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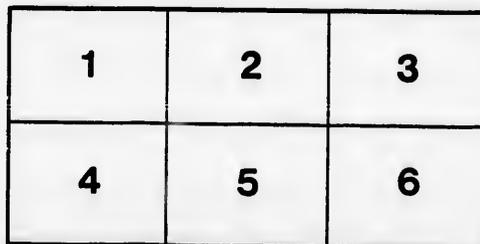
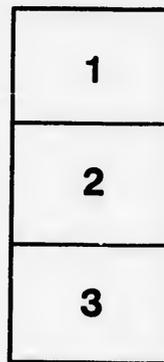
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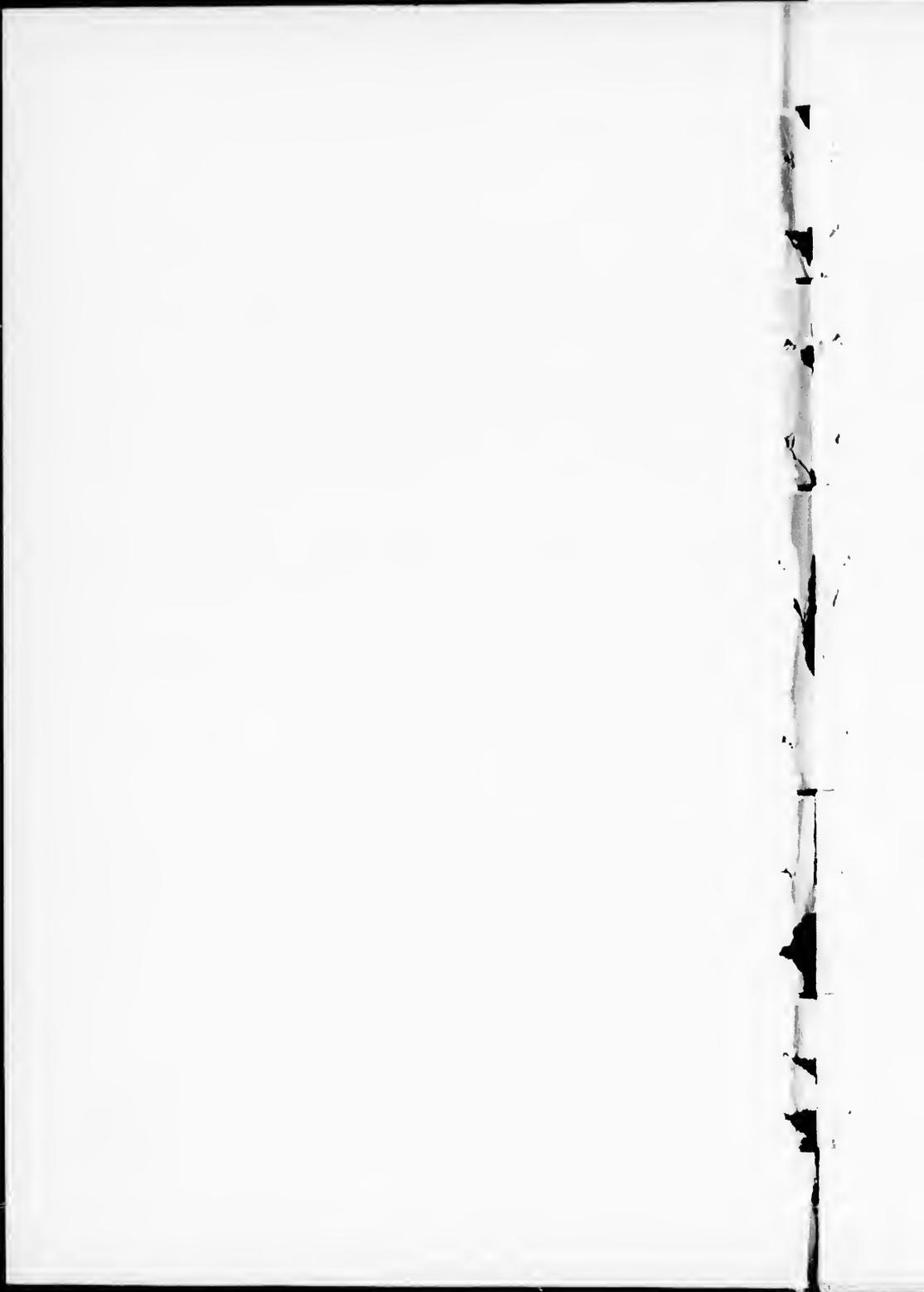
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