

to accept it with all its consequences, come from what quarter it may, if it be necessary to do so in order to defend the honor and integrity of our own Empire." (Cheers.) I call your attention to the last words of the orator. He speaks of "our own Empire," and he struck the right chord, for the Empire of Great Britain is the common heritage of all her sons, and is not the appanage of the United Kingdom alone. (Cheers.) Now, in the course of that debate, many speeches were made, all to the same effect, and the resolution was unanimously passed with acclamation.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

But again and again allusion was made to the opportunity, to the occasion, which every well-wisher to the unity of the Empire was bound to seize, and a hope was expressed that something might be done to bring us nearer together. Sir, we share that hope. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) And I ask you now, gentlemen, is this demonstration, this almost universal expression of loyalty from all our colonies, to pass away without a serious effort upon the part of both colonial and Imperial statesmen to transform these high sentiments into practical results? (Cheers.) I have, at any rate, thought that it was my duty the first time I had the opportunity of speaking at least to call attention to the position of this great question, which has been before us now for a good number of years, which has attracted intensely the sentiments of the people, but which has not up to the present time resulted in anything like a practical scheme. In the year 1884 a league was formed the Imperial Federation League on each side of the bridge. The League—under the most favorable auspices. The late Mr. Forster was its President, and it afterwards enjoyed the assistance of a long series of distinguished statesmen and prominent personages; but two years ago it was dissolved, without having accomplished its object, unless, indeed, its sole object was the education of public opinion to the importance of the subject. But during its career it was again and again challenged to produce a plan, and it was unwilling or unable to answer the challenge. Sir, I think that we may, at all events, learn from its experience that the realization of our hopes, if they are in the direction of a federation of the empire—their final realization—is a matter of such vast magnitude and such great complication that it cannot be undertaken at the present time. But it does not follow that on that account we should give up our aspiration. (Hear, hear.) It is only a proof that we must approach the goal in a different way; that we must seek the line of least resistance. To create a new Government for the British Empire—a new Government, with large powers of taxation and legislation over countries separated by thousands of miles of sea, in conditions as various as those which prevail in our several dependencies and colonies—that, indeed, would be a duty from which the boldest statesmen might shrink appalled. We may, however, approach this desirable consummation by a process of gradual development. (Hear, hear.) We may hear in mind, in the first place, the words of Shakespeare—that

"No vast design was ever snatched in haste."

COMMON INTERESTS.

We may endeavor to establish common interests and common obligations. When we have done that it will be natural that some sort of representative authority should grow up to deal with the interests and the obligations we have created. What is the greatest of our common obligations? It is Imperial defence. What is the greatest of our common obligations? It is Imperial trade. (Hear, hear.) And these two are very closely connected. It is very difficult to see how you can pretend to deal with the great question of Imperial trade, Imperial defence is largely a matter of ways and means, and ways and means are dependent upon the fiscal and other commercial arrangements you may make; and, therefore, the conclusion to which I arrive is this—that if the people of this country and the people of the colonies mean what they have been saying, and if they intend to approach this question of Imperial unity in a practical spirit, they must approach it on its commercial side.

THE GERMAN EXAMPLE.

We have a great example before us in the creation of the German Empire. How was that brought about? You all recollect that, in the first instance, it commenced with the union of two of the States which now form that great empire in a commercial Zollverein. They attracted the other States gradually—were joined by them for commercial purposes. A council, a Reichsrath, was formed to deal with those commercial questions. Gradually in those discussions national objects and political interests were introduced, and so, from starting as it did, on a purely commercial point, and for commercial interests, it developed until it became a bond of unity, and the basis of the German Empire. We have another reason why we should approach this subject from its commercial side, and that is that in regard to the colonies, to whose feelings we must pay the utmost deference, who must, in fact, in some sense at any rate, take the initiative in any movement, have clearly pointed by their action to commercial

