

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE failure to arrange for another Imperial Conference at the normal date this summer may be excused, in all the circumstances, and it can be remedied later on. But it is a disappointment to those who believe that the time has come for dealing with concrete proposals. The autonomists in Canada may rejoice at the postponement, and the Liberal Government in England has no doubt quite enough on its hands already, with the war by land and sea. Amid the din of arms constructive schemes of imperial organization would stand only a poor chance. But the opportunity should be found for giving articulate expression, at the heart of the Empire, to the fact that the war has proved a great federating agency. This will be only a natural sequel to what has gone before. Two years before the war broke out Mr. Asquith went the length of stating, in the British House of Commons, that now the Dominions were participating in the active burdens of the Empire, "there rests with us undoubtedly the duty of making such response as we can to their obviously reasonable appeal that they should be entitled to be heard in the determination of the policy and in the direction of imperial affairs." The call of the Empire and the answer of the Dominions have emphasized this duty, but more than one Conference will be needed before general agreement can be secured as to the manner in which it may best be discharged. Empire Parliament, Imperial Council, or merely an extension of this present system of Conferences and Committees of Defence,—these are the issues which ought shortly to be engaging general attention. If we cannot succeed now in the task of federation, at least for defensive purposes, we shall show ourselves strangely lacking in the normal instinct of political combination. And it must not be forgotten that the Dominions will want to have a voice in