

real agreement and no common policy seemed possible, because "the circumstances in the different Colonies differed so widely"; and so, to save the situation, a number of separate private interviews took place between the Premiers and the President of the Board of Trade, as the result of which the several Premiers undertook to press their Governments for substantial preferences for British imports.

The general resolution which they adopted, while expressing this intention, put a formal extinguisher upon Mr. Chamberlain's notion of "free trade within the Empire."

The following are the important clauses of the resolution:—

"That this Conference recognises that, in the present circumstances of the Colonies, it is not practicable to adopt a general system of Free Trade as between the Mother Country and the British dominions beyond the sea.

"That with a view, however, to promoting the increase of trade within the Empire, it is desirable that those Colonies which have not already adopted such a policy should, as far as their circumstances permit, give substantial preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the United Kingdom.

"That the Prime Ministers of the Colonies respectfully urge on his Majesty's Government the expediency of granting in the United Kingdom preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the Colonies, either by exemption from or reduction of duties now or hereafter imposed." This was the first demand from the Colonies for preferential treatment of their products in British markets. It was not proposed as a necessary condition of preference to British goods in Colonial markets. The two resolutions were independent of one another.

Canada had, it appears, been pressing the Imperial Government, throughout the Conference, for a definite remission of the war duty upon Colonial wheat. To this Mr. Chamberlain could not then accede, urging that the material results of the existing Canadian preference were not sufficient to justify "such an im-