

and another ; all the acts of state and public utterances which bring people, whose union and good understanding is desirable, closer together are advantages, and this I regard as one of the measures contributing silently and unostentatiously to a closer and stronger union between different portions of the British Empire. Let me say this, that our union is a peculiar one. We know the union of the neighbouring republic sprang up. A compact was entered into between the colonies. The powers which belonged to the British Government passed to the central government ; the powers which belonged to the colonies passed to the States, and so their constitution did little more than regulate and define the boundaries which separated these respective powers, and they were enabled, without much difficulty, to frame a written constitution. Let me say you can have no such constitution between the different portions of the British Empire. We are differently constituted : the different portions of the Empire are not in contact with each other, and the union which exists and which largely consisted at one time of the supremacy of the central authority, now more largely consists in the extension of interests, in commercial relations, in closer business contact and, when necessity arises, in international controversies, and granting to a dependency a voice in any international board for the settlement of those difficulties in proportion to the interest which it has. Now, that is a union which you cannot provide for by a written constitution. It is a union which must grow, and it is the business of public men in every part of the Empire to look abroad and to see where the opportunities exist for the extension of that union and the strengthening of its bonds, in order that in time an Imperial constitution, similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom—similar in principle to that by which we are governed, may spring up between the different portions of the Empire. It is not a union in which there is a legislative body, for which it is necessary to make legislative provisions. It is a union consisting largely of administrative relations, of the settlement of treaty relations, of understandings ; it is a union based on convention and usage and common sense, not on law, and which will in time become a far more perfect machine than it is possible for the wisdom of statesmen to create. Now, my hon. friend I thought

undervalued the importance of more friendly relations with the neighbouring republic. My hon. friend did not speak against such union, I know perfectly well ; but I thought he undertook to minimize the observations made by my hon. friend who moved the Address. Now, I think they are of very great consequence.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—What I desired to point out was I would not submit to great concessions even to obtain that.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—Neither would I. We may have a little difficulty in drawing the boundary, but there are somethings on which I think concessions ought never to be made, and other things on which concessions may be made, and if experience shows they do not work as satisfactorily as you anticipate, they may be withdrawn. While I have no desire to see any political relation between this country and the neighbouring republic ; while we should maintain our autonomy here, an autonomy consistent with the continued unity of the empire, I am in favour of friendly relations and a friendly understanding with our neighbour across the boundary.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—So is everybody.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—Now, it is one of the benefits that have grown up within a recent period, a period extending back but a few months, that more friendly relations do exist. I have myself met many men of prominence in the neighbouring republic during the past summer and this winter, and I know there is a very great change for the better in their feeling towards Canada and towards Great Britain. When the United States gave up the old colonial idea of living to themselves, of being a world by themselves, of avoiding entangling alliances, meaning thereby not merely political alliances but intimate commercial relations, they attained their majority. They have gone abroad in that they have undertaken to acquire outside dominion, and in doing so have given hostages for their good conduct in time to come, and they will not occupy that isolated position which some regarded as independence, but which I regard as leading to ill-nature and to its exhibition. I