

all other countries, both British and foreign) was increased, and this could only have been done if trade within the Empire had been moved into more economical channels. As has been shown above, this has not been accomplished, but if it had been it would inevitably have produced an increased volume of world trade. It is true, of course, that the whole position can be radically altered by the governments of Canada and Australia, acting through their Tariff Boards, making such alterations in the tariff as definitely to turn Empire trade into more economical channels. If one places too much faith in this possible turn of events, however, one may be laying oneself open to grave disappointment.

One more question remains. What influence will the Conference agreements have on the direction of the future development of world trade? Will it be towards nationalism, continentalism or internationalism? Internationalism is the most desirable objective, and it is probably true to say that it is the one held by many responsible men in the majority of countries today. Efforts will be made to move towards it at the World Economic Conference - the ultimate attainment, of course, will take many years - and the success of those efforts will depend largely on whether the Empire is able, and willing, to take part in the movement. If she is, all well and good. If she is not, then the movement will almost certainly be towards groups of countries united by tariff agreements, with barriers erected against the rest of the world, but not necessarily with any great degree of free trade among themselves. The tendency of the grouping is likely to be broadly along continental lines - wide the Pan-European and Pan-American movements - with certain definite exceptions such as the British Empire. One effect of this continentalism will be to put a check on the growth of nationalistic tariff policy.

E. CONCLUSION

The success or failure of the Imperial conference is not susceptible to judgment at the moment, for there are too many important problems still awaiting solution. Certain reflections may be permitted, however, in the nature of a summing up of the discussions in this memorandum. Any views as to the result of the Conference are necessarily dependent on what was hoped from it in the first instance. If the desire was that an area of free - or at any rate freer - trade should be established, which would have been of great significance in world recovery, this has so far not been achieved. The only remaining hope in this respect lies in the action of the Tariff Boards, supported by their governments. If it was intended that the creation of a tariff barrier around the Empire could be used as a bludgeon to induce other countries to lower their tariffs, the effectiveness of the weapon was much reduced by the difficulties that were put in the way of altering the tariffs. Here again, however, there are many loose ends which may prove to be capable of manoeuvring in such a way as to improve the situation, but any satisfactory results in bargaining will come by circumventing or modifying the agreements, rather than by employing them. And if the objective was to increase the prosperity of the Empire, or any part of it, no matter what happened to the rest of the world, this too is not likely to be achieved, because at the moment it seems as if the Empire may lose more on the swings than it will gain on the roundabouts.