union as the point upon which as they consider, the whole subject is most ripe. Why, what happened at the great conference at Ottawa which was held in 1894? The principal resolution—principal, at all events, in regard to its importance—which was passed at that conference was in the following terms:—That this conference records its belief in the advisability of a customs arrangement between Great Britain and her colonies, by which trade within the empire may be placed upon a more favorable footing than that which is carried on with foreign countries." (Cheers.) It is quite true that that was the declaration of a general principle, and that no definite plan was submitted to or adopted by the conference, but we have other means of information. We are acquainted with the speeches that were made there, and we know what was in the minds of the delegates. I observed in the Times this morning a telegram from Canada, which tells us that Mr. McNeill, the gentleman who moved the patriotic resolution to which I have already referred, has moved another resolution in the House of Commons of Canada, by which he proposes to declare that it is desirable in the interests of Great Britain and of the colonies that a moderate ad valorem duty, independent of any existing duty, should be imposed, both by the colonies and by the mother country, upon all imports from foreign countries. (Cheers.) That, therefore, is the suggestion, for I will call it no more, it is not a formal proposition, but it is the suggestion that has been made to us by our colonies for carrying out a system of commercial union. At any rate a proposition of that kind is entitled to respectful consideration, and if we object to it we ought, I think, to propose an alternative, and we ought—and this is the other opportunity for us—to say at once that all that we have said, all that we have done, all that we have thought about Imperial unity has been thrown away, and that idea must be abandoned as an empty dream. Now, sir, do not let us minimize the proposition we are asked to consider. It would involve in the case of the United Kingdom a most serious disturbance of our trade; it would be a great change in the principles which for many years past have guided our commercial policy. It involves the imposition of a duty, it may be a small one, but it is a duty, upon food and upon raw material, and whatever may be the result of imposing such a duty as to which, if I had time, I could discourse for many minutes—whatever may be the actual result—the tendency is to increase the cost of living, which would, of course, increase the pressure upon the working classes of this country—"No, no"—to increase the cost of living, and to increase the pressure upon the working classes of this country. (Hear, hear.) That cannot be denied, and it would have a tendency to increase the cost of production, which would put us, of course, in a worse position than now in competition with foreign countries in neutral markets.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROPOSAL.

I see no use in shutting my eyes to the consequences of the proposition—(cheers)—which I desire to consider with an impartial mind. The first thing is to establish the facts, and the facts are as I have stated. In return, under this proposal we should get a small, and a very small, consideration in the shape of a preference for of, it may be 2 per cent., it might even be 5 per cent. in our competition with foreign manufactures in the colonial market. Now what, then, is the proposal we are asked to consider? It is a very startling proposal for a free-trade country—(hear, hear)—and I say that in its present form it is a proposal which it is impossible for us to adopt. (Cheers.) I do not say that merely because a proposal of this kind is contrary to free trade principles; because I think I am myself a convinced free trader in the sense of believing that the theory is undoubtedly the theory on which the world would become most prosperous, yet I have not such a pedantic admiration for it that, if a sufficient advantage were offered to me, I would not consider a deviation from the strict doctrine. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Cobden himself took this view, and compromised his principles in making the French treaty; and it cannot be expected that we, his disciples, should be more orthodox than the apostle of free trade himself. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) But my point is that in the proposal and the suggestion which has hitherto been made there is no sufficient quid pro quo, the advantage offered is not enough to induce this country to take the certain loss and the possible risk which would be involved in reviewing altogether its present commercial policy. Having regard to the amount of the colonial duties which are at the present time levied upon British produce it is evident that a fixed addition such as is suggested would be a much smaller preference in the case of goods going to the colonies than it would be in the case of goods coming from the colonies to this country. In the case of this country the preference is given on the present cost price of the goods, but in the colonies the preference is only added to the cost of the goods plus the heavy duties now imposed. The percentage therefore would be much more in favor of the colonies than it would be in favor of the United Kingdom. (Hear, hear.) But the second point, which is much more important, is that our foreign trade is so gigantic in proportion to the foreign trade of the colonies that the burden of an arrange-

ment of this kind would fall with much greater weight on the United Kingdom than upon our fellow-subjects in the colonies to better their offer it, as I believe, they desire to proceed upon those lines, and if those lines do really offer the best direction in which we can proceed.

