

affairs which are of concern to the United Kingdom itself. They may also be reminded that the Dominions have always shown themselves too jealous of their own autonomy to be likely to interfere with the domestic interests of the mother country. And sticklers for autonomy in the Dominions, on the other hand, may perhaps be soothed and conciliated by the reflection that the conclusions of the War Cabinet can only be carried into effect by the Parliaments of the different portions of the Empire. In any case this new attempt further to regulate imperial procedure gives the Dominions an assured place in regard to both the conduct of the war and the settlement of the terms of peace. It seems to have been rightly appraised by Sir Robert Borden when he said that in the War Cabinet of the future will be found "the germ of constitutional development of the Empire which will form the basis of its unity in years to come."

In former days part of the attractiveness of the idea of imperial preference, at least to some of us, was that it was a word of fear to Germany. She was England's best customer before the war, and while guarding her own markets with jealous exclusiveness she made the utmost possible use of the "open door" offered to her by British Free Trade. Without this privilege she could never have ventured to challenge British commercial supremacy throughout the world. The war has changed many things, and it will probably have a lasting effect on the economic policy of the various belligerents. There can be no question to-day of our absolute right to control all essential materials throughout the Empire, to regulate what are known as "key industries," to develop in our own interests our material resources, actual and potential, wherever they may be found, and to recognize the important part which economic conditions play in any well considered scheme of imperial defence. It does not lie in the mouth of protectionist nations to say that Britain must not be allowed to reconsider, in the light of new conditions, her traditional devotion to Free