



Hon. Andrew Fisher, Mrs. Fisher, Lady Ward and Sir Joseph Ward.



Sir Edward P. Morris and Lady Morris.

THE EMPIRE'S PREMIERS GATHER IN LONDON

THAT the Imperial Conference will accomplish much that is definite, is unlikely. Its great benefit will be in the meeting of so many important statesmen from all parts of the Empire, with a consequent exchange of views on many subjects. Before any group of men can

work together to advantage they must have met each other face to face and become acquainted. It is almost impossible for two men who have never met to carry on a satisfactory correspondence, or to act together with common intention. The meeting of so many British Premiers in London will smooth out many difficulties and remove many misunderstandings. This in itself is worth while.

Among these Premiers Sir Wilfrid Laurier is the leading figure, and the reports issued daily indicate that his policy of *laissez faire* in Imperial matters has met with general approval. Sir Wilfrid is determined that all Imperial co-operation shall be based upon voluntary intention rather than obligation. So far as one may gather, the Premiers largely agree with him.

Honourable Andrew Fisher, Prime Minister of Australia, is perhaps the most romantic figure at the gathering. A man who rises from coal miner to Prime Minister has accomplished something which appeals to the most ordinary imagination. He was once Secretary of the Ayrshire Miners' Union, was blacklisted by the employers and migrated to Australia. He holds no grudge against his former British employers and returns to London prepared to co-operate for their benefit. In this cabinet of cabinets his influence must be very great. Though an ardent Imperialist he is almost as keen as Sir Wilfrid Laurier in his support of colonial autonomy. His naval policy is practically the same as that adopted by Canada—a home-made fleet stationed in home waters and directed by home authorities, yet always ready in case of Imperial emergency.

Newfoundland is represented by Sir Edward Morris, the Prime Minister, the Honourable Robert Watson, and the Honourable Robert K. Bishop. Sir Edward Morris has been a member of the Newfoundland Legislature for many years, and was a Cabinet Minister as early as 1889. He has been Prime Minister for about two years. The smallness of the colony which he represents prevents him from being a great figure, but he will, nevertheless, do great work for that colony while in London.

Sir Joseph Ward, Premier of New Zealand, is probably the keenest Imperialist at the Conference. He is a successful merchant, a successful Postmaster-General, and is doing fairly well as a Premier.

The Honourable Louis Botha, Premier of the Transvaal, is not a fluent user of the English language, and so his part in the Conference will be largely that of the silent listener. Nevertheless, anything earnestly desired by Sir Wilfrid Laurier will be supported by the South African statesman.



Sir Wilfrid talking with Mr. Fisher.



Sir Wilfrid attending Hamar Greenwood's Wedding.