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Problems of Empire Trade Being Discussed at Ninth Congress, Which
Opened in Toronto Last Friday—Will Tour Ontario Next Week—Many Reso-
lutions Being Considered—Proposals to Stabilize Exchange Within Empire

"THIS great assemblage is the culmination of the hopes and ambitions of the Toronto Board of Trade for many years, and the realization of these gives to our organization, its members and its officers the deepest gratification," said C. Marriott, president of the Toronto Board of Trade, in welcoming the delegates to the ninth congress of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire. The congress opened in Toronto on September 17th, where it remained until today, September 24th. The remainder of this week will be spent in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, and next week the delegates will visit Brantford, London, Windsor, Guelph and North Bay. The following week they will go to Copper Cliff, Espanola, Sault Ste. Marie, Cobalt, New Liskeard, Haileybury, Timmins and Iroquois Falls, returning by way of Ottawa and Montreal.

The delegates came from all parts of the empire, and number about ninety. Other Canadian cities and towns are represented to the number of about 100 delegates. Rt. Hon. Lord Desborough is president of the congress.

Review of Previous Meetings

The first congress was held in London in 1886, on the invitation of the London Chamber, at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of that year, and thereafter, more or less, triennially until 1912. In two instances during this period they were convened in the overseas Dominions, viz., at Montreal (Canada) in 1903 and at Sydney (New South Wales) in 1909 in view of a decision that they should be held alternately in London and in the Dominions. The last congress having been held in London, it was decided to accept the invitation of the Toronto Board of Trade for the succeeding congress, to take place in Toronto in 1915. Owing to the war this invitation was held in suspense until circumstances were more favorable, and after many delays and changes in arrangements it was definitely convened for September 18th, 1920. Lord Desborough, who was president of the congress in 1912, and who again occupies the same position this year, is president of the British Imperial Council of Commerce, and thus has been in close touch with the business of both congresses. By this and other means continuity of purpose has been ensured.

These congresses have been invariably thrown open to any chamber of commerce or board of trade which may be willing to send delegates, but the representation prior to 1912 was not strictly confined to such bodies. After the Sydney congress of 1909, however, it was considered desirable to limit representation to chambers of commerce and boards of trade or associations thereof while preserving the franchise on the broadest lines, and in 1911 it was resolved to form a permanent bureau for future congresses, called the British Imperial Council of Commerce, by which the 1912 congress was arranged. New rules were formulated in November, 1913, under which the congress now meets, which differ in the main from those of the British Imperial Council of Commerce and are kept separate and distinct. There is, however, this similarity between the constitution of the council

and the congress—both are comprised of representatives elected by individual chambers of commerce, boards of trade and associations thereof; but, as it happens, the membership is not precisely the same, as certain bodies which have participated in the congresses have not thought fit to subscribe to the council also. There are, however, 116 bodies affiliated with the council.

Extensive Program

In a summary of the work of the congress, written in anticipation of this year's meeting, Charles E. Musgrove, honorary secretary of the ninth congress, says:—

"During the period 1913-1920 the British Imperial Council of Commerce has had steadily in view its main purpose, viz., to keep alive the work of the congresses between one meeting and another by carrying out the resolutions passed and preparing for the next occasion when the congress meets. In addition, the British Imperial Council of Commerce has initiated several matters of importance, more particularly relating to war conditions, by convening, besides its annual meetings, certain business conferences, notably in 1916, when valuable discussions on economic topics, including imperial preference, were initiated, bearing upon post-war conditions, which, however, to some extent, lost their practical value owing to the war being protracted until November 11th, 1918. There was still great uncertainty in regard to the economic position until peace with Germany was signed in 1919, as it was not possible to deal with post-war conditions in anything like a comprehensive form. Large schemes of economic reconstruction, both on the part of the government and of business men, have been held in abeyance by adverse conditions which were not merely inter-imperial, but world-wide in their manifestations. Even now it cannot be said that there is anything like an assured basis for progressive development on strictly imperial lines owing to adverse circumstances existing all over the world, but the way is clearer for the consideration of many problems which press for solution and for the reconsideration of many of the old ideals under altered conditions.

"It is hardly necessary, and would, indeed, be impossible, within reasonable limits, to describe in detail the results which have attended the meetings of the congress since 1886, but as one who has been connected with them from the first, in conjunction with his predecessor (Mr. Kenric B. Murray), the writer can affirm that many of the measures advocated have ultimately materialized, sometimes in a modified form, due to altered circumstances. There is no doubt whatever that, looking at the subjects considered, even at imperial conferences, the governments represented have been inspired from the same sources as the chamber of commerce, aided by public opinion. Some of the old questions of the past are still with us, retarded in their solution by war conditions. Others, old and new, are ripe for treatment and only need the powerful help of governments to be settled. All that any congress can do is to affirm its views and take steps to secure effect being given to them in the proper quarter, bearing in