

for Empire development and transport primarily. Within the Empire there is ample scope for our best energies and equipment, and before all else we should develop and populate the vast and incalculably rich estate that we hold in trust.

Lastly, I would say this. It is high time we were defining our attitude in certain respects, and they are briefly these: First, the attitude of the parts of the Empire to each other and to the Empire as a whole. Are we thinking about it? Do we propose to do anything about it? How shall we stand with regard to each other? My own principles are well known. I am not a Free Trader under present circumstances. Speaking personally, I do not hold out the least hope that the Empire can to-day come together on the basis of Free Trade. In the Overseas we are differently constituted from you perhaps. Maybe you are getting gradually into a position which does not greatly differentiate yourselves from us across the seas. It is time the Empire should consolidate itself, and with reference to trade and commerce and production should get about it quickly and hammer out its policy for the future. I attended the Economic Conference. What did I find? I found that Great Britain, with all her power, did not, and could not, speak for an Empire. How much stronger her representatives would have been if the Empire had its defined policy and they could have spoken for the whole Empire. My plea is the homely family plea—let the Empire treat itself and its units more favourably than it treats any country which does not belong to its flag. Preference within the Empire is natural and wise, and I believe necessary. It is also possible and practical.

We must also define our commercial attitude towards neutral countries. That is a delicate subject it is true. But how long is this Empire to attune its ears to every whisper as to possible disadvantage from a neutral country if the Empire dares to arrange its home affairs as it likes. We have to choose between the Empire of to-day and that illimitably greater Empire of the future, and build for that, and even though we may sacrifice some of our profits of neutral trade, we will have our reward as