the Future." What was then the "Promise of the Future" has already been enrolled in the "Record of the Past." That which the League demanded yesterday has been done to-day. Not only has the Conference which it suggested been summoned in conformity with its wish, but with scarcely any exception the programme which the Committee of the League placed before the public as that which they endorsed, has been faithfully followed by the members of the Imperial Conference.

Already the League has occupied in force the ground which it has won, and from that vantage is pushing forward to new conquests. The Committee feel that it will be satisfactory to all members of the League that each forward step should be recorded and acknowledged. It is not often that an association can point to such a ready and such a complete realisation of its hopes. Those who have followed the recent events in the history of the League will be aware that the next steps towards our goal have been mapped out with the same clearness and precision as those which preceded them. There is no need for haste or confusion; we can afford to progress deliberately, as long as each time we step forward our foot is securely planted, and we are brought nearer to the point for which we are making.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF N.S.W. MITCHELL LIBRARY

A LIST

OF THE MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE, HELD IN LONDON IN 1887.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR HENRY T. HOLLAND, BART., G.C.M.G., M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies, *President.*

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G., Prime Minister.

THE EARL CADOGAN, Lord Privy Seal.

THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH, M.P., First Lord of the Treasury.

THE RIGHT HON. EDWARD STANHOPE, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD GEORGE HAMILTON, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty.

THE VISCOUNT CROSS, G.C.B., Secretary of State for India.

THE LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON, G.C.B., President of the Board of Trade.

THE RIGHT HON. H. C. RAIKES, M.P., Postmaster-General.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES FERGUSSON, BART., G.C.S.I., M.P., Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

NEWFOUNDLAND:—

SIR ROBERT THORBURN, K.C.M.G., Premier.

SIR AMBROSE SHEA, K.C.M.G.

CANADA:—

SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, K.C.M.G., Lieut.-Governor of Ontario.

MR. SANDFORD FLEMING, C.M.G.

NEW SOUTH WALES:—

SIR PATRICK JENNINGS, K.C.M.G., late Premier.

SIR ROBERT WISDOM, K.C.M.G., formerly Attorney-General.

SIR SAUL SAMUEL, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

TASMANIA:—

MR. JOHN STOKELL DODDS, late Attorney-General.

MR. ADYE DOUGLAS, Agent-General.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE:—

SIR THOMAS UPINGTON, K.C.M.G., Attorney-General.
MR. JAN HENDRICK HOFMEYR.
SIR CHARLES MILLS, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:—

SIR JOHN W. DOWNER, K.C.M.G., Premier.
SIR ARTHUR BLYTH, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

NEW ZEALAND:—

SIR FRANCIS DILLON BELL, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.
SIR WILLIAM FITZHERBERT, K.C.M.G., Speaker of the Legislative Council.

VICTORIA:—

MR. ALFRED DEAKIN, Chief Secretary.
SIR JAMES LORIMER, K.C.M.G., Minister of Defence.
SIR GRAHAM BERRY, K.C.M.G., Agent-General.
MR. JAMES SERVICE, late Premier.

QUEENSLAND:—

SIR SAMUEL GRIFFITH, K.C.M.G., Q.C., Premier.
SIR JAMES GARRICK, K.C.M.G., Q.C., Agent-General.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:—

MR. JOHN FORREST, C.M.G., Commissioner of Crown Lands.
MR. SEPTIMUS BURT.

NATAL:—

MR. JOHN ROBINSON.

The Imperial Conference.

I.—THE WHY AND THE WHEREFORE.

The Origin of the Conference.

On the 9th of August, 1886, a deputation from the Imperial Federation League waited upon Lord Salisbury, at the Foreign Office. The proposal which the leaders of the deputation laid before the Prime Minister was of a twofold nature. In the first place, they asked that a Conference, composed of members from each of the great self-governing Colonies, should be convened in London, under the auspices of the Home Government. In the second place, they requested that certain matters of common interest to all parts of the Empire should be submitted for the consideration of the Conference when assembled. Deputations to Ministers too often end in a few complimentary phrases. In this case, however, the result was far more satisfactory. On the 4th of April, 1887, a Conference such as that proposed actually met in London, and its members are at this moment considering the details of a programme which, as far as it extends, is that of the Imperial Federation League.

The result is no doubt eminently satisfactory to the voluntary association which has taken the lead of late in the promotion of Imperial Union. It is infinitely more satisfactory to the public, which reaps the advantage of their efforts.

What the Conference may mean.

The racket and turmoil of purely domestic politics so completely obscure the political atmosphere, that some of the most important movements which are taking place under our eyes are scarcely discernible. It is probable that the vast majority of

newspaper readers are unaware that an Imperial Conference has, in fact, been summoned, and has actually been sitting during the last few days in the capital of the Empire. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that the meetings at the Colonial Office may well prove to be the commencement of the greatest and most important political changes which have taken place in the history of the British people since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This is not merely fine talking. The Conference in itself is a small thing, no doubt. Its members are endowed with no direct authority. Its ultimate effect may be *nil*. On the other hand, its consequences may be enormous. The question, one portion of which the delegates have set themselves to solve, is beyond all dispute the greatest which this country will have to deal with in a not very distant future.

In the Parting of the Ways.

