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## CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOR OF A DOMINION DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

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BY THE SECRETARY OF THE DOMINION BOARD OF TRADE.

The necessities of nations have given rise to multiplied and increasing divisions of departmental detail in carrying on Government, and much could be said about the importance of the functions of Ministers forming Cabinets in countries which enjoy responsible government. But after all that might be adduced regarding the several offices, there is probably none that could now have an interest or influence surpassing that of a Department as yet only specifically recognised, it is believed, in France and Germany,—viz., a Department of Commerce.

It seems evident that particular attention must be given in future by Governments to their internal trade and commerce, and to facilitating their expansion; and the most casual observer cannot but realise that the bonds which are to hold nations together in friendly alliance, will, hereafter, consist of those which are the outcome of commercial arrangements or treaties,—rather than those of mere political affinities or compacts; and when that consummation is attained, the prestige of the War Department, as well as of some others, will have been eclipsed by the Department of Commerce, presided over by a Cabinet Minister. It will further be evident, that in any international treaty or convention which may be ratified, the country whose statesmen are most intimately acquainted with the minutiae of its industries and commerce, will derive the most substantial advantages. Of course, it is not meant to be implied that there is no provision made under existing arrangements, in this or other countries where there is no special Department of Commerce, for consideration by Governments of commercial and trade matters,—but Commerce, *per se*, is only treated casually, and not with that deference which is due to its immense and growing importance. The experience of investigators, both in the United States and Canada, is that official records and statistics relating to commerce are lamentably defective;—while of Great Britain it has been said:—"There has not been an hour, day or night, in the past thirty-five years, when her Government has ceased to be at work investigating, debating, reporting, experimenting, legislating, adjudicating, and solving the single problem: How shall England secure to her internal commerce the lowest rate of charge for transportation which is consistent with the just claims of the capital embarked in her channels of commerce?"

### *The Question in Great Britain.*

Misapprehension has prevailed, and still exists, regarding the functions and duties of the Board of Trade of Great Britain. As a governmental department, that Board has been commonly supposed to be specially charged with the duty of watching over, and, when needful, protecting the manifold interests of commerce and industry, in their relations to other branches of the public service, and to foreign countries. The President