

Imperial interest and for such concerted action founded on that consultation as the several governments shall determine."

If at the first glance this resolution seems to conflict with Lord Curzon's previous statement concerning the business of the Conference, a closer examination will show that it does not. It reads pleasantly, it repeats what has been said a hundred times, it evades the thorny features that are met whenever the problem of Imperial Federation is grappled with. The substance of it all is that this is no time to consider such constitutional questions. This decision was wise. But was it necessary to hold a Conference and pass resolutions that the questions must be let alone?

The Conference, unnecessarily taking up the vexed question of Imperial Preferential Trade, took a course which, so far as the Overseas Dominions are concerned, may be happily expressed in these classic lines:

Mother, may I go out to swim?

Yes, my darling daughter,

Hang your clothes on a hickory limb, -

But don't go near the water.

The Conference resolution says three things:

(1) That the principle of preference is approved; but (2) it is distinctly understood that such approval does not include a preferential tariff on foodstuffs, the only important things that the Dominions export to Great Britain; and (3) that in any case nobody need do anything about it now. Surely a policy of silence would have been better than this, especially as the conclusion reached, while abandoning the very essence of the preferential tariff question as hitherto considered, contains controversial matter upon which many British statesmen hold strong opinions, thus raising a very contentious question at a time when such matters should be laid aside.

Ireland

HOW acute the Irish question still is may be judged from the fact that in a by-election in South Longford (the constituency once represented by the late Hon. Edward Blake), Mr. McGuinness, a Sinn Fein candidate, has just been elected by a small majority over a follower of Mr. John Redmond. The Sinn Fein party are the extreme Irish element, which seeks not constitutional Home Rule but the separation of Ireland from the British Empire. The member-elect is at present in jail under a three years' sentence for participation in the Dublin rebellion of a year ago. This election illustrates the hard position in which Mr. Redmond and his Nationalist followers are placed. Loyally accepting the assurances of the Liberal leaders that they would give Ireland Home Rule, the Nationalists have striven to suppress everything like disorder and to make Ireland contented. Just when, after long years of struggle, the Home Rule Act was passed, the war came on. Mr. Redmond and his friends assented to a temporary suspension of the Act, and gave their best efforts to encourage recruiting and to support the Government in its policy for carrying on the war. The war has lasted longer than many supposed it would. The coming into operation of the Home Rule Act is delayed. Much of the old hostility to Home Rule is occasionally manifested by the Ulster element. The Sinn Fein Irishmen take advantage of this situation to preach that it is useless to look to England for justice. In the contest just closed two of the most prominent Irish leaders, Mr. John Dillon and Mr. Joseph Devlin, warmly supported the Nationalist candidate, but, as the returns show, the people are more ready to listen to the ex-

tremists than to those who stand for constitutional agitation.

This election, and that of a recent date in which another Sinn Fein candidate, Count Plunkett, was chosen, will afford much encouragement to the disloyal elements in Ireland, and make the task of Mr. Redmond and other Nationalist leaders harder than before. An early coming into operation of the Home Rule Act, either in its present shape or with amendments agreed upon, would not entirely stop the Sinn Fein movement, for, as we have said, the leaders of it are not looking for constitutional Home Rule. But in all probability the establishing of Home Rule as an actual condition, instead of an Act held in suspense, would to a large extent disarm the disloyal sections and give the friends of law and order a better chance to obtain control.

It should be evident by this time that the granting of Home Rule for Ireland is now inevitable. This being the case, those who have hitherto so warmly opposed the measure may reasonably be asked to accept the situation and put the law into operation at a time when such a step is likely to be of much value in promoting the interests of Ireland and the Empire.

