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limits of possibility," and pleading for the immediate creation of "a real Council of the Empire to which all questions of Imperial interest might be referred, and, if it were desired to proceed gradually, the Council might in the first instance be merely an advisory council." "But, although that would be a preliminary step, it is clear that the object would not be completely secured until there had been conferred upon such a Council executive powers, and perhaps also legislative powers; and it is for you to say, gentlemen, whether you think the time has come when any progress whatever can be made in this direction."^{*}

The Colonial gentlemen did not think the time had come. Not even the arch-Imperialist Mr. Seddon dare commit his Colony to any approach towards accepting the idea of an Imperial Council. No report is given of the discussion of the scheme: no Premier brought forward a resolution on the subject, and the Conference contented itself with a resolution affirming, in terms similar to those of 1897, the general desirability of Conferences, adding the more definite suggestion that they should be held at intervals "not exceeding five years."

The only resolution adopted which affected the political relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies was a demand not for curtailment but for enlargement of Colonial liberty, asking that in treaties negotiated by Great Britain with Foreign Powers "the views of the Colonies affected should be obtained."

A strong appeal was made by Mr. Chamberlain for a "fair distribution of the burdens of Empire" in the shape of a larger contribution towards Imperial defence.

The Naval side of this suggestion was supported by an elaborate Memorandum from the Australian Minister of Defence, maintaining the proposition "that the Empire should have one fleet maintained by the whole nation, every part contributing to its support on some plan to be mutually arranged." The project of a Royal Naval Reserve, to which the different

* Cd. 1299, page 4.