

mind that the thought of to-day may become the act of to-morrow. Measured by this standard, a congress of chambers of commerce compares favorably with any other."

Toronto Sessions

In speaking at the opening meeting on September 17, Mr. Marriott, president of the Toronto Board of Trade, said:—

"After such a titanic and terrific war it was inevitable that commerce and industry together with all great public services throughout the empire should be disorganized. In fact, so widespread had been the changes that the work of reconstruction had been delayed, perhaps not unduly delayed, for the making of a new world. In the making of this new world time should be taken to lay the foundations deep in righteousness and honor and justice and unselfishness. The business of the empire should be carried on for the benefit of all the people who are its co-operative shareholders. We approach the opening of the congress to-morrow with great anticipations and high hopes, believing that its deliberations will result in important benefits to the wellbeing of trade and commerce through the empire."

Lieut.-Governor Lionel H. Clarke spoke on behalf of the province, and mayor T. L. Church on behalf of the city. Sir James W. Woods, chairman of the Toronto Board of Trade general congress committee, expressed the opinion that no-one now questioned the wisdom of postponing the meeting which had been planned for 1915. Many conclusions which might have been reached then would have had to be revised now, he pointed out. The purpose of the Congress, as he understood it, was to see that all efforts are made to the end that every dollar's worth of goods imported by any part of the empire shall, if possible, be got within the empire. In the case of Canada, he had to confess, there was room for improvement. In the past twelve months Canada imported from the United States goods to the amount of \$802,102,187, or about \$100 per head of population. Canada bought from the United States five dollars' worth of goods for every dollar's worth purchased from Britain, and nearly twice as much as the United States bought from Canada. From the motherland Canada bought only one-quarter of what Britain purchased here. He believed the preferential tariff had been a great influence in stimulating trade with Britain.

"But I believe," continued Sir James, "much more would be accomplished by arousing a real empire spirit for the purposes and demands of peace, as we had it in connection with the war." It was to awaken such a spirit that he was glad to see the Congress come to Toronto. He wondered why some of the spirit that was quickened in August, 1914, could not be aroused in connection with imperial commerce. "If the Bolshevik can scatter his seed broadcast and produce a crop of disciples of his peculiar brand of world salvation, surely the Congress will devise some means of propaganda that will achieve results."

Replies on behalf of the delegates were made by Lord Desborough, president of the congress; by Stanley Machin, chairman of the organizing committee, and President of the London, Eng., Chamber of Commerce; by A. J. Hobson, late lord mayor of Sheffield, and president of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, and by Thomas Mackenzie, former premier of New Zealand. Lord Desborough stated that he had already been through Canada on more than one occasion, and each time is impressed with the progress made. Mr. Machin said:—"As we stood together in war, so may we stand together in peace. We are here on this great commercial mission to meet in this city representatives from almost every important part of the empire, to discuss questions of the greatest commercial importance, and I feel that we at this time should act in the sentiment of the words of our greatest colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, and think imperially." Mr. Hobson emphasized the fact that Canada was to have her own minister at Washington, and Lloyd George had announced that there would be a meeting

once a year of the Imperial War Committee, at which the overseas premiers would be present or send their personally accredited representatives. The congress would endeavor to do something to assist in the work of reconstruction. It was not proceeding as rapidly as one would like. Europe was in a sad and miserable state. The fires of war had not yet been put out, and until they were entirely extinguished, and until the nations have been restored to stable conditions, with regard for honesty and a desire to carry out their obligations, present conditions would likely continue to prevail.

Empire Currency and Exchange

The most striking proposal considered at the Toronto meetings was that made by John F. Darling, who moved the following resolution: "That the home government be asked to call an imperial conference on the stabilization of our inter-empire exchanges by the co-operation of the home government with the governments of the Dominion of India."

Mr. Darling said in part: "Each portion of the empire is anxious to get back to gold parity, and this can be done by co-operation of the units of the empire. The only basis for this is the pound sterling, but before this is adopted as an instrument we must make sure it is on a sure and sound basis. This is impossible because there is not enough gold to go around. The proposal is that the self-liquidating bills of exchange should be made the basis for further alterations in exchange. London will always be the centre of such bills, no matter what happens. These bills for goods bought should be for only three months, and there is no necessity for altering the nomenclature of the various monetary systems in the empire."

"A basis for currency may conform to past theory, but if it is neither practical nor workable for us under the changed economic conditions caused by the war's upheaval, we must endeavour to find some other basis. This is surely the case in regard to gold and silver. Their sources of supply are uncertain and subject to great changes; on the other side, the demands for currency or as a basis for credit have to contend with the demands for the arts and the insatiable demands of the east."

"Why should we not follow the lead of the United States and introduce bills of exchange as a currency basis to improve somewhat on the federal reserve system? It is necessary to distinguish between the bill created on pure credit and that drawn against a movement of goods from one country to another. The former we eliminate, and even in the latter it is desirable to limit the time the bill has to run to three months and to avoid renewals."

"But within these limits a currency system based upon bills of exchange is really based upon a mass of different commodities in course of movement, at current prices, and, in the majority of cases, actually sold so that the bill can be easily met at maturity."

Canada's Peculiar Difficulties

Sir Edmund Walker, in seconding this resolution, said: "I want to make a frank statement as to the difficulties in this regard. In Canada the currency is the dollar, based on the old Spanish dollar. We used to have two kinds of shillings here. Our financial affairs are rooted with the people to the south of us—the United States. We are involved in the entire trade of North America, with New York as our financial centre. We could not do business with the States if we had an English currency. Such an object as Mr. Darling has outlined is a worthy one, but you must recognize our difficulties."

An Imperial Banking System

This proposal carried almost unanimously. Another proposal of Mr. Darling's, to the effect that an imperial bank and clearing system should be created, was also discussed. Mr. Darling explained that this would completely secure the stabilization of all inter-empire exchanges. It would be necessary to secure a common custodian of funds of 125 banks, for bank amalgamations have been carried so far and