

C of 1894.

Ottawa 1894.—Two questions discussed at the Conference of 1887 continued to claim the earnest attention of colonial statesmen—preferential trade and a Pacific cable. The Canadian Government became more and more convinced of the importance of preferential trade within the Empire, and Mr. Fleming kept up an unremitting agitation in favour of a Pacific cable, with the result that the Government of Canada issued invitations for a conference to be held in Ottawa in 1894 for the discussion of commercial relations between Canada and Australasia. The question of preferential trade was discussed at great length, and the desirability of a general system of trade preferences between the self-governing parts of the empire was so clearly and forcibly urged by the Canadian ministers, Hon. George E. Foster and Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, that the Conference decided almost unanimously in favour of a system. Two years later the Conservative Government of Canada was defeated in a general election, but the new Liberal Government under Sir Wilfred Laurier brought in a measure granting a preference of 12½% to British goods, which was later increased to 25%, and finally to 33½%.

Mr. Fleming once more urged the importance and the feasibility of a Pacific Cable, ~~and, in spite of the determined opposition of a cable trust,~~ persuaded the Conference to take such action that in 1902 a Pacific cable, the property of the co-operating governments, was completed at a cost of \$1,800,000.

The conference of 1894 is usually called a subsidiary one. It was summoned by one of the colonies. Moreover, the British Government was represented only by the Earl of Jersey, who was not allowed "to bind Her Majesty's Government, or to express views on their behalf". Yet this Conference, which is given scant attention by some of the historians, had very important results.

London 1897.—Many very important things happened between 1894 and 1897. The Liberal Government of Lord Roseberry was replaced in 1895 by a Conservative one under the Marquis of Salisbury. A few months later, the unfortunate "Venezualan Affair" came up to disturb the good relations between Great Britain and the United States. On January 1st, 1896, Dr. Jameson undertook his wild raid into the Transvaal and on January 3rd the world was startled by the Kaiser's famous telegram to President Kruger, which was answered by the sailing of Great Britain's Flying Squadron. A few months later still, the Anglo-Egyptian advance up the Nile against the Khalifa was begun. The next year, Canada granted a customs preference to British goods. At the same time, active negotiations were going on in Australia looking to the federation of the Australian colonies. Surely it was an appropriate