

In this connection it may also be of further interest to record an observation which fell from the lips of Lord Selborne in his opening address :—

“ There was a time when no one who took an interest in these fiscal questions, whether he was a member of the Cobden Club, or an ardent Protectionist, could discuss them without assuming an air of absolute infallibility. There has been more assertion of dogma in this question of Free Trade and Protection than ever has been current amongst theologians. I believe Free Trade not to be a religion, but to be a policy.”

He said again, in speaking of the difficulties which had been overcome in bringing about the federation of the different Australian colonies :—

“ In Australia they have been overcome, and, therefore, it does seem to me that probably in a different way they may also be overcome in the Empire. Union in any political sense is one of the problems of the future.”

It is not thought necessary to take up space by quoting arguments for or against the Resolutions. In order to fairly understand what has been accomplished since 1887, appended hereto are copies of similar Resolutions on this subject, which have been carried in other Congresses.

In reviewing the proceedings, therefore, of past Congresses in the discussion of Commercial Relations between the Mother Country, her Colonies and Dependencies, it will be seen that by the Resolution which was carried in 1896, the desire was expressed that it would be right and expedient to promote the question by the consideration and the formation of some practical plan, by summoning an Imperial Conference, fully representative of the interests involved, or by such other means as Her Majesty may be advised to adopt.

Following along these lines, the Resolution submitted to the last Congress by this Board, recommended the appointment of a Committee of Home and Colonial Delegates to devise some scheme. The time, however, at the disposal of the delegates for such an undertaking being altogether inadequate, and having become conversant throughout the animated debate with the temper of the members of the Congress, one of your delegates proposed that the Canadian delegates might be willing to revise the Toronto Resolution, provided the Manchester