

caution which has since been so carefully followed out by the League, not to lay down any hard and fast lines of action, not to attempt to indulge in any fantastic efforts at premature constitution-making, but to act as a medium of public instruction in the necessity and advantages of some scheme of Imperial Federation; impressing upon the minds of British subjects in all the self-governing communities of the Empire that the mode of procedure would be a careful development of existing institutions, by a gradual process of time and education, into a form more suitable to the necessities of the period and the people, than the present ill-defined and perhaps precarious union. Evolution, not revolution, has been the guiding principle of the League and of the advocates of a closer connection, ever since the inception of the policy, and this it is that has contributed so largely towards the phenomenal success of the movement.

When we look back over the record of the last four years, the progress made by this idea of Imperial unity seems to have been so great as to astonish even its first promoters. The two great obstacles towards progress which faced the first advocates of the principle were ignorance commercially, and ignorance politically. In 1886, by means of that marvellous gathering of products, and exhibition of wealth, progress and undeveloped resources known as the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, much was done to diffuse information amongst the people of the mother country regarding the great possibilities of trade which lay before them, and to develop a desire to increase the interchange of commercial commodities between themselves and the various colonies which were there so magnificently represented.

This great display of what had been done in the past to build up the Colonies, and hint of what yet remained to be done in the future to weld their interests and those of Great Britain into that closer union which is so essential to the maintenance of British commerce and the development of colonial trade, did much to dispel the ignorance which then so generally prevailed. No sooner, however, was the Exhibition over, than the Prince of Wales, to whose indefatigable exertions and great influence so much of its success was due, turned his attention to the difficult task of rendering the Exhibition a permanent one. It was proposed that an Imperial Institute should be established, with all the departments and equipment necessary to make it a living commercial centre and industrial school for the Empire,