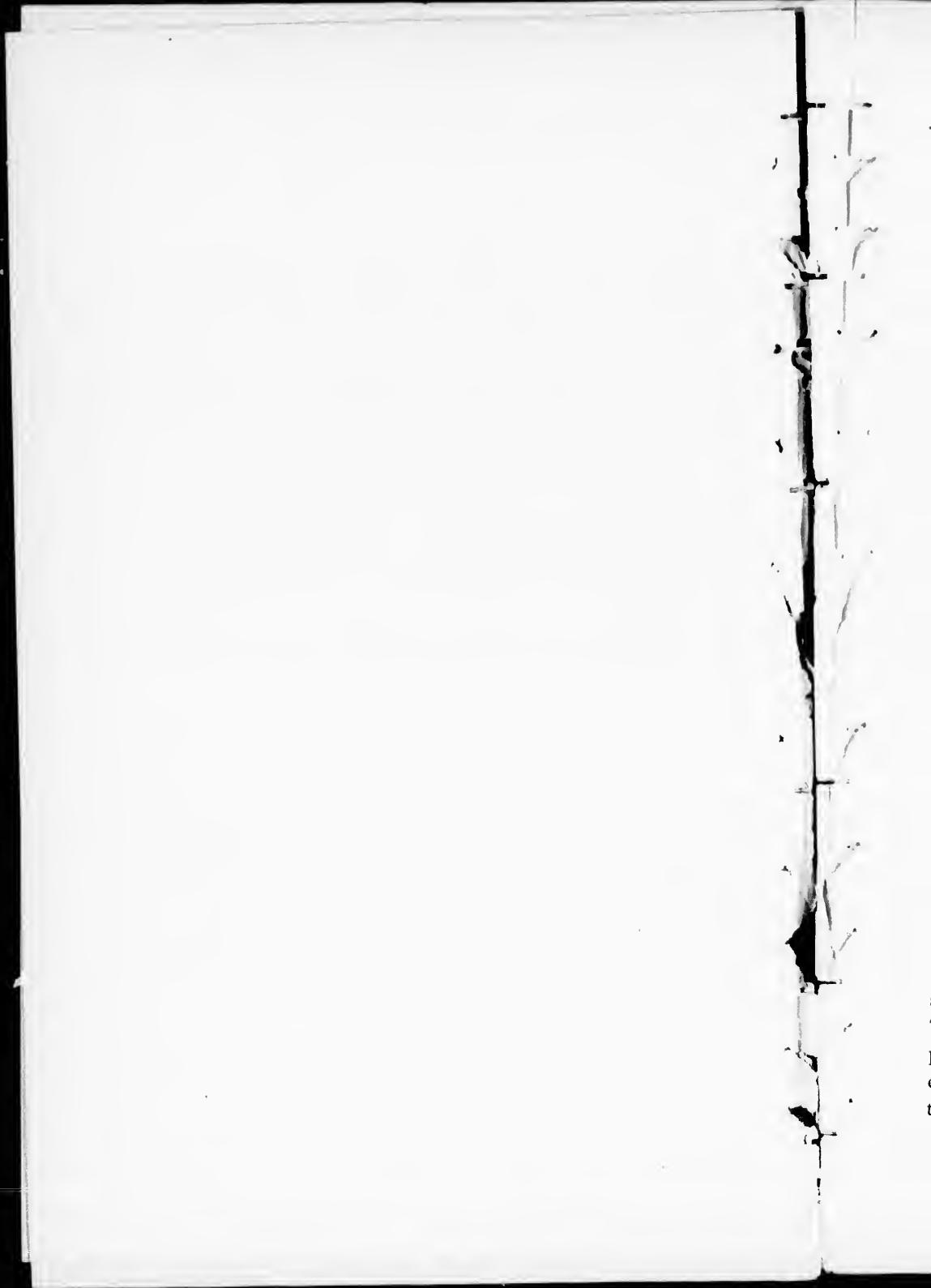
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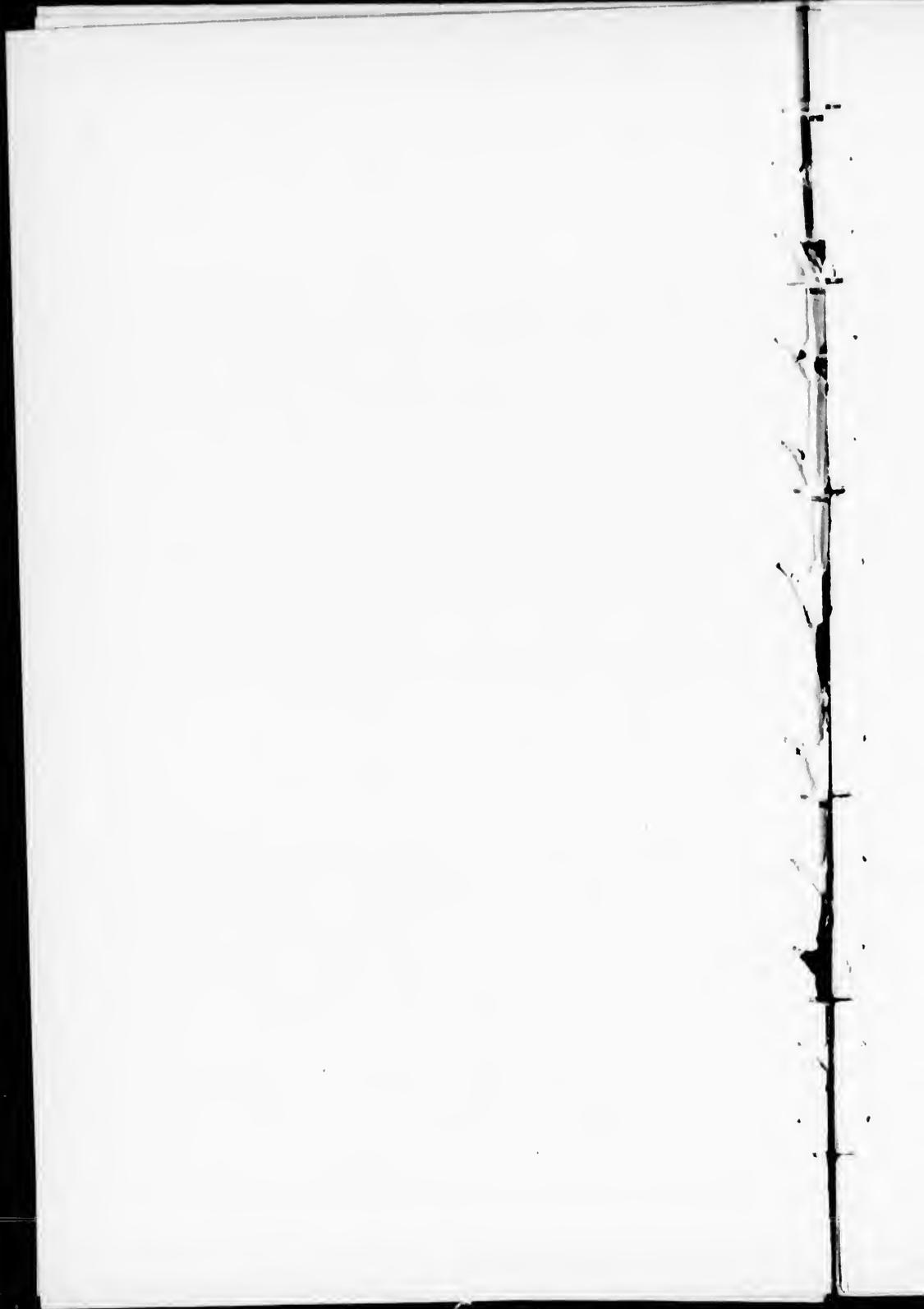


