

have sprung the resolutions which greatly interest the trading nations of the world. It is safe to state that the Russian government's economic experiment is no doubt the only one which compares with that of the nations of the British commonwealth.

On the one hand, it was the first time that such a meeting was convened outside of the United Kingdom; a dominion made the invitation, prepared the agenda and led in the debate; a sign that the dominions have attained their manhood and are no longer subordinate either to the government or parliament of Great Britain. Seated at this round table were representatives of countries having equal rights, the head delegate of Great Britain was but *primus inter pares*.

In 1894 a colonial economic conference met. England did not take an active part. She simply was represented by Lord Jensey, as an observer. Canada was the only one that had then the statute of Dominion, and from that viewpoint the recent Imperial conference at Ottawa was without precedent; another point to note was that the circumstances in general under which it met were very different from those of 1930. Great Britain and the dominions recognized that their reciprocal relations were entirely changed and that the problems to be solved were more numerous, greater and more complex.

What was the subject discussed at Ottawa? First, the replacing of the imperial preference existing to a various degree by a system of tariff protection in common, thus isolating the commonwealth from the rest of the world. Certainly no one dared to mention a "closed economic entity." All understood that the British Empire, notwithstanding her diversified climate and products, could not refuse trading with countries outside the empire and content herself with internal markets.

The great English newspaper, the London Times was aware of this fact and pointed it out to the delegates a few days before the conference:

The Empire, no more than its component parts, can exist by itself. There must be international cooperation on a larger scale to bring about this widespread prosperity which is the only sound and lasting foundation of the prosperity of a country or group of countries, whatsoever. However, it is also admitted that progress can only be gradual, and that the members of the commonwealth must first come to an understanding on a common trade policy. It is therefore quite natural that Great Britain will endeavour to exercise pressure on her associates in favour of protective views which she has sponsored: it is not without a motive that, in the general tariff, the exemption of an import duty granted to the products of the dominions, has but a duration of six months and expires probably with the closing of the conference.

[Mr. St-Père.]

We have not to concern ourselves, in the course of this debate, as to whether the deliberations at the conference were stormy or peaceful. The state of mind and feelings of delegates were daily commented upon by the press, but this has no bearing whatsoever over the final recommendations of the conference. Let us come to facts, in his opening speech, the right hon. Prime Minister expressed himself as follows:

What results do we expect from this conference? The answer is, I think, from all of us, greater markets within the empire. This is the answer from all of us, undoubtedly, if we are persuaded, as I am, that greater empire markets mean as well greater world markets. For to us in Canada closer empire economic association does not mean in any sense world disassociation. The trading potentialities of this empire are great. But even one-quarter of the human race cannot profitably shut itself off from contact with the rest of the world.

Up to then the Prime Minister of Canada is perfectly in agreement with the Prince of Wales, who made the following remarks at a banquet given in honour of the English delegates to the Ottawa conference:

I will read this in English for the information of the hon. member who seems to protest against the use of French:

At the present time—

Said the Prince:

—we in the British Empire are inevitably dependent on the world prices—and can afford to do nothing which might react adversely on world confidence and so check the recovery of world prices. Indeed, it is of the utmost importance in our own interest that, so far from taking any step that might discourage foreign countries, we should make effort at Ottawa to put heart into the world, and to concert measures in which other countries may later cooperate.

(Translation): Then the Prime Minister continues:

When we reach an agreement by which our products pass more freely from one empire country to another, we drive clear channels through the stagnant pools dammed up by the world upheaval, and naturally we will carry past the boundaries of the empire and to its benefits, establish once more again throughout the world that commerce which is its very life blood. The British people in their vigour, industry and experience have nothing to fear from foreign competition when they are united in that economic association which is now possible. When from this conference that results, we will welcome fair and friendly competition. In our own interest we will welcome it.

"To drive clear channels through the stagnant pools dammed up by the world upheaval." The Prime Minister thought fit to allow them a free course and to even increase the flow by adopting intermediary and general prohibitive tariffs, condemned by all the great