

chance of success and Mr. Osler had recognized that himself. He was a protectionist, a national policy man, in favour of closer trade relations with England, anxious to give England the same preference in our market that we were getting in hers, and looking around him and seeing the all prevailing sentiment what does he say? His resolution was :

Resolved, that in the opinion of this congress the advantages to be obtained by a closer union between the various portions of the British Empire are so great as to justify an arrangement as nearly as possible of the nature of a Zollverein based upon principles of the freest exchange of commodities within the empire, consistent with the tariff requirements incident to the maintenance of the local government of each kingdom, dominion, province or colony, now forming part of the British family of nations.

He asks for closer relations and what is his view of the feeling that prevails in this large gathering on the subject of a preference for the colonies in the British markets. Here is what he says in his speech :

I will only repeat that in Canada we believe that certain concessions must be made if we are to get England to join in a confederation, and I think that as Canadians we are willing to make these concessions. We believe it will be for our own interest and for the interests of the empire that we should do so. I thoroughly agree with all Mr. Chamberlain has said, that it is impossible for us to have in the meantime Great Britain imposing a duty upon the food products from foreign countries, and not increase the price that she would otherwise pay, for she will be able to get from her colonies all the wheat supply she requires.

That is Mr. Osler's opinion. He evidently felt it was hopeless to expect the British workman to submit to a tax on food products for the benefit of the colonies until the colonies could supply the demand.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Just as hopeless as it was ten years ago to ask for the denunciation and abrogation of the treaties.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—There was not, even at this time in 1894 a chance of it being abrogated. The parliament of Canada had asked for it a few years before. It had been pressed upon the attention of the Imperial government and the answer was a positive and absolute refusal. Nothing could be more decisive, than Sir Donald Smith brought forward a resolution in these terms :

Therefore resolved—That this congress records its belief in the advisability and practicability of a customs arrangement between Great Britain and her

colonies and India on the basis of preferential treatment, and recommends that steps should be taken by Her Majesty's government to bring about an interchange of opinion on the subject between the mother country and the other governments of the empire.

There was not even a vote taken on that resolution. Sir Donald Smith saw the sense of the meeting was so strongly against it that he withdrew it. Let us see what the president who represents probably the largest Chamber of Commerce in the world, the Chamber of Commerce of London, says upon the proposal :

The dangers of a preferential duty in favour of colonial imports are the following : first, the increase in the price of food and raw materials in this country ; an increase which would at once be felt by the working classes—increased cost of living, which would involve on their part a demand for an increase of wages. That, in its turn, would lead to labour disturbances. Then there would be an increased cost in the production of our own manufactures, which would tell against us all over the world, not only in foreign countries but in the colonies themselves. Why do colonies buy from us to such a large extent? Because they find Great Britain is the cheapest market. If we increased our duties to them we should lose our trade with them and our trade with the rest of the world. We should meet with retaliation from foreign countries.

That is pretty decisive language and it met with acquiescence by the representatives of the various chambers of commerce ; there was not a whisper that within any reasonable distance of time that we could accomplish the object of our hope which was to secure a preference in the British market.

The resolution presented by the Toronto Board of Trade with the several amendments proposed was withdrawn and the only resolution that could receive the approval of the conference was couched in the language usually adopted at the gatherings of the representatives of the British Empire League in its palmy days. The resolution read as follows :

That this Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the empire is of opinion that the establishment of closer commercial relations between the United Kingdom and the colonies and dependencies is an object which deserves, and demands, prompt and careful consideration. The Congress therefore respectfully represents to Her Majesty's Government that, if the suggestion should be made on behalf of the Colonies or some of them, it would be right and expedient to promote such consideration, and the formulation of some practicable plan, by summoning an Imperial Conference, thoroughly representative of the interests involved, or by such other means as Her Majesty may be advised to adopt. That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the president, to the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the leaders of the opposition in both Houses, the High Commissioner for Canada, and the agents general of the other Colonies