

Hong-Kong, and Singapore must be protected by something better than paper plans; and if, by dint of persistence, the authorities, Imperial or local, are compelled to erect fortifications, we must refuse any longer to be content that the fortifications should remain without guns, the guns without ammunition, and both without men trained to employ them. We have made a beginning only, and we must be watchful and persevering.

Postage.

With regard to postal reform, it seemed as if the Conference were about to separate without accomplishing anything at all. Happily, however, at the eleventh hour it has been announced that a great step in advance has been taken, and that there is a definite prospect of an over-sea mail to Australia being established, with a charge of 3d. instead of 6d. for each letter carried. Half a loaf is better than no bread, and no doubt the Colonies are perfectly right in protecting their own Exchequers from loss; but this matter will not end here. The facts in favour of penny postage are too strong to be disregarded, and it is a mere question of time how long it will be before the Postal Departments here and in Australia are convinced that the public convenience and the public purse will alike be gainers by the inevitable reduction.

Law.

The discussions which have taken place with respect to bankruptcy law, the probate of Colonial wills, and other legal questions, are not likely to strike public imagination. They are not, however, the less important on that account. On the contrary, they are in some respects the most useful outcome of the Conference. They furnish a proof, if proof were needed, that in all the details of administration and legislation there is room for improvement in the direction of harmonising and simplifying the law and the practice prevailing in different parts of the Empire. It is to these silent and unobtrusive methods that we must look for the binding together of the Empire by invisible but unbreakable bonds. If the line of action inaugurated by the Conference be steadily adhered to, we may look forward to the time when the unity of institutions, customs, and conveniences among all British subjects will be so much a matter of course, and their interruption so intolerable an interference with daily habit, that the very