

should not pay imperial expenses without imperial representation. Federation of the component parts of the Empire was thus suggested, and questions of commercial relations led in the same direction. Canada's interest was chiefly with a system of preferential tariffs, while Canada, Australia, and South Africa were all concerned with improved steamship and cable service. Minor subjects of discussion were connected with these main topics.

However desirable imperial federation might be, it soon became apparent that it was practically impossible, for the present at least. Within the British Empire are a great variety of races and peoples, whose characters and abilities are as widely divergent as are the natural conditions of the countries they inhabit. The adjustment of mutually satisfactory terms of union among these peoples would seem to be an almost hopeless task, with so little in common and such diversity of political status. It was small wonder that the Conference failed to reach a decision. The question of commercial relations within the Empire presented fewer difficulties. Yet even here a divergence of interests was encountered. Canada asked for a preferential tariff, under which colonial and English goods would be mutually favored over goods from other countries. But Australia claimed that the free admission of English goods would annihilate the revenue of the Commonwealth, Australia being essentially an importing country and chiefly from British countries. The preferential idea does not accord, either, with England's policy. The colonies are protectionist, but, despite evidences of a gradual breaking-away, England is still committed to her principles of free trade. She is not yet ready to place a duty on foreign goods in order that she may give a preference to colonial goods. But free-trade nation though she is, England has duties, and it is most unfortunate that one of these, the grain duty, falls heavily

on Canada. Failing a general preference, might not this duty on Canadian grain be removed? But even this Canada is not yet able to secure, although she has a warm supporter in the person of Mr. Chamberlain.

So far as the encouragement of a brotherly spirit among the colonies is concerned, the Conference was a success. "The links of Empire" were doubtless strengthened, and seed was sown which will bear fruit in time. What was done may be summed up in this: Cape Colony, Natal and Australia agreed to give annual subsidies to Imperial naval defence; Canada undertook only to keep her forces in efficiency and in readiness for Imperial service; preferential tariff arrangements will be worked out gradually with the individual colonies, following the lines of the Canadian tariff; resolutions were passed in regard to commercial relations; an intelligent grasp of the various situations was secured and ideas were set a-going which will bring definite action somewhat nearer. The Conference had no legislative powers; it was a purely deliberative body, and its action must be passed upon by the colonial and imperial legislatures. At the next gathering, four years hence, appreciable progress may be looked for. Affairs of empire, like the affairs of joint stock companies, require frequent consultations among the directors. No doubt the premiers and ministers are in a position to estimate the success of the Conference in more concrete terms, and they may have reason to believe that results will not be long delayed.

England's Political Prospects

Concurrent with the end of the war and the coronation of the King a reconstruction of the British Cabinet has taken place, with the dropping out of several prominent statesmen and the coming in of several new ones. The resignation of Lord Salisbury, which had been expected for some time, left the premiership to