P R E F A C E .

THE following articles, which appeared at the end of April in the present year, are reprinted, by permission, from the *Leeds Mercury*. In the opinion of the Committee of the League they furnish an accurate and sympathetic account of the work of the Imperial Conference.

The present pamphlet may be considered as the proper supplement to that issued by the League under the title of "The Record of the Past and the Promise of the Future." What was then the "Promise of the Future" has already been enrolled in the "Record of the Past." That which the League demanded yesterday has been done to-day. Not only has the Conference which it suggested been summoned in conformity with its wish, but with scarcely any exception the programme which the Committee of the League placed before the public as that which they endorsed, has been faithfully followed by the members of the Imperial Conference.

Already the League has occupied in force the ground which it has won, and from that vantage is pushing forward to new conquests. The Committee feel that it will be satisfactory to all members of the League that each forward step should be recorded and acknowledged. It is not often that an association can point to such a ready and such a complete realisation of its hopes. Those who have followed the recent events in the history of the League will be aware that the next steps towards our goal have been mapped out with the same clearness and precision as those which preceded them. There is no need for haste or confusion; we can afford to progress deliberately, as long as each time we step forward our foot is securely planted, and we are brought nearer to the point for which we are making.



A LIST

OF THE MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE,
HELD IN LONDON IN 1887.

- THE RIGHT HON. SIR HENRY T. HOLLAND, BART., G.C.M.G., M.P.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies, *President*.
THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G., Prime Minister.
THE EARL CADOGAN, Lord Privy Seal.
THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH, M.P., First Lord of the Treasury.
THE RIGHT HON. EDWARD STANHOPE, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
THE RIGHT HON. LORD GEORGE HAMILTON, M.P. First Lord of the
Admiralty.
THE VISCOUNT CROSS, G.C.B., Secretary of State for India.
THE LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON, G.C.B., President of the Board of
Trade.
THE RIGHT HON. H. C. RAIKES, M.P., Postmaster-General.
THE EARL OF ONSLOW, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.
THE RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES FERGUSSON, BART., G.C.S.I., M.P., Under-
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

NEWFOUNDLAND:—

- SIR ROBERT THORBURN, K.C.M.G., Premier.
SIR AMBROSE SHEA, K.C.M.G.

CANADA:—

- SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, K.C.M.G., Lieut.-Governor of
Ontario.
MR. SANDFORD FLEMING, C.M.G.

NEW SOUTH WALES:—

- SIR PATRICK JENNINGS, K.C.M.G., late Premier.
SIR ROBERT WISDOM, K.C.M.G., formerly Attorney-General.
SIR SAUL SAMUEL, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

TASMANIA:—

- MR. JOHN STOKELL DODDS, late Attorney-General.
MR. ADYE DOUGLAS, Agent-General.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE :—

SIR THOMAS UPINGTON, K.C.M.G., Attorney-General.

MR. JAN HENDRICK HOFMEYR.

SIR CHARLES MILLS, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA :—

SIR JOHN W. DOWNER, K.C.M.G., Premier.

SIR ARTHUR BLYTH, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

NEW ZEALAND :—

SIR FRANCIS DILLON BELL, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

SIR WILLIAM FITZHERBERT, K.C.M.G., Speaker of the Legislative Council.

VICTORIA :—

MR. ALFRED DEAKIN, Chief Secretary.

SIR JAMES LORIMER, K.C.M.G., Minister of Defence.

SIR GRAHAM BERRY, K.C.M.G., Agent-General.

MR. JAMES SERVICE, late Premier.

QUEENSLAND :—

SIR SAMUEL GRIFFITH, K.C.M.G., Q.C., Premier.

SIR JAMES GARRICK, K.C.M.G., Q.C., Agent-General.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA :—

MR. JOHN FORREST, C.M.G., Commissioner of Crown Lands.

MR. SEPTIMUS BURT.

NATAL :—

MR. JOHN ROBINSON.

The Imperial Conference.

I.—THE WHY AND THE WHEREFORE.

The Origin of the Conference.

ON the 9th of August, 1886, a deputation from the Imperial Federation League waited upon Lord Salisbury, at the Foreign Office. The proposal which the leaders of the deputation laid before the Prime Minister was of a twofold nature. In the first place, they asked that a Conference, composed of members from each of the great self-governing Colonies, should be convened in London, under the auspices of the Home Government. In the second place, they requested that certain matters of common interest to all parts of the Empire should be submitted for the consideration of the Conference when assembled. Deputations to Ministers too often end in a few complimentary phrases. In this case, however, the result was far more satisfactory. On the 4th of April, 1887, a Conference such as that proposed actually met in London, and its members are at this moment considering the details of a programme which, as far as it extends, is that of the Imperial Federation League.

