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Britain's Eyes Now Open To Trade Danger.

Free Trade Discredited—Frank Speeches in British Parliament by Premier Asquith and Others.

Free Trade is no longer the master word in Great Britain. The war has opened the eyes of the people. The Economic Conference of the Allies in Paris has prepared the way for a fiscal and economic revolution in the United Kingdom. As Mr. Asquith told the House of Commons on Aug. 3rd, the events of the past two years have shown that for long before the war Germany used her policy of economic penetration and control of vital industries in Ally countries to strengthen herself for the conflict. After the war she will be animated by the same spirit of financial and commercial domination in the world's markets. She will start with very considerable advantages. In the invaded territories both in Belgium, and in France she has destroyed works and factories, and she has carried off large quantities of plant and raw material—not to mention people—which have been sent to the industrial centres of Germany and of Austria.

Germany's Ships Ready.
She has a large merchant fleet—for the time being safely interned in her own ports or in the ports of neutral countries. It is evident from the German trade papers that the Germans are counting on these factors to impede the industrial and commercial recovery of the Allies. In face of this menace the British Government firmly adheres to the decisions of the Paris Conference, which provide for permanent measures of mutual assistance and collaborational assistance and collaboration after the war, as well as during the continuance of the war and the reconstruction period. The Allies are finally agreed to withhold most-favored nation treatment from all enemy countries for a term of years. This leaves them free to make special concessions to each other and to neutral nations. The Allies declare themselves agreed to conserve for the Allied countries, before all others, their natural resources during the whole period of commercial, industrial, agricultural, and maritime reconstruction, and for this purpose they undertake to establish special arrangements to facilitate the interchange of these resources.

Protection Against Enemy.
The object of this resolution is to meet the attempts which Germany is believed already to have made to secure supplies of raw material in neutral countries, and the attempt which she will certainly make to replenish her own supplies immediately after the war. The Allies are under a bounden duty to take every practical measure to secure for their own use supplies which are produced in their own territories, and to prevent any German control, such as existed in some cases before the war. The Allies have decided to take the necessary steps without delay to render themselves independent of enemy

countries as regards the raw materials and manufactured articles essential to the normal development of their own economic activities. The three most important resolutions of the Conference—namely, those relating to most-favored-nation treatment, protection against dumping or unfair competition, and the adoption of measures to render the Allies independent of enemy countries as regards essential industries—were proposed by the British delegates. This alone reflects the extent to which fiscal opinion has advanced under pressure of the war.

Mr. Asquith Outspoken.
As to the apprehension that the Allied programme involves the abandonment of Free Trade in Great Britain, Mr. Asquith reminded the House that for 10 years nobody had fought harder for Free Trade than he, but he added: "I would regard it as deliberate blindness to the teachings of experience if we were to say we had forgotten nothing, and had learned nothing from a war like this. I am not surrendering any convictions I have ever held. I am asking the people of these islands to envisage, as our friends across the Channel say, the new conditions of a world-wide problem. I ask them to take part with the Allies with whom we are fighting side by side in a struggle which we all believe to be essential to the preservation of the freedom of the world, in securing for the future not only protection against the possibility of military domination, but also true, well-grounded, and lasting economic independence. None of us who approaches the matter with a free mind and with the lessons which the war has taught us can deny—it does not matter whether you are a protected or a Free Trade country for this purpose—that all of us have been too independent on chances and risk, which we did not adequately foresee and against which we certainly did not satisfactorily provide. I trust and believe that as a result of this free interchange of opinion between the different Allied countries associated together as they find themselves in a cause which is equally dear to them all, and the success of which we believe to be essential to the future freedom of the world, we shall be able on the general lines laid down in the resolutions of this Conference, each in our own country and each subject to the modifying conditions of our own special economic and industrial interests, to work out a policy of common action which will make the peace which is to come at the end of this war a lasting peace and a peace which will rebound not only to the credit of our arms, but to the stability of our industry and finance."

Mr. Bonar Law Agrees
The Prime Minister declared that the Government was already taking action. The Board of Trade was actively engaged in devising schemes to render the Empire independent of enemy supplies as regards dyes, spelter, and other important commodities. The Government further was communicating with the Dominions and with India in regard to the resolutions of the Conference, and it was intended to hold conferences with representatives of the Dominions and India on the whole question of the Empire's trade policy considered in the light of these Resolutions. Sir John Simon and one or two others raised the old Free Trade arguments, but Mr. Bonar Law, Colonial Secretary, replied: "Let the House remember the importance of our command of the sea, which presumably does not depend on Free Trade, because we had it long before we were a Free Trade country. If you can imagine this country placed in the position in which Germany is of having all her external trade cut off, I would ask hon. gentlemen how long we should have been able to do what Germany has done—carry on the war in spite of that. I am not going to use that as an argument in favor of tariff reform, but it does show that there are different kinds of resources, and that from the point of view of military strength production is at least as important as commerce and shipping and these other things." Again he said: "I do take the view that it is not unreasonable to think that in a world convulsed like this things have changed and that it is reasonable for very one to look at the whole question involved—the question not merely of what particular fiscal policy you hold but of all the problems involved in national and economic development—from an entirely new point. That does not mean, in my case, that we expect other people to say that they have been wrong and that we have been right and to adopt our views. In my belief the effect of a tariff is greatly exaggerated on both sides. It is really a question of organization more than of the method by which you are to carry out that organization."

