

# Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee.

THIS Committee adopts the following Resolutions passed by the Conference which founded the Imperial Federation League in 1884:—

That in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire some form of Federation is essential.

That no scheme of Federation should interfere with the existing rights of Local Parliaments as regards local affairs.

That any scheme of Imperial Federation should combine on an equitable basis the resources of the Empire for the maintenance of common interests, and adequately provide for an organised defence of common rights.

It also adopts the expansion of the principles of those Resolutions by the Special Committee of 1892, as expressed in the summary taken from the Report adopted by the Council of the Imperial Federation League in the same year.

In particular, the Committee recognises as the lesson to be drawn from the experience of the nine years' working of the late League—

1. That an adequate system of Maritime Defence is the primary necessity common to all parts of the Empire.
2. That such a system of defence does not exist under present conditions.
3. That if the self-governing Colonies take their share in the cost of such a system of defence, they must have a proportionate share in its administration and control; and if those Colonies are not willing to take their share in a common system of defence, it is evident that Federation is not practicable, whatever arrangements may be proposed or adopted as regards interchange of commerce, means of intercommunication, monetary standards, etc.
4. That given a common system of Maritime Defence, provided and controlled by a body in which all parts of the Empire are represented, the Federation of the Empire is attained, so far as essentials are concerned.
5. That combination for the defence of common interests is therefore—as was recognised in 1884—the necessary point, and the test of the practicability of Imperial Federation.
6. That proposals involving participation by them in the cost of general maritime security, which has hitherto been enjoyed without expense, cannot be expected to come, in the first instance, from Colonial Governments.

It will therefore be the first aim of the Committee to call the attention of the people of the United Kingdom to the anomalous and precarious state of affairs now existing, and to induce Her Majesty's Government to make to those Colonial Governments, in an official manner, such statements as to the present means by which defence is provided, and such proposals regarding the future, as will elicit from them an expression as to their willingness to take part in such a combination.

In order to narrow the issue as much as possible, and thereby to concentrate effort upon this one essential point, it is specially declared that the objects of the Committee do not include any proposal involving an alteration of the fiscal policy either of the United Kingdom or of any of the Colonies.

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