

TIGHT BINDING.

Governments concerned on the existing basis as recommended by the Imperial Committee on Economic Consultation and Co-operation in 1933, subject to any apportionment of India's present contribution which may be agreed on between India and Burma in the event of Burma desiring representation on the Committee.

XVII.—COMMITTEE ON CERTAIN ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

Questions relating to the work of the Imperial Economic Committee and a proposal for the establishment of an Empire Agricultural Council were referred to a Committee on Economic Questions under the Chairmanship of the Hon. N. C. Havenga, M.P., Minister of Finance, Union of South Africa. The following is a summary of the Committee's report:—

(i) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE IMPERIAL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE.

The Committee considered the Progress Report, 1933-6, of the Imperial Economic Committee. General appreciation of the work of the Imperial Economic Committee was expressed by all Delegations, and the Committee recommended that it should continue on the existing basis.

The Committee also recommended that if Burma should wish to participate in the future work of the Imperial Economic Committee as a separate country, with one representative, arrangements to this end should be made.

The cost of the Imperial Economic Committee is met from a fund to which the participating Governments contribute on the scale recommended by the Imperial Committee on Economic Consultation and Co-operation, 1933. This fund, since 1st October, 1933, has been £20,000 a year. The Imperial Economic Committee, in a financial statement and forecast for the period 1st April, 1938, to 31st March, 1943, foresee that the work at present in view would make it desirable to increase the fund to £22,000 a year. The Committee recommended that this increase over the five-year period should be approved.

On the Committee's recommendation, the Conference adopted the following resolution:—

The Conference desires to place on record its warm appreciation of the valuable work done by the Members and Staff of the Imperial Economic Committee since the last Imperial Conference.

The Conference is glad to note the success which has attended the operations of the Committee on the basis of the complete constitutional equality of the participating Governments.

The Conference approves the continuance of the Imperial Economic Committee as at present constituted and would welcome a representative of Burma on the Committee.

The Conference approves generally the proposals for the finance of the Imperial Economic Committee set out in the Financial Statement and Forecast prepared by the Committee in May, 1937, in respect of the five-year period from the 1st April, 1938, to the 31st March, 1943, and in particular approves that the annual fund of the Committee, over this period, to which the several Governments subscribe, should be £22,000.

The Conference approves the continuance of the scale of contributions recommended by the Imperial Committee on Economic Consultation and Co-operation, 1933, and at present in force, subject to any adjustment which may be agreed between India and Burma in the event of Burma desiring representation on the Committee.

(ii) PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMPIRE AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL.

The proposal by His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia for the establishment of an Empire Agricultural Council was considered and fully discussed. The representatives of the Commonwealth explained that the proposed Council would consist of the Ministers concerned with agriculture in the Governments represented at the Imperial Conference. It would meet as opportunity afforded or occasion required between Imperial Conferences and would be designed to provide more frequent opportunities for joint examination of agricultural questions than are at present afforded by Imperial Conferences and occasional meetings between Ministers. When Ministers could not attend they could be represented by High Commissioners. The Council would be purely advisory and would not require any elaborate organisation of a permanent kind.

It was agreed that the Governments of the Empire should aim at the greatest possible measure of co-operation in the examination of problems of common concern. Doubt was expressed, however, by certain representatives whether many of the problems were of a kind which could be best dealt with by an organisation such as that proposed. Furthermore, before deciding to set up any new advisory or consultative body, it should be clear that it would not duplicate work which is within the scope of the already existing Inter-Imperial agencies. The constitution of the Imperial Economic Committee, whose terms of reference have been revised by the resolutions of successive Imperial Conferences, seemed, it was considered, to be well qualified to meet most of the

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