

specially qualified to take a useful part in the deliberations. The colonial office suggested as a suitable subject for discussion, in addition to defence, postal and telegraphic communications, and to this the Conference of itself added, in the course of its sessions, such matters as legislation with regard to merchandise-marks and patents, the effect of foreign bounties on colonial sugar production, and the investment of trust funds in colonial securities.

The second and third conferences were held under the presidency of Mr. Chamberlain. The former was convened in connexion with the celebration of Her late Majesty's "Diamond" Jubilee (1897), and the questions which Mr. Chamberlain proposed for discussion in his opening speech included political relations, defence, commercial relations, and matters connected with ocean cables, the establishment of an Imperial penny post, and alien Immigration laws. It is of interest to record the fact that it was on this occasion that Mr Chamberlain referred to the Australian suggestion that a commission should be appointed to inquire into the feasibility of closer commercial arrangements within the Empire, stating that if it were the wish of the other self-governing colonies to join with Australia in such an inquiry, the home government would also be glad to take part in it. Two points of importance emerge in the record of the proceedings of this conference. In the first place the assembled representatives, by a majority, declared their opinion that the present political relations between the United Kingdom and the self-governing colonies were "generally satisfactory under the existing condition of things," and secondly, they thought that it would be desirable to hold such conferences periodically for the discussion of matters of common interest.

The coronation of King Edward was the occasion of summoning the third conference in 1902. The subjects proposed in advance were again the political and commercial relations of the Empire, and its naval and military defence. Further suggestions were invited from the colonial governments, and with a view to guide and assist discussion they were also asked