

**The Wider Imperialism.**

Inter-State steamship lines, and submarine cable services have been established. We have Imperial penny postage. Several of the self-governing Dominions have enacted preferential tariffs. Contributions towards Imperial defence have been made by several States, and are under consideration by others.

Another important step forward was the formation of the Committee of Imperial Defence. At present the kindred States are wholly unrepresented on this committee, although its elastic constitution permits the addition to it as a member, of any citizen of the Empire whose advice is thought useful.

Inter-State conferences, such as the recent Imperial Press Conference and the Imperial Defence Conference, and the coming Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, serve to educate the nation towards a wider patriotism and a closer union.

These have all helped to spread the spirit of wider Imperialism, though in no case have they been intended or proposed as part of a system of organic union of the Empire. That is a subject not only of vital interest and importance, but one of wide dimensions and great complexity, and although during the past twenty years many formal plans have been suggested for reaching a basis of mutual understanding and for strengthening the bonds of Empire, the Empire is still without an articulating agency. That progress, however, has been made is evident when we read the history of the Colonial or Imperial Conferences since 1897.

Though tentative, embryonic and incomplete in form, these conferences have been a means of getting something done and of approaching a mutual understanding imperially. While sitting they possess an official and representative character. The discussions concern the Empire's affairs, though their resolutions bind no one.

The last Imperial Conference in 1907 instituted a permanent secretariat, appointed under the direction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, charged with the duty of keeping informed the several governments in regard to matters of past, or for future discussion; and the conduct of correspondence details. This secretariat has now been established in Downing-street, and, presumably, it is doing some useful work within its sphere of action. This is a step forward, and constitutes or can be made to constitute, a real centre of mutual information and discussion in Imperial affairs. "In that direction," says Sir Frederick Pollock, "lies the practicable line of advance."

**An Imperial Council.**

Let us take this as a starting point for the next conference of 1911. Let that conference take three steps:—

*First:* Suggest or recommend to the British Government that the Secretary of State for the Colonies be known in future as the "Secretary of State for Imperial Affairs," or "for the Oversea Dominions," or "for Greater Britain."