We stand at the parting of the ways. Every one who has given the slightest attention to the condition of our Colonial Empire, every one who has studied the course of history, or who is acquainted with the natural forces which influence men's actions, is aware that our present relations with our Colonies are, and must be, temporary only. In this matter there is no standing still. Every day the facts of the situation are changing; every day we are coming nearer and nearer to a solution. That solution may be the destruction of the Empire as we know it, or it may be the unifying of the Empire by rational methods and on broad principles. It is possible for a reasonable man to anticipate either of these conclusions, it is possible for a reasonable man to desire either of these conclusions; but to anticipate or to desire the continuance of our present formless and haphazard system is the part neither of reason nor of sense. It is the fashion among a certain class of persons to speak of Federation, and the questions connected with it, in sneering tones, and to affect to regard it as a fantastic and sentimental idea.

Some Facts.

As not unfrequently happens, this spirit is merely the outcome of want of information and want of thought. The future relations of the great English-speaking peoples to one another may be most uncertain, and may not be susceptible of any alteration by active effort on our part, but that they are of the most overwhelming importance and interest there can be no doubt whatever.

At the present moment there are a hundred millions of men and women who speak the English language as their native tongue. Of these, fifty millions, the enormous majority of whom are of pure British extraction, still owe allegiance to the British Crown. They live for the most part in the temperate regions of the earth, and possess the great wheat-growing tracts of the world.

These facts are in themselves of great importance, for they mean that, however widely the fractions of the British race may be distributed, the forces of climate and habit are not likely to differentiate the inhabitants of the various localities. The physical conditions of work and nourishment in Canada, in Australia, and in New Zealand are not materially different from those which exist in this country. Political causes may transform a New Zealander into an alien, and possibly into an enemy; but physically he will remain an Englishman.

The Future of Englishmen.

And now let us consider what is the future of these English-speaking millions. In a period so brief that many now alive will live to see it, the hundred millions of English-speaking people not only may, but must be two, or it may be three hundred millions. The future of the world is in the hands of the English-speaking people. We may regret it, we may dislike it, but it is among the certainties of the immediate future—that French, German, and Italian must become practically provincial dialects. France has ceased to increase. The overflow of Germany is added in a generation to the English-speaking world, and the change is proceeding with a speed which few of us have yet realised. The final result we can neither avert nor alter; but we can by the exercise of a little forethought and a little common sense materially affect the position which we ourselves shall occupy when the process is complete.

A Great Example.

Already one great branch of the English-speaking people has prepared for the future, and the scheme of government, devised by the deliberate wisdom of a few, has become accepted as the most precious national inheritance of a nation of fifty millions. That scheme has already stood the trial of a protracted war, and has overcome the differentiating effect of varied climate and immense distance. It remains for the other great branch of the

English-speaking people to achieve the same result by the same or by some equally effectual means. That a union can be obtained by active political exertion on our part has not yet been proved, and is fairly open to dispute. That such a union is in itself desirable seems almost beyond contention.

A *Liberal* Doctrine.

This is, fortunately, a question which involves no party issues, but if it appeals more strongly to the traditions of one party than of another, it is surely to those of Liberalism. The accepted commonplace of almost every Liberal politician is the practical identity of interest between different portions of the community. The assumption lies at the bottom of all Free Trade teaching, and forms the basis of every protest against legal or artificial restriction. Among the most pressing tasks of Liberalism has been that of demonstrating to different sections of the people the true identity of their interests, and denouncing the barriers which custom, ignorance, or prejudice have erected between those whose interests are really the same.

Apply these commonplaces, as we are bound to apply them, to the British Empire, and every single argument in favour of encouraging its different sections to form themselves into independent nations instantly falls to the ground.

If ever a case existed in which interests were identical, it is that of the various sections of the same people which are now growing up in different parts of the world.

Our great "Interest."

Of all British interests, the greatest and the most unvarying is that of peace. Every one knows that between nations communicating only through the ordinary formalities of diplomatic representation, jealous on either side for their national dignity, and animated by all the force of national pride, questions of the simplest nature are constantly magnified into the most serious and dangerous disputes. It ought not to be so, doubtless, but the history of the world tells us that it is so, and we may be sure that when once we begin to conduct our relations with our great Colonies on these terms the same difficulties and the same dangers will arise which have arisen in other international disputes ; and the very character of the disputants would render a peaceful solution difficult of attainment.

Once let there be war between two English-speaking peoples,

and in the fulness of time they may become friends again, allies again, but one people never more.

Danger Ahead!

At the present moment there is absolutely no method by which any matter in dispute, save a purely judicial question, can be rationally arranged between Great Britain and the Colonies, or between any two of the Colonies. Any day may find us face to face with a danger which it would be impossible to avert. Time therefore presses. It is of the essence of the question. What is to be done should be done quickly; it is worth while, therefore, asking what can be done, how it can be done, and how far the newly convened Imperial Conference is capable of doing it.