LORD RIPON'S DESPATCH.

The arguments I have used, and a good number of others which I should not think of wearying you with, have been very ably stated in an important despatch which was addressed to my predecessor, Lord Ripon, in 1895, to the Governors of all the colonies, and that despatch has been generally assumed to be an absolute negative to the proposals of the colonies. That is a mistake. That despatch is conclusive, in my opinion, as to the particular proposal which has up to the present time, been suggested for our consideration, but it does not bar the door to other proposals, which, being more favorable might receive a more favorable consideration. There is one passage in Lord Ripon's despatch, most important in my eyes, which somehow or other seems to have escaped general attention. It is a paragraph to this effect:—"The resolution (that is, the resolution on the Ottawa conference) does not advocate the establishment of a customs union comprising the whole empire, whereby all the existing barriers to free commercial intercourse between the various members would be removed and the aggregate customs revenue equitably apportioned among the different communities. Such an arrangement," says Lord Ripon, "would be free in principle from objection, and, if it were practicable, would certainly prove effecting in cementing the unity of the empire and promoting its progress and stability." Now that is another suggestion. That is a suggestion of an alternative to the proposition which I have been considering; and I would like to be allowed, in order to make the course of my argument perfectly clear, to summarize what I have said to you upon this point.

FOUR PROPOSITIONS.

I have laid down four propositions which I think cannot be controverted. The first is that there is a universal desire among all the members of the empire for a closer union between the several branches, and that, in their opinion, as in ours, this is desirable—nay, it is essential for the existence of the empire as such. My second proposition is that experience has taught us that this closer union can be most hopefully approached in the first instance from its commercial side. My third proposition is that the suggestions which have hitherto been made to us, although we know them to have been made in good part, are, when considered from the point of view of British interests, not sufficiently favorable to be considered by this country. My fourth proposition is that a true Zollverein for the empire, that a free trade established throughout the empire, although it would involve the imposition of duties against foreign countries, and would be in that respect a derogation from the high principles of free trade and from the practice of the United Kingdom up to the present time, would still be a proper subject for discussion, and might probably lead to a satisfactory arrangement, if the colonies on their part were willing to consider it. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) It has been assumed, in Lord Ripon's despatch and in many other documents, that the colonies must necessarily refuse to consider a proposition of this kind, because it would interfere with the necessities of their revenue, that they are obliged to rely upon direct taxation for the funds by which their Administration is carried on, and that they could not enter on such agreement as this without providing ways and means by methods which, at present at any rate, are altogether unpopular in many of our colonies. I am not convinced of the truth of that statement, and I want, especially to point out that the advantages of such a proposal are so enormous to the colonies, as they would undoubtedly lead to the earliest possible development of their great natural resources, would bring to them population, would open to them the enormous markets of the United Kingdom for their products, their food, their timber, their sugar—the advantages, I say, are so enormous that it appears to me that the colonies themselves would be bound to give to any suggestion, of this kind at all events, a careful reconsideration.

AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION.

My second point is that we are dealing with an entirely exceptional state of things, and that we cannot, even if we wished, imitate exactly the German Zollverein. We are not continental countries; we are countries, as I have said, separated by thousands of miles, in some cases, and the circumstances of our different countries vary so considerably that it is evident that in any arrangement as to general free trade within the empire exceptions must be made in the case of articles that are chiefly taxed for revenue purposes. For instance, we cannot admit free trade in spirits or in tobacco, and to any gentleman who has any experience other articles will suggest themselves, which in one part of the empire or another are the subject of strictly revenue duties, and might, by common agreement, be excluded from any such arrangement. But the principle which I claim must be accepted if we are to make any,

