

sufficiently definite for discussion ; and yet it presents great difficulties in detail, and particularly so when the interests of Great Britain and the likelihood or unlikelihood of her giving her assent are taken into account. Federation presents the idea of a British connection as

OPPOSED TO INDEPENDENCE OR ANNEXATION,

which to my mind is a distinct conception. It also aims at the preservation and defence of all parts of the Empire. This, too, presents a definite idea, which may be worked out in detail if we wish it. We know that it is a matter of common occurrence for nations that have nothing in common except the maintenance of their existence to form alliances for defensive and sometimes offensive purposes. They first settle that it would be desirable and then they enter on details. When Bismarck first suggested to Italy that it would be to their common advantage to form an alliance, was there not something definite in the proposal? and yet, no doubt, there were great difficulties and important details to settle before the alliance was consummated. If we at once come to the conclusion that it would be to our advantage, and the advantage of the Empire at large, to enter into an alliance for our preservation, we shall have made definite progress; and at that point the League has already arrived. And so would it also be with regard to questions of trade and our relations with other powers; the only difference being that the trade question presents greater difficulties. No one will deny that it would be of great advantage to us if our trade relations with all the parts of the Empire could be enlarged. This is

ONE OF THE AIMS OF THE LEAGUE.

We should encounter great difficulties no doubt in forming a trade league owing particularly to our rivalry with the United States and to differences of opinion on questions of Free Trade and Protection. But no one can say that these difficulties are insuperable or that present opinions on these questions will always remain unchanged. If we cannot gain all we want by Federation, we can certainly gain much, and the trial is worth the making. In all these matters our relations with the United States would be an important factor in our arrangements. We do not lose sight of this, and we believe that Federation would in the end establish the most friendly relations between ourselves and our neighbors, which it is our wish as well as interest to maintain.

Space does not permit me to enter into a discussion of the advantages which would result from Federation, and my object now is simply to show that we have definite objects and think Federation feasible.

And now a few words as to our scheme. The general impression among those who are not familiar with the constitution of the League is that an Imperial Parliament or Executive Council, composed of delegates or representatives from the different members of the Empire, is indispensable to the scheme of Federation, and it must be admitted that the word "Federation" is calculated to give that impression. But Lord Rosebery, the authoritative mouthpiece of the League in England, refused to commit the League to this as an article of its creed. There would be at least very great difficulty in getting Britain and the great