In order to obtain a correct idea upon these points, it will be necessary to make some examination of the *personnel* of the Conference, and to inquire under what commission they appear in London as representatives of their respective Colonies. Having satisfied ourselves as to the correctness of their credentials, and the nature of their powers, it will then be advisable to explain the method by which they can most effectively work; and, lastly, to discuss in some detail the chief points to which, according to the published programme of their deliberations, they are devoting their attention. We propose in subsequent articles to follow this method of inquiry. It is right that the attention of Englishmen should be called to the immense importance of the Conference; it is right that they should be reminded how vitally they are themselves concerned in the settlement of the matters which are at present under debate; and, lastly, it is essential that they should be convinced—as, indeed, they will require to be convinced—that the methods which they are asked to approve are rational and practical, and that the objects which they are invited to promote are not only attainable, but are in themselves of obvious value and profit to the United Kingdom and to the Empire. We shall endeavour to satisfy these reasonable requirements.

II.—THE DELEGATES AND THEIR WORK.

Who are the Men?

In a previous article we spoke of the origin of the Imperial Conference, and dwelt upon the enormous possibilities of profitable work which lay before such an organisation, provided its members were men of the right stamp, and that its operations were conducted in a practical fashion. At this point we are naturally led to inquire how far these essential qualifications have been fulfilled, and to what extent we are justified in anticipating a successful result from the deliberations of the delegates now assembled in Whitehall. Who are the men? And what are the methods? The first is the most important question. Who are the men whom the great self-governing Colonies have sent to the Old Country in response to the invitation of the Executive? Has the response which the Colonial Governments have made been a perfunctory acquiescence in an unpalatable demand? Or has it been an enthusiastic acceptance of a welcome and honourable invitation?

A glance at the list of the delegates will furnish a ready and a complete answer to any doubts which may arise upon these points. Our countrymen across the sea have done honour to themselves and honour to us in sending their best, the chosen leaders of their own active and growing political life. History does not afford any precedent by which we can gauge the value and the significance of this new assembly. Over and over again some brilliant Congress, some influential Conference, has been held in which the great States of Europe have been represented by distinguished nominees of the Sovereigns under whose commission they acted.

Such representatives have received, as they were entitled to receive, respect and attention; but their credentials were in every respect inferior to those of the delegates recently selected to attend the summons of the Colonial Office. The men who have been sent represent emphatically the free choice of a great and free people. They are men, every one of them, who have qualified for the high position which they now fill by long, arduous, and successful work in the service of their country.

They are the representatives not of a dynasty, not of a party, but of the good-will and sympathy of Imperial England—the trusted spokesmen of eight millions of the most active and intelligent population on the world's surface.

The Colonies have, indeed, sent us their best. No less than seven of the delegates have been, or are, Prime Ministers of the Colonies on whose behalf they speak. In Sir Alexander Campbell, Canada sends an ex-Speaker, a Senator, and a Lieut.-Governor—a man who has passed successfully through every department of the public service, and who has occupied with approbation the highest offices which it was in the power of the popular vote on the one side, and of the Royal Prerogative on the other, to bestow. Mr. Sandford Fleming comes to us with a double distinction, scientific and academical—the one confirmed by his selection as the engineer of the great Canadian Pacific Railway, the other vouched for by his position as Chancellor in the Queen's University of Canada.

Sir Graham Berry and Mr. James Service have both attained an eminence, in the high office of Prime Minister of Victoria, which has made their names familiar far beyond the limits of Australia.

In Sir Patrick Jennings we have another Prime Minister, representing the great Colony of New South Wales; while Mr. Robert Thorburn has held similar office in Newfoundland. The energy and ability of Mr. Upington, who speaks on behalf of Cape Colony, will not be doubted by those who are acquainted with the history of the Administration of which he was the head.

What are their Credentials?

It would be useful, and it would be interesting, to exhaust the list of the delegates, and to discuss at greater length their respective qualifications. Space does not permit of such an inquiry. But what is true of one is true of all. The delegates are, without exception, known men, experienced men, and men who have during the course of an active life claimed and secured the confidence and the support of the great body of the people. Their credentials should, beyond all doubt, command for them the respect and sympathy of every party in this country. They have been commissioned under circumstances which compel us to accord serious attention to their propositions, even though we may not all sympathise with what the majority of them have declared to be their hopes. To those who share these hopes,

the active and willing participation of such men in a serious attempt to advance the cause of Imperial unity must be a source of the most profound gratification and encouragement.

So much for the men. We now come to the consideration of the methods.

The Nature of the Conference.

The meeting at the Colonial Office is a conference in the strict sense of the word. The delegates appointed to attend it are not plenipotentiaries; they have power to consult and to advise, but they have no power to act without reference to their Governments. This is well. No wise action can be taken without careful deliberation; and, extraordinary though it may seem, the matters which are now before the Conference have never yet been seriously debated by any qualified or competent assembly.

How the End may be Attained.

Those who are either the enemies of the cause, or who are ignorant of the elements of the question involved, are often heard to suggest that it is the object or the duty of the Imperial Conference to elaborate forthwith a complete and cut-and-dried scheme of Federal Government. Nothing is further from the fact. In the fulness of time such a scheme may be completed. If so, it will be the consequence and not the cause of the measures which alone can give true unity to the Empire.