The Nation

THE ban placed by the British authorities on the transmission abroad of the London Nation has called forth very widespread condemnation, by no means confined to quarters in which the Nation's criticisms of men and things are approved. Mr. Massingham, the editor of that journal, in writing of the incident, said: "Mr. Lloyd George's Government has now added British Liberalism to the list of prohibited exports." The London Chronicle, which has itself joined in the condemnation of the action taken, has published a semi-official statement which reads strangely. "The Government," the Chronicle was authorized to say, "have had nothing whatever to do with this insensate prohibition. The responsibility for it belongs to the intelligence department of the War Office. Neither the Cabinet nor the propaganda department of the Foreign Office appears to have been consulted or informed on the subject." From other sources it has been learned that the Army Council ordered the prohibition, because it had learned that enemy papers had quoted from the Nation. The reason given is an extraordinary one, in view of the freedom which was long permitted to the Northcliffe press to indulge in criticisms of the Asquith Cabinet, which naturally enough were reproduced in German papers. More remarkable is the apparent distinction which has been drawn, in the semi-official explanation, between the "Government" and the "War Office." If under the new order of things departments are to be permitted to take important steps without the authority of responsible officials, and if the Cabinet is to be allowed to disassociate itself from the action taken, it is time for a revival of something like responsible government in Great Britain.

Inadequate Pensions

A CONSIDERABLE amount of dissatisfaction is being expressed by returned soldiers and their families over the administration of pensions. On general principles the criticism is that the pensions are totally inadequate and that the Board sticks to the letter of the law rather than interpreting its spirit.

If hard and fast rules have been made regarding the amounts to be paid to different classes of disabled soldiers, then the Board of

Pension Commissioners have nothing to do but to interpret the law as they find it. We do not believe, however, that that was the spirit which prompted those who put the law on our statute books. If such is the case, however, the sentiment throughout the country will call for radical changes. Without being actually extravagant it is imperative that Canada deal generously with her returned soldiers. These men risked life and limb in defence of the liberty which we prize so highly. Their going made possible our staying at home in peace and security. We are satisfied that the country would support the commissioners if they dealt generously with the returned men, and, instead of sticking to the mere letter of the law, interpreted it in a broad, generous spirit.

Nothing will have a more detrimental effect on recruiting than the impression that the country will not provide thoroughly and adequately for her wounded soldiers. It would be well for the Board of Pension Commissioners to give heed to the criticisms which are being made in regard to their work.

A Successful Scheme

WE referred several weeks ago to a suggestion made by Principal Cumming, of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, that town folks wishing to encourage increased production on the farms might do so by undertaking to supply fertilisers at cost and to accept payment at the end of the season in farm produce at minimum prices. The project did not go without criticism. Some people said that no farmers would be willing to make the arrangement proposed. This, however, has not proved correct. A Halifax committee took up the scheme and proceeded to make the necessary arrangements. The only difficulty now is in obtaining sufficient fertiliser to meet the demand. The farmers are guaranteed that in the settlement of their fertiliser account their vegetables shall be valued at not less than the following prices:

Potatoes—70c. per bushel.
Turnips—25c. per bushel.
Beets—70c. per bushel.
Carrots—70c. per bushel.
Parsnips—70c. per bushel.
Cabbage—1½c. per lb. (Fall).
Beans—\$5.00 per bushel.
Wheat—\$1.50 per bushel.
Oats—70c. per bushel.
Buckwheat—85c. per bushel.

These are prices which assure the farmer a moderate return on the larger operations he is undertaking. If, as is quite probable, the market prices are higher when the crop is harvested, the farmer will be entitled to the higher price. The guarantee that in any case he will receive a price that will be remunerative encourages him to undertake the larger operations. The movement bids fair to be a useful aid in the campaign for greater production, besides impressing the farmers with the good results that may be obtained from improved farm methods.

Non-Partisan War

There is a general recognition of the patriotic action of President Wilson, in naming a very distinguished political opponent, Mr. Elihu Root, as the head of the mission about to proceed to Russia. Secretary McAdoo, in preparing his financial measures, invited the co-operation of Republican leaders, as well as Democrats. The President's action in naming Mr. Root is further evidence of his desire to ignore the question of party patronage and to unite all sections in the prosecution of the war.