

portant departure from the established fiscal policy of the kingdom," and that if it were to be entertained at all "it would be necessary for Canada to offer some material tariff concessions beyond those which she had already voluntarily given."

Subsequent events indicate that Mr. Chamberlain was counting much upon the maintenance of the wheat tax as a means of negotiation with Canada, and as the germ of a system of British preferences to the Colonies. The announcement of the Government, during his absence from the country, that the wheat tax was abandoned, wrecked this hope, and probably precipitated the wider campaign of protection to which he committed himself in 1903.

While the Colonial Conference of 1902 showed a creditable unanimity in the minor issues of Coasting Trade, Mail Services, Protection of Patents, Most Favoured Nation Treatment, Merchant Shipping Laws, and other issues which appealed either to the protective spirit which more or less inspires them all, or to the several interests of the Colonies, upon the vital question of imperial federation, political, military, or commercial, no substantial result was obtained.

The advanced proposals made in nearly every instance by Mr. Seddon, and supported with some degree of cordiality by the representatives of Cape Colony and Natal, were rejected by the representatives of Canada and Australia.

THE CONFERENCE OF 1907.

Now, turning to the Colonial Conference of 1907, we are in a position to consider the value of its deliberations, taking as the chief heads the same three issues of political structure, defence, and commercial federation which figured in the Conference of 1902.

First, turning to the political relations of the Colonies and the Mother Country, we find that while measures are taken for improving the deliberative character of the Conference and for establishing more continuous opportunity of discussion between the different parts of the Empire, no single step is taken towards