It is possible—nay, more, it is highly probable—that a time will come when, by the very force of circumstances, the various branches of the Imperial administration throughout the world will have become uniform and systematic; conducted everywhere upon the same principles, by the same methods, and with the same objects. When that time arrives, Federation will be an accomplished fact. The mere names and phrases which we may apply to the new *régime* will spring up of themselves. We shall describe the fact because the fact will be there. But we shall not hasten this consummation one hour by any make-believe. Federation will not be brought about by a royal proclamation, or by a single Act of Parliament; it can only be the outcome of long, careful, and conscientious work done by those who care for their country, and who have realised the right way of serving it. What, then, is the nature of this process? It is a process which is familiar to any man who in any station of life, in any department of science, art, or industry, has brought to a successful

termination the work upon which he was engaged. It is the old process of the application of mind to matter. The Imperial Conference has been summoned to discuss the best means of dealing with those matters which are of common interest to the Empire. But it is not convened to create these common interests. They exist already—they have long existed; and each day that we live their number and their complexity are increasing. In every branch of private as well as of national life, examples are to be found. In trade, in commerce, in agriculture, in science, in literature; among all the religious bodies, in the humblest concerns of domestic life, the intercommunication between the various parts of the British Empire is growing with amazing rapidity.

From every one of these departments of human life and interest we learn the same lesson. Neither business nor pleasure, neither the colossal operations of commerce nor the humblest details of private communication, can be transacted, or are transacted, without some form of reasonable organisation, based upon common sense, and calculated to economise time and labour and to diminish friction.

The Line of "Least Resistance."

In other words, wherever voluntary effort has been appealed to, an application of mind to matter has been the invariable consequence. Already five-sixths of the work of Federation is being done to our hand. The poets are doing it, the ministers of religion are doing it, the merchants, the engineers, the soldiers, the sailors, the great trade societies, and a host of private correspondents are all engaged upon it. The Empire is being federated along the line of least resistance. In one department, and in one only, has common sense never obtained a footing. In one department of our Imperial communications alone has the ordinary experience of practical men been disregarded. To one class of persons alone has the idea of applying mind to matter never yet occurred. It is sorrowful to reflect that, unless the incompetence and want of forethought which have hitherto been exhibited in this one quarter alone can be replaced by a more intelligent and more reasonable system, the whole of the good which has been accomplished under our eyes, by private enterprise, and by the pressure of favourable circumstances, is in danger of being undone. It is in the departments of Government and administration alone that no effort has hitherto

been made to organise and to arrange upon a reasonable basis the necessary work of the Empire. That the relations between the administration of the Mother Country and that of the Colonies should have been in the first instance formless and improperly organised is, indeed, not unnatural in view of the chequered history of our Empire. That no serious attempt should have been made up to the present time to remedy so unsatisfactory a state of things is almost incomprehensible. If no effort be made in the future to do so, it will not only be a mark of our incapacity for an Imperial position, but will be the sure sign that we are laying up for ourselves a future of danger and difficulty which it is sorrowful to contemplate.

The True Method.

The work, therefore, which the Imperial Conference has to do is marked out plainly enough. It has got to go through, step by step, the various departments of administration both here and in the Colonies. It has got to select those matters which are of common interest to all parts of the Empire; and it has got to suggest methods by which the work which is done avowedly in one interest and with one object can be most effectively done, most uniformly done, and most economically done.

At this very day there is a career open to the head of any Government Department who would devote his attention to merely utilising his existing opportunities of extending the procedure of his office, and to bringing it into harmony both in form and sentiment with that in other parts of the Empire. But the heads of departments are apparently either unable or unwilling to avail themselves of their opportunities. It will be the work of the Imperial Conference to suggest, to prompt, and to advise. We shall show, in a subsequent article, to what points they can most profitably direct their attention, where the need is sorest, and where the hope of obvious and immediate advantage is the greatest.

III.—PERILS BY SEA.

The First Step.

It is not easy to predict where the work of the Conference will end, or to assign a limit to the operations which it may profitably undertake. But as to the point at which it should begin there can be no doubt or difficulty whatever. All other matters can be allowed to wait, but the question of Imperial defence cannot be allowed to wait for a day. This may seem a strong proposition; it is, however, a mere statement of an obvious fact. It is true that for years the matter has been neglected, that every practical recommendation on the subject has been overlooked, and that the Empire notwithstanding still flourishes. It is also true that uninsured premises not unfrequently flourish till the day they are burnt down. It is possible to postpone indefinitely the steps necessary to secure absolute protection. But the necessity for taking them is equally pressing and equally immediate on each succeeding day that is allowed to elapse. It is beyond contradiction or argument that at no period in the world's history were interests so great and so important as those of the British Empire safeguarded by defences so miserably inadequate as those which we now possess. The matter is one, as we have said, about which there could not under any circumstances be a shadow of doubt. But, as if it were necessary to make assurance doubly sure, we have in our usual odd fashion made an elaborate official inquiry into the whole question; have demonstrated to our own satisfaction that every reasonable precaution has been grossly neglected, and have even gone so far as to tabulate the measures which ought to be taken to make us safe in the future.

Sinning Against the Light.

All this work was thoroughly and accurately carried out by Lord Carnarvon's Commission, more than five years ago. And until within the last few months absolutely nothing had been done to give effect to its recommendations. At last, however, public opinion has been directed towards the dangers of our position. No thanks, however, to the responsible persons who were and are paid to provide for the security of the country. There need be no mistake about this matter. Every single step in advance

that has been made during the last two years in the direction of strengthening our fleet and fortifying our ports has been the result of popular pressure and newspaper criticism, and not of official energy or enterprise. Now, for the first time, we have sitting in London a body of men capable of understanding, appreciating, and dealing with the great question of Imperial defence upon a uniform and rational plan. Such an opportunity has never yet occurred. Like other similar opportunities, it will pass away without result if we wait for the Government Departments to utilise it. Public opinion must be brought to bear in favour of action, and before the public can be expected to exert any pressure they must be fully informed of the greatness of the need.

