

A committee of influential men was appointed; large subscriptions collected from the different countries; the site for the building selected and the project fairly launched. Thus a new stone was added to the structure of Imperial unity, and the foundation laid of the great edifice which was to be at once a memorial of Her Majesty's jubilee year, and a vivid illustration of the resources of the Empire, as well as a practical and permanent exhibition of all the products to be obtained within its bounds, and a powerful means of promoting the extension of commercial information and facilitating trade between its various divisions.

In 1887, at the instigation of the Imperial Federation League, which sent a strong deputation to wait upon the British Premier, an Imperial Conference was held in London. There was a large representation of leading Colonial statesmen. The Premier of Victoria, Hon. Alfred Deakin; and his predecessor, Hon. Jas. Service, President of the Federal Council of Australia; the Premiers of South Australia, of Queensland, and of Newfoundland; Sir Alex. Campbell, and Mr. Sandford Fleming, of Canada, with many other distinguished men, attended as delegates. Arrangements were made, subject to the approval of the various Legislatures, regarding many important matters pertaining to the defence of the Empire, while other burning questions then troubling the political arena were discussed and disposed of as far as friendly consultation and deliberation could effect a settlement. Even commercial questions, though outside the range of formal discussion, came up for informal consideration, and caused a very general expression of opinion regarding the feasibility and advantage of adopting some system of preferential duties within the Empire.

The most important result, however, will probably be found in the precedent which this Conference forms, and undoubtedly this was the idea uppermost in Lord Salisbury's mind when he said, in his opening speech, "We are all sensible that this meeting is the beginning of a state of things which is to have great results in the future. It will be the parent of a long progeniture, and distant councils of the Empire may, in some far off time, look back to the meeting in this room as the root from which all their greatness and all their beneficence sprang," and in concluding the same speech, when he outlined in such clear and comprehensive words the political faith of all loyal British