

about to be raised again in regard to naval control and foreign relations. It is the old problem of Imperial Federation. There cannot be concerted action without central authority of some kind. Just as in trade and tariff relations the issue has been evaded by expedient inaction, so in naval, military, and foreign affairs the issue has remained dormant because no crisis arose to challenge its conclusion. Now the challenge has arisen. It can be evaded only at the price of present cowardice and future disaster.

Mr. Chamberlain began by demanding free trade within the Empire and an Imperial tariff against "foreigners." That was the logical extreme from the system of real autonomy which left each and all of the Imperial units free to protect themselves, or to trade unhindered with friend or foreigner, as seemed good to them. The imperium—the real "empire" organization—in commerce was regarded as unattainable and inexpedient. In the opinion of most students of Imperial Preference it remains so after the lapse of sixteen years. An empire which presents an united front industrially and commercially to the world outside is inconceivable to-day as it was in 1902, owing to the conflict of economic interests, the diversity of resources and products and, above all, by the limitations on commercial and political liberty which are inseparable from it.

Now will come the problems of Imperial defence and of Imperial unity in the domain of foreign relations. The Imperial War Cabinet has been of practical use in the war; but it is to be realized that all the matters decided by it were so decided under conditions which made the governments represented in it practical autocrats; in the face of the common foe the autonomous rights of the Dominions and the Mother Country were simply regarded as in abeyance. The representatives of each unit accepted the conclusions of the War Cabinet as practical expedients dictated by necessity. That condition will vanish—is, in fact, on the testimony of General Smuts, already gone, and with its removal the War