The Perils of Ignorance.

It is occasionally pretended by persons of limited information that the people of these islands can not only afford to disregard what is taking place across the seas, but that there is something actually to be commended in an ostentatious indifference to the affairs of the outside world. The number of persons holding and expressing these views is, unfortunately, large; and the amount of harm that they have done by producing a false sense of security is not inconsiderable. The best way to destroy the illusion which they desire to create is to recall some of the facts of our national life, which can be most easily authenticated by a reference to any ordinary statistical table. It is no exaggeration to say that were it not for the supplies which we receive from over the sea, one man out of every two in England would be starving; and five out of every six would be out of employment. It is well sometimes to apply these facts to the circumstances of particular districts; and any town in the north of England will furnish an example of the extent to which we depend upon outside products.

Statistics to be Remembered.

Over 50 per cent. of our corn-supply is sea-borne: so also is every pound of our cotton, and the great bulk of our wool. Deprive Lancashire of its cotton, Yorkshire of its wool, and both of half their food, and it requires no word-painting to enable us to comprehend the result. Shortly put, it would be ruin.

But the danger can never arise.

This is just the mistake which those who do not know what

modern warfare means are accustomed to make. It is the mistake of pure ignorance. There is no man, and no body of men, laying claim to or possessing the slightest scientific knowledge, who would not assert that the dangers which we are running are of the very gravest and most terrible nature, and who would not add that the steps we have hitherto taken are ludicrously inadequate for our protection.

Public Enemies.

One of the commonest and most fatuous lines of argument which are taken in this matter is, that war being a bad thing and a thing to be discouraged, it is a waste of money to take precautions to protect ourselves from its consequences. If only the persons who strive to delude their fellow-countrymen with such absurdities would hold out any hope whatever that they or their friends would really relieve us from the danger of a hostile attack, they would deserve at least a patient attention. They do nothing of the kind, however; and until they do, they are simply, however unintentionally, public enemies, and should be so treated. Meanwhile, to those who are wise enough to free themselves from any illusions of this kind, the following facts will be of some interest. They will especially commend themselves to commercial men, and to all those who are accustomed to provide for the contingencies of the future by prudent action in the present.

Our Daily Bread.

We have shown how the very life of England depends upon the safety of her sea-borne commerce. The fact, however, is notorious, and needs no demonstration. Our great neighbour France has, like us, a certain amount of commerce, and some considerable colonies. It is a fact, that if every ship flying the French flag were swept off the sea to-morrow, and every colony belonging to the Republic were at the same time wrested from its allegiance, France would be palpably, demonstrably richer by the operation. It is not necessary to dwell upon the consequences of a similar fate, should it befall this country. It would be national annihilation. For every threepence that England spends upon its national insurance, in the way of protection for its sea-borne trade, France spends one guinea. It is scarcely worth while to heighten the contrast; but we may add that for every shilling England spends, Russia spends proportionately eight pounds. In other words, not to put too

fine a point upon it, either we are grossly neglecting proper precautions for our own defence, or foreign nations are deliberately expending money with the hope and object of injuring us and destroying our commercial supremacy. As a matter of fact, both suppositions are true. Granting, therefore, that the danger is great, that the risk is enormous, and that the need presses, can we truly say that the Imperial Conference supplies us with the means of lessening the danger and meeting the need? We shall endeavour in a future article to give an affirmative answer to this question.

IV.—"WHO WILLS THE END WILL FIND THE MEANS."

It *Does* Matter.

In our last article we pointed out that the question of Imperial defence was one which no man and no party in England could afford to neglect; that it was in no sense connected with class interests or professional theories, but concerned the daily life and fortunes of every man, rich and poor, in the Queen's dominions. There is no doubt of the correctness of this view. *It does matter;* and those who believe, or pretend they believe, that it does not matter, are simply, after the fashion of the ostrich, hiding their heads in the sand, to escape the sight of the danger which they fear, but take no steps to avoid.

What can a Conference Do?

But, granting this much, what, it will be asked, can the Imperial Conference, or any similar body, do, to give us a security which our present arrangements do not afford? The answer is that it can do everything, and that, while every isolated effort of the Home Government, or of the individual Colonies, to guard against attack, must inevitably be a failure, the combined efforts of the various parts of our Imperial realm can create an offensive and defensive armament of such a strength that no Power in the world will be able to break through the chain which will connect British interests round the globe.

The proposition is scarcely worth arguing with any member

of the community save a Government official. Conceive for a moment one of our great commercial firms with branches in London, Calcutta, Montreal, Melbourne, and Hong-Kong, allowing the staff of each branch to transact business, to make contracts, to despatch cargoes, without any sort of reference to what was being done at the other centres of the firm's operations! In a commercial concern, which had not behind it the inexhaustible purse of a long-suffering people, ready to pay tenfold value for all its appliances, the result would be simply ruin.

A Lesson from Business-men.