even the slightest, progress is that within the different parts of the empire protection must disappear, and that the duties must be revenue duties, and not protective duties in the sense of protecting the products of one part of the empire against those of another part. It seems to me that if that principle were adopted there would be reasons for calling a council of the empire, calling representatives from the different States forming the empire; and, although the subject would be one of enormous difficulty and the greatest complication, still, with the good will that exists and the ultimate goal in view, I cannot but think that something like a satisfactory and a workable arrangement might be arrived at. (Cheers.) And, although in such a case the principles of free trade would lose something in their application to the dealings between ourselves and foreign countries, advocates of free trade must remember how much they would gain by its extension to all the States which form the British Empire, States which are after all, whatever may be said, more likely to develop and increase in prosperity and population and wealth and power of commerce and enterprise than any of the foreign States with which we have relations.

OUR ULTIMATE OBJECT.

Mr. President, I feel that I owe you some apology for dealing at such length with a subject which might be thought to be too serious for after-dinner oratory, but there is no doubt that we all feel that it is a subject of enormous importance, and I desired very much to call attention to it. I speak on this occasion for myself only. I want, not to lay down a course of policy which must be followed, but I want to provoke discussion—to provoke discussion in this country and to provoke discussion, above all, in the colonies; and if the details of such a sub-

ject as this are prosaic, at all events the ultimate aim that we have in view appeals to our highest sentiments of patriotism. To organize an empire—one may almost say to create an empire—greater and more potent for peace and the civilization of the world than any that history has ever known—(cheers)—that is a dream if you like, but a dream of which no man need be ashamed. (Loud cheers.) We appreciate and we cordially respond to the notes, the stirring notes, of loyalty and affection that have been evoked from our colonies when the great mother country has appeared to be in danger. We look forward with hope and with confidence to the development of these countries which are populated by our children and by our kinsmen, but those sentiments alone will never make an empire unless they are confirmed by bonds of material interest, and we can only found Imperial unity upon a common weal. (Cheers.) And so, if you will permit me, I will conclude in the words of a Canadian poet, who, addressing the statesmen of the Dominion, said:

"Unite the Empire—make it stand compact,
Shoulder to shoulder let its members feel
The touch of British brotherhood; and act
As one great nation—strong and true
As steel."
(Loud cheers.)

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HOMESTEAD REGULATIONS.

All even-numbered sections of Dominion Lands in Manitoba or the Northwest Territories, except 8 and 26, which have not been homesteaded, reserved to provide wood lots for settlers, or for other purposes may be homesteaded by any person who is sole head of a family, or any male over eighteen years of age to the extent of one quarter-section of 160 acres, more or less.

ENTRY.

Entry may be made personally at the local office for the District in which the land to be taken is situate, or if the homesteader desires he may, on application to the Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, or the Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, receive authority for some one to make the entry for him. A fee of \$10 is charged for an ordinary homestead entry; but for lands which have been occupied an additional fee of \$10 is chargeable to meet inspection and cancellation charges.

HOMESTEAD DUTIES.

Under the present law homestead duties must be performed in the following way, namely, by three years' cultivation and residence, during which the settler may not be absent more than six months in any one year without forfeiting the entry.

APPLICATION FOR PATENT

May be made at the end of three years, before the local agent, or the homesteader in person. Before making application for patent the settler must give six months' notice in writing to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands of his intention to do so. When, for convenience of the settler, application for patent is made before a homestead inspector, a fee of \$5 is chargeable.

INFORMATION.

Newly arrived immigrants will receive at any Dominion Lands Office in Manitoba or the Northwest Territories information as to the lands that are open for entry, and from the officers in charge, free of expense, advice and assistance in securing lands to suit them; and full information respecting the land, timber, coal and mineral laws, and copies of these Regulations, as well as those respecting Dominion Lands in the Railway Belt in British Columbia, may be obtained upon application to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior (Immigration Branch) Ottawa; the Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, Manitoba; or to any of the Dominion Lands Agents in Manitoba or the Northwest Territories.

N.B.—In addition to Free Grant Lands, to which the Regulations above stated refer, thousands of acres of most desirable lands are available for lease or purchase, on easy terms, from railroad and other corporations and private firms.