

living to-day, he would not be found dealing with those momentous subjects in a carping and narrow spirit.

We must realize that we are not yet over all the hurdles. It is true that men who a while ago were crying out "humbag" are now pronouncing benedictions. And we take note of the fact that there has been a remarkable change of mind in regard to fiscal Commonwealth policies, and that the representatives of the United Kingdom will sail to Canada for the Conference of this year on a ship that will fly the colours of Mutual Preferences.

If he is correctly reported, Mr. Thomas, the other day, announced that the English statesmen would come to the Conference "not riveted to any creed or dogma, but with a single-minded desire to effect a real settlement." And he added this semi-exhortation:

I am sure the Dominions will not only realize—as they do realize—the advantages of their association in the British Commonwealth, but if they reciprocate in the spirit with which we intend to go there, there ought to be no doubt of the success of the Conference.

It is cheering news. In Canada we nurse no grievance. We utter no reproach. We recognize to the full the unquestioned right of the Mother Country to settle and direct her own domestic policies. The Dominions enjoy a like measure of right in that regard. Now, with that accepted principle as a foundation, inspired by an impelling desire to add to the strength and hasten the development of the Commonwealth, in the spirit of reasonable give and take, Canada, I feel sure, is ready to play a constructive part in the coming Conference.

I believe that I can with safety suggest to Mr. Thomas that he may at once eliminate the "if" from his mind. The spirit that moved Canada at the Conference of 1930 has not changed. Indeed, on reflection, Mr. Thomas will be reminded that over thirty years ago Canada made practical overtures, and ever since that time has been in the spirit of offering and giving; ready to enter into arrangements that might be mutually advantageous to all the members of the Empire. It is no fault of Canada that such arrangements were not long ago consummated.

May I add this comment. When thirty years ago Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was engaged in flouting the proposal of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for mutual preferences, he pinned his faith in enduring Empire solidarity to "bonds of friendship and regard, and esteem and common blood and common sentiment." It can be said with truth that those bonds never slackened in Canada. But Canadians, in common with the people of the other Domi-

nions, hold to the conviction that with an unknown and unreadable future ahead, it is our duty as far as possible to insure the Commonwealth against risks; and that greater certainty of enduring relations will be likely if the bonds mentioned by Sir Henry be dovetailed with mutual commercial interests. We are at the beginning of what Mr. Thomas has said to be "a new political conception of the British Empire." We should not let matters drift, or opportunities slip by. We are in a new undertaking—the making of a great Commonwealth. The bonds must surely be strengthened; otherwise there will be danger of slackening. Sir Wilfrid Laurier visualized that risk when he sounded an alarm in 1902. The world is ever changing. Canada will not stand still. The Commonwealth must not be allowed to stand still. Who is there to guarantee its virility and development if we of the Commonwealth be not alert to the urgency of knitting it closer and closer together by the agencies of common interest as well as the cement of common blood? This, I have no doubt, was in the mind of Canada's present Prime Minister when he made his challenging statement, "We dare not fail."

As Mr. Bennett points out, there cannot be assurance of real national progress without stability in trade conditions. And our Commonwealth, stocked as it is with everything necessary for national growth, and knit together by the ties of blood and friendship, offers limitless opportunities for the development of enduring commercial intercourse of mutual benefit to all the member nations. In no other channels can the same measure of stability be hoped for. We, of Canada, have tried out foreign nations in this regard and we know by experience that stability would always be in doubt in any trade arrangement we might make with such people as our neighbours to the south, unless we are willing to concede to them more than a fair percentage of benefit under such arrangement. This would appear to have been the considered opinion of Mr. King in 1930. The signed statement which he issued to the country through the press of July 26, 1930, referred to the United States as being "apparently unwilling to deal with us on equal terms."

So, as I see the matter, our great and promising hope is rooted in the Commonwealth. And if we of the Commonwealth entrench ourselves in mutually advantageous trade arrangements we need not fear the future. We shall have a stable foundation on which to