The commonplace which has lain at the bottom of all modern industrial advancement has been the duty of co-operation. The telegraph has added almost infinitely to the application of the principle. A buyer in London learns that a commodity is cheaper in Calcutta than in New York. He buys therefore in Calcutta. A contractor learns that there is a demand for labour or railway appliances in South America or in Australia, and accordingly he transfers his energy and his capital to those places. But hitherto in that great business of defending the Empire, which by courtesy is supposed to be undertaken by our great naval and military departments, this obvious application of commonplace principles has been wholly wanting.

How Not to Do It.

A typical instance of the method of conducting business will be of interest. Not long ago, as the result of much pressure and much persuasion, it was decided to grant money for the purpose of making and fortifying a dock at one of our coaling-stations.

The dock was built — at the Cape. The fortifications were constructed — at Aden. The guns were sent — to Bombay, and there dropped over the side of the barge into the water, where they still remain — but it is not necessary to multiply examples.

"Wilful Waste makes Woeful Want."

From the present system there can be only one result—a result with which we are all familiar—a spasmodic expenditure o odd sums of money, in odd quarters of the globe, without method and without arrangements. There is not one of the great Colonies which has not already some naval and military force at its disposal. The naval and military expenditure on the Imperial services is over sixty millions a year. It is no exaggeration at all

to say that the value of both the Imperial and the Colonial armaments might be doubled by the outlay, not of more money, but of that apparently much scarcer commodity, brains. In the year 1887 for the first time a serious attempt has been made to organise a naval intelligence department, and an annual pittance has been assigned for securing the due performance of a duty which the head of any commercial house in England would have considered the obvious preliminary to any outlay whatever. We know that there is material enough in the form of manuscript essays and approved schemes lying in the pigeon-holes of the Government offices to allow of a formal contradiction to the statement which we are about to make; but the statement nevertheless is an absolutely true one—namely, that at this moment there exists no practical organisation whatever for utilising the strength of this country in time of war. The whole organisation of the war services of the country is a peace organisation. Our condition is that of a manufacturer who builds up his engine in a room just large enough to contain it when at rest, but which is altogether insufficient to allow of the slightest movement of crank or shaft when once the steam is turned into the cylinder.

Past a Joke.

This state of things would be ludicrous if it were not so serious. It is a state of things which concerns the Colonies as closely as it concerns us. What they send we receive, and many of them are actually exposed to the first brunt of an attack.

The Public must Help.

An unrivalled opportunity has arisen of arranging with the representatives of the great Colonies what part they will take in carrying out the work of defence. Already the Imperial Conference is engaged upon the task; and nothing can aid them so much in bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion as the clearly expressed sympathy and approbation of the public. To sympathise the public must first understand; and to understand they must take the trouble to learn. There are ample materials ready to their hand which will show them where the dangers lie, what is their nature, and what is their gravity.

The work which Captain Colomb, M.P., has done in this connection is the result of many years' close professional study; and no one who reads what he has written upon the defence of the Empire can plead ignorance of the facts of the case, or of

our responsibilities in regard to them. It must not, of course, be forgotten that material aid in the shape of ships, guns, and men, is not all that is required to secure the most effective co-operation of the Colonies in our national defence. They are sufficiently one with us in history and in character to be deeply influenced by sentiment and generous sympathy.

"Jacks in Office."

How easily these may be accorded, and with how little thought they are sometimes withheld, is well shown by an incident which occurred two or three years ago. One of the Australian Governments, having determined to add to its war fleet, ordered three vessels to be built in England. When completed, the squadron left for its destination under the command of a British naval officer, who had been allowed to undertake the duty. By the wish of the Colonial Government, and as a compliment to England, the ships hoisted the white ensign. Now, the white ensign is the flag of the Royal Navy, and was selected as such in deference to the strongly expressed preference of Admiral Nelson. It will hardly be credited that on arrival at Gibraltar the officer commanding the Colonial vessels received a peremptory order from Lord Northbrook (then First Lord of the Admiralty) to haul down his flag. It would be hard to conceive a more exasperating command. Its only possible justification would have been a plea of absolute necessity. Lord Northbrook, when interrogated, excused himself by saying that the law compelled him to insist on his prohibition. It did nothing of the kind. The matter was one entirely within the discretion of the Admiralty; and if any proof were needed, it would be afforded by the fact that very recently, without any statutory provision, the white ensign has been formally sanctioned as the flag of the Colonial navies. This anecdote is worth recording, for it is an epitome of the whole situation. It shows how much may be done towards unifying the Empire by any one in an official position who is ready to seize the opportunities which are presented to him in the ordinary routine of official life. It shows how much may be undone or prevented by any one who, through lack of knowledge or through lack of sympathy, neglects such opportunities. If we may slightly modify a French proverb, we would say that in this question of Imperial unity, "He who wishes the end will easily find the means."

V.—THE WORK WAITING TO BE DONE.

Cedant Arma Togæ.