Future of the British Empire
The British Empire will issue out of this war larger and less loose-jointed than it was at the beginning of the struggle. Enemy territory will have been added to it and the bonds of union will have been strengthened. The process of assimilating populations that have been annexed goes on faster under the British Crown than under any other head of State. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the genius for ruling subject peoples and colonizing their territories is peculiarly British. The second is that the British Idea now spreads its influence from any centres, whereas early in the history of the Empire it could be exerted but from one. Each of the Dominions is now radiating British civilization almost as powerfully as was the Mother Country herself when the lamp was in her hand alone. When the war is over there will be a fresh linking up of communities under the British flag. South Africa will doubtless be a greater Dominion, taking in at least the conquered German South-West Africa. That it will be expanded over still greater areas it is not possible at this stage to say. It may be that German East Africa, which armed forces from the South Africa Union are assisting to subdue, may be joined to Northern Rhodesia into a new political unit of the British Empire. Of those who looked for some such development long before the war began Earl Grey, our former Governor-General, was one. He thought it not impossible that Southern Rhodesia's fortunes might some day be joined to those of the South Africa Union, but that Northern Rhodesia was destined for another sphere of British development. It is not only by attaching islands and continental sections captured from the Germans that Dominions of the Empire are likely to be rounded out as sequel of the war. There will be other integrations. We look for important ones in this part of the Empire. Newfoundland must some time weary of its single estate. There is reason to believe that it is now turning favoring eyes on Canada. It may soon cast in its lot with us. It ought to be the policy of our Government to encourage it to do so. Newfoundland has everything to gain and nothing to lose by so electing. Her own credit would be immensely bettered and the means for forwarding her development would be forthcoming in tenfold measure. The union would be an advantage to Canada. For one thing it would make invisible the now divided benefit of the Atlantic coast fisheries. There are also affinities drawing Canada and the British West Indies together. The commercial treaty negotiated after the Borden Government came into office was born of this force of mutual attraction. The trade relations thus brought about have greatly strengthened the impulses towards closer relations between Canada and the British West Indies, and now the project of political union is being discussed in circles where the idea was not entertained in times when it was proposed in a more academic way. A Canada that should include a great tropical area would be economically ideal. It would greatly facilitate the development of both the Northern and Southern complements. The idea is less of a dream than it was a dozen years ago, and who can say that in these days of great consummations the British West Indies will not become part of the Canadian Dominion? Mr. W. H. Farguharson, a prominent sugar planter of Jamaica, now visiting in Canada, is quoted by a Montreal newspaper as an advocate of the union of the British West Indies with Canada.

Labor and Free Trade.
Mr. Bonar Law continued: "But, again, I point out that all our arguments about what is called Imperial Preference and all that kind of thing must be looked at from a new point of view as a result not so much of the war, but of what we feel the consequences of the war might have been. It is not a question of whether it pays us equally well to trade, say, with the Argentine or with Canada. If we can afford to trade with Canada instead of with the Argentine, it means that in a war Canada will have increased strength which she will throw into the scale, and that is an element which every one has to take into account." He did not believe that the people would allow Germany to resume her old dumping system and trade penetration after peace was secured. He ventured to say that not merely now, but for a long time to come, any candidate for Parliament who made that proposal would have a very small chance of getting in, and any party which made that proposal might at once abandon all prospect of holding power, for this generation at all events. Mr. Hodge, a Labor member from Lancashire, agreed with Mr. Asquith and Mr. Bonar Law. He said there were thousands from the iron and steel trades who

FUTURE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Constantine III.
Paris, Aug. 29.—A Havas despatch from Athens says: King Constantine was unable to receive yesterday a delegation of the Greek Liberal party which had asked for an audience as the king still was suffering from a slight operation which he underwent on Sunday.

A failure is frequently the successor of success.

had been fighting in the trenches. When they returned he did not want German production to be dumped down here to the disadvantage of these men. He was of the late Lord Kitchener's opinion, that the Germans ought to be made to do penance for 21 years. When our soldier came back from France it was inconceivable that they would be satisfied with their former standard of life. There would be a problem to be solved either by the agency of Customs duties, or of subsidies, or bounties. There would be a revolution if any attempt were made to drive the men, when they returned from the war, back into the old pre-war conditions.

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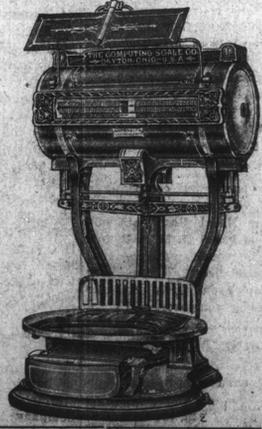
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