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A commercial convention between Canada and France was negotiated by Sir Charles Tupper in 1892-1893. The British Ambassador at Paris (Lord Dufferin) was formally associated with him for the purpose, but the actual negotiations were conducted by Sir Charles.

At the Colonial Conference of 1894, the following resolutions were passed:

"That provision should be made by Imperial legislation enabling the dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity, including power of making differential tariffs, with Great Britain or with one another.

"That any provisions in existing treaties between Great Britain and any foreign power which prevent the self-governing dependencies of the Empire from entering into agreements of commercial reciprocity with each other or with Great Britain should be removed."

This led to an important despatch (June 28, 1895) from the Colonial Secretary (Lord Ripon) to Canada and the Australian Colonies. He expressed the view that the power of negotiating treaties without reference to the British Government would give the Colonies an international status as separate and sovereign states, and would result in breaking up the Empire. Therefore, such negotiations must be conducted by His Majesty's representatives at the Court of the foreign power, but such representatives should have the assistance of a Colonial representative, either as a second plenipotentiary or in a subordinate capacity. He declared, *inter alia*, that

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