It must not be supposed that because we have devoted two articles to the question of Imperial defence, the usefulness of the Conference is confined to the impetus which it is calculated to give to the completion of our naval and military preparations. Were such the case it would be a sorrowful and unfortunate fact. In the first place, it would immediately stamp the important assemblage now sitting in Whitehall as a specialised body with narrow aims and small possibilities; and in the second place, it would certainly deprive the Conference of the sympathy of all those to whom war and all the preparations connected with war are highly distasteful. We have spoken of fleets and armies first because we are bound to take cognisance of the facts of the situation as they exist. Whatever may be our hopes or our preferences, it is no use pretending that we are safe when we are not safe. It *is* essential to protect our coasts, our commerce, and our Colonies from all attack. We have not done this, and it must be done. At the same time it must not be forgotten that all defensive warlike preparation is but a means to an end. It is the means by which we hope to carry on without interruption the manifold avocations of a great and peaceful nation. Granted that the Conference has taken the necessary steps to organise and to render effective the military strength of the Empire, it will merely have arrived at the threshold of the duties which it ought to undertake, and can undertake with advantage.

Work for Willing Hands.

Let us recall for a moment our definition of the method by which alone true progress can be made in the direction of Imperial unity. We said that it was the duty of our Government Departments to follow the example of the great leaders of private enterprise, and to apply mind to matter in the arrangement of all those questions which are of common interest to all parts of the Empire. Apply this method to the facts of the situation, and a moment's reflection will suffice to convince us that from this day forth no Minister and no Department need be backward

in treading the right path. In every branch of the Administration the opportunities of work lie ready to the hand of the willing worker.

British Empire—Postage One Penny.

Rapid and easy communication is the breath of commerce, and commerce is the life of the Empire. The duty of instituting an Imperial penny postage is one which presses upon every Postmaster-General; it is one which will most assuredly be undertaken when that office is next filled by some person of capacity, who is really acquainted with the work which passes under his hands. The excuses which have hitherto been given by the Department for not doing their duty in this matter are utterly unworthy. There is no need, however, to be the least disheartened by the gloomy prophecies or by the apathy of the officials of St. Martin's-le-Grand. No single great reform in postal matters—from the inland penny postage down to the sixpenny telegram and the parcel post — would have been secured if there had not been steady outside pressure upon the Post Office, and if the public had not insisted upon the needed changes in the face of the most categorical predictions of failure by the officials. The process will have to be repeated; the penny stamp will have to be printed bearing the legend, "British Empire. Postage—One Penny;" and the sender of a letter must be made aware that if his packet be destined for Manchester or Melbourne, for Hong-Kong or Hackney, the postage will in every case cost him one penny, because its destination is within his own country.

Wanted, a Postal Reformer.

Meanwhile one or two facts with regard to postal questions must not be forgotten. England, which thirty years ago was in advance of every other country in the matter of postal facilities, is now behind such countries as Holland, Denmark, or even Peru and Brazil. Again, the figures given by the Postmaster-General with regard to the necessary cost of over-sea postages are either misleading or irrelevant. The present rate paid for letters to Australia is two thousand pounds per ton. We now pay five pounds for transmitting correspondence which could be conveyed as freight for three-and-sixpence. The margin for reduction is enormous. The question which has actually been under the consideration of the Conference during the last few days, with regard to a Government subsidy towards establishing a through

route to the East by way of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver, is another obvious instance in which official co-operation is required. We know now that Canada and Australia are ready to take a part in the enterprise, if reasonable terms can be arrived at. The Imperial Government is also prepared to assist. The Conference gives an admirable opportunity for discussing the terms and agreeing as to the methods.

"Pioneers and Founders."

The great religious bodies have already commenced the work of Federation, and have, without exception, extended their organisation throughout the Empire. It remains for another learned profession, that of the law, to follow the example set by their clerical brethren. Commercial law has practically been made by commercial men, and is therefore practically uniform throughout the Empire; but the criminal and civil laws of various parts of the Queen's dominions differ widely, not only in those points where local peculiarities demand exceptional arrangements, but in matters where the want of uniformity is simply an unnecessary cause of confusion and injustice. Here is work for the lawyers in council to undertake.

Diplomacy.

Turn from the law to the civil and diplomatic services. It is absolutely essential that the great civil and diplomatic appointments of the Empire should be put, not nominally only, but practically, within reach of any Englishman in the Queen's dominions. India, the great possession of our people, should be administered by Englishmen, not from these islands only, but from all parts of the Empire. Here is more work for the reformer. If once the feeling of possession with regard to India is brought home to Canada and Australia, our countrymen there will bring the infinite resources of their strength and enterprise to bear in assisting us to retain and to administer the great peninsula. Already a halting attempt has been made to systematise emigration. What chance is there of making it effectual unless and until we have the ready co-operation of our great Colonies? How is such co-operation to be obtained without mutual counsel and debate?

We might continue our list almost indefinitely; but this is a problem which every one is capable of helping to solve. There is no end to the possibilities of development and improvement

which are open to us. Once grant the desire to succeed, and the only difficulty will lie in choosing with proper judgment the most important out of the many roads which will lead us to success.

VI.—A SUMMARY.

A Tribute to the Federation League.

The Imperial Conference has concluded its sittings, and several of its members have already returned to their respective Colonies. It is not possible to review the precise details of the work which has been accomplished, for the proceedings have throughout been conducted in private. Enough, however, has been communicated to the public by the indiscretion of some person who was present during the meetings to give a fair general idea of the nature of the business undertaken, and of the spirit in which the various questions were approached. It is satisfactory to learn that, both as regards form and matter, the proceedings of the Conference were conducted in the strictest conformity with the principles which in these articles have been laid down as being calculated to ensure real and permanent success. There has been no attempt to create new and fictitious bonds of union between various portions of the Empire; the delegates have wisely recognised the fact that in organising and utilising the material which already existed, there was ample work ready to their hands.

