

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

The proposition to establish a permanent institute representing the arts, manufactures and commerce of the colonies and India, has been under discussion in England for several years.

In 1874-5, the Chambers of Commerce and the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom, memorialized Her Majesty's Government on the subject of establishing an Imperial Museum.

In 1876, the *Times* fully discussed this question, giving an estimated cost of site, cost of buildings and cost of maintenance. That year was considered to be opportune, as the Centennial Exhibition was being held, it being supposed that arrangements might be made at its close for transferring the colonial exhibits from Philadelphia to the Imperial Museum.

The amount proposed to be raised was \$2,000,000 for site and buildings; in addition, the estimates for maintenance amounted to \$100,000 per annum. The promoters of the scheme were of opinion that this expenditure should be shared equally between England, and India and the colonies.

When the matter was publicly debated, it was considered that there would be no difficulty in raising one-half of the required expenditure from India and the colonies, but as regarded England, the question arose whether it was advisable to spend so much money for a museum, as they were then erecting the Natural History Museum, at a cost of \$1,760,000, and, in addition, the grants for maintenance of museums and kindred institutes, amounted to over \$1,000,000 per annum.

There is no doubt that the principal reason the Imperial Museum was not proceeded with in 1876, was because the Government did not vote the necessary funds.

After the close of the Paris Exhibition in 1878, efforts were again made to renew the project, but from various reasons they fell through.

The present seems to be a very fitting time for the establishment of such an Institution; the success of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, and the approaching Jubilee of the Queen, were no doubt sufficient inducements for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to take a personal interest in endeavoring to establish an Imperial Institute, and for that purpose the Prince addressed the following letter to the Lord Mayor of London:—

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE.

Pall-Mall, S.W., Sept. 13.

DEAR LORD MAYOR,—My attention has been frequently called to the general anxiety that is felt to commemorate in some special manner the approaching Jubilee of Her Majesty's reign.

It appears to me that no more suitable memorial could be suggested than an Institute which should represent the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce of the Queen's Colonial and Indian Empire.

Such an Institution would, it seems to me, be singularly appropriate to the occasion, for it would illustrate the progress already made during Her Majesty's reign in the Colonial and Indian Dominions, while it would record year by year the development of the Empire in the arts and of civilization.

It would thus be deeply interesting to Her Majesty's subjects, both within and beyond these islands, and would tend to stimulate emigration to those British territories where it is required, to expand the trade between the different British communities, and to draw closer the bonds which unite the Empire.

It would be at once a Museum, an Exhibition, and the proper locality for the discussion of Colonial and Indian subjects.

That public attention has already been forcibly directed to these questions is sufficiently proved by the remarkable success which is attending the Colonial and Indian Exhibition at South Kensington, and I confidently anticipate that arrangements may be made whereby the more important collections, which have so largely contributed to this success, will be placed at the disposal of the Institution.