The Defence Question.

The Defence question seems to have made real progress. This, indeed, was inevitable as soon as any responsible body was really brought face to face with the facts, and was prepared to co-operate towards achieving the desired end. The work of properly utilising the defensive resources of the Empire has undoubtedly received a great stimulus, but it will not do to allow our officials to go to sleep again. It is a good thing to be agreed as to what is best to be done, but it is better still to do it. It will be necessary to keep a careful watch upon the naval and military authorities, and the public must show itself both alert and distrustful. The Cape, King George's Sound,

Hong-Kong, and Singapore must be protected by something better than paper plans; and if, by dint of persistence, the authorities, Imperial or local, are compelled to erect fortifications, we must refuse any longer to be content that the fortifications should remain without guns, the guns without ammunition, and both without men trained to employ them. We have made a beginning only, and we must be watchful and persevering.

Postage.

With regard to postal reform, it seemed as if the Conference were about to separate without accomplishing anything at all. Happily, however, at the eleventh hour it has been announced that a great step in advance has been taken, and that there is a definite prospect of an over-sea mail to Australia being established, with a charge of 3d. instead of 6d. for each letter carried. Half a loaf is better than no bread, and no doubt the Colonies are perfectly right in protecting their own Exchequers from loss; but this matter will not end here. The facts in favour of penny postage are too strong to be disregarded, and it is a mere question of time how long it will be before the Postal Departments here and in Australia are convinced that the public convenience and the public purse will alike be gainers by the inevitable reduction.

Law.

The discussions which have taken place with respect to bankruptcy law, the probate of Colonial wills, and other legal questions, are not likely to strike public imagination. They are not, however, the less important on that account. On the contrary, they are in some respects the most useful outcome of the Conference. They furnish a proof, if proof were needed, that in all the details of administration and legislation there is room for improvement in the direction of harmonising and simplifying the law and the practice prevailing in different parts of the Empire. It is to these silent and unobtrusive methods that we must look for the binding together of the Empire by invisible but unbreakable bonds. If the line of action inaugurated by the Conference be steadily adhered to, we may look forward to the time when the unity of institutions, customs, and conveniences among all British subjects will be so much a matter of course, and their interruption so intolerable an interference with daily habit, that the very

idea of abandoning such a system will appear too unreasonable for serious discussion.

New Hebrides.

We will not attempt to enter here into the controversy arising out of the French occupation of the New Hebrides. The matter has been before the Conference, and it does not appear to have yet reached a satisfactory settlement. It is, however, a great step in advance that the responsible Ministers of the Crown representing the United Kingdom and the Australasian States have at least had an opportunity of a personal meeting, and an interchange of views otherwise than through the hopeless channels of official correspondence. As to the main proposition, that it is for the benefit of the Empire, of Australasia, and of civilisation at large, that the French should be got out of the New Hebrides, and made to fulfil their treaty engagements, there can be no doubt whatever. Public feeling at home, as doubtless in the Colonies, has been distinctly dissatisfied by the tone of the Prime Minister's language on this subject; but it will be recognised that there is room for much discretion and much care, as well as for much firmness, in the action which is taken to achieve the desired result.

The True Measure of Success.

After all, however, the value of the Conference is not solely to be judged either by that which it has done or that which it has failed to do. Its true value lies in the demonstration which it affords of the new conditions of our Empire. It has proved that responsible and able officials can be gathered together from all parts of the world, with the consent and approbation of their Governments, and without any serious dislocation of the political work of their respective Colonies. It has proved that a body of men so assembled can be relied upon to discuss the great questions of Imperial interest with sympathy, with reason, and in a thoroughly practical spirit. It has proved that the difficulties which were supposed to stand in the way of Imperial unity diminish rapidly as soon as they are confronted with courage and common sense.

Death of the "Colonial Office Demon."

While we in the United Kingdom have learnt much, the delegates themselves have also learnt something. They have seen that the baneful traditions so long maintained by the

Colonial Office have been broken down, and that the "Colonial Office Demon," to which Sir Henry Holland alluded, has been exorcised by the force of public opinion, which will no longer tolerate the mixture of apathy and bad manners which used to be considered the necessary qualities of all intercourse between the Home Government and the Colonial Ministers. The various delegates have learnt, as Mr. Deakin has told us, that there are other Colonies besides those from which they come, each with its own difficulties, dangers, and advantages; each with something to gain from co-operation: each with something to contribute to the common stock.

The Application of Mind to Matter.

And lastly, the lesson has been once more impressed upon the world that Englishmen are capable of doing business even when that business is not the work of the counter or the workshop, but of the legislator, the administrator, and the ruler: that in the work of government as well as in the work of buying and selling, manufacturing and distributing, the English people are really still capable of applying mind to the arrangement of matter.



PRINTED BY CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, LA BELLE SAUVAGE, LONDON, E.C.

10559009

DSM
354.4201
I

DSM/ 354.4201/ I
Imperial federation : report of the Conference held July 29, 1884, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, the Right Hon. W.E. Fors

STATE LIBRARY
OF N.S.W.
N2128075