The result is no doubt eminently satisfactory to the voluntary association which has taken the lead in the promotion of Imperial Union. It is infinitely more satisfactory to the public, which reaps the advantage of their efforts.

What the Conference may mean.

The racket and turmoil of purely domestic politics so completely obscure the political atmosphere, that some of the most important movements which are taking place under our eyes are scarcely discernible. It is probable that the vast majority of

newspaper readers are unaware that an Imperial Conference has, in fact, been summoned, and has actually been sitting during the last few days in the capital of the Empire. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that the meetings at the Colonial Office may well prove to be the commencement of the greatest and most important political changes which have taken place in the history of the British people since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This is not merely fine talking. The Conference in itself is a small thing, no doubt. Its members are endowed with no direct authority. Its ultimate effect may be *nil*. On the other hand, its consequences may be enormous. The question, one portion of which the delegates have set themselves to solve, is beyond all dispute the greatest which this country will have to deal with in a not very distant future.

In the Parting of the Ways.

We stand at the parting of the ways. Every one who has given the slightest attention to the condition of our Colonial Empire, every one who has studied the course of history, or who is acquainted with the natural forces which influence men's actions, is aware that our present relations with our Colonies are, and must be, temporary only. In this matter there is no standing still. Every day the facts of the situation are changing; every day we are coming nearer and nearer to a solution. That solution may be the destruction of the Empire as we know it, or it may be the unifying of the Empire by rational methods and on broad principles. It is possible for a reasonable man to anticipate either of these conclusions, it is possible for a reasonable man to desire either of these conclusions; but to anticipate or to desire the continuance of our present formless and haphazard system is the part neither of reason nor of sense. It is the fashion among a certain class of persons to speak of Federation, and the questions connected with it, in sneering tones, and to affect to regard it as a fantastic and sentimental idea.

Some Facts.

As not unfrequently happens, this spirit is merely the outcome of want of information and want of thought. The future relations of the great English-speaking peoples to one another may be most uncertain, and may not be susceptible of any alteration by active effort on our part, but that they are of the most overwhelming importance and interest there can be no doubt whatever.

At the present moment there are a hundred millions of men and women who speak the English language as their native tongue. Of these, fifty millions, the enormous majority of whom are of pure British extraction, still owe allegiance to the British Crown. They live for the most part in the temperate regions of the earth, and possess the great wheat-growing tracts of the world.

These facts are in themselves of great importance, for they mean that, however widely the fractions of the British race may be distributed, the forces of climate and habit are not likely to differentiate the inhabitants of the various localities. The physical conditions of work and nourishment in Canada, in Australia, and in New Zealand are not materially different from those which exist in this country. Political causes may transform a New Zealander into an alien, and possibly into an enemy; but physically he will remain an Englishman.

The Future of Englishmen.

And now let us consider what is the future of these English-speaking millions. In a period so brief that many now alive will live to see it, the hundred millions of English-speaking people not only may, but must be two, or it may be three hundred millions. The future of the world is in the hands of the English-speaking people. We may regret it, we may dislike it, but it is among the certainties of the immediate future—that French, German, and Italian must become practically provincial dialects. France has ceased to increase. The overflow of Germany is added in a generation to the English-speaking world, and the change is proceeding with a speed which few of us have yet realised. The final result we can neither avert nor alter; but we can by the exercise of a little forethought and a little common sense materially affect the position which we ourselves shall occupy when the process is complete.

A Great Example.

Already one great branch of the English-speaking people has prepared for the future, and the scheme of government, devised by the deliberate wisdom of a few, has become accepted as the most precious national inheritance of a nation of fifty millions. That scheme has already stood the trial of a protracted war, and has overcome the differentiating effect of varied climate and immense distance. It remains for the other great branch of the

English-speaking people to achieve the same result by the same or by some equally effectual means. That a union can be obtained by active political exertion on our part has not yet been proved, and is fairly open to dispute. That such a union is in itself desirable seems almost beyond contention.

A Liberal Doctrine.

This is, fortunately, a question which involves no party issues, but if it appeals more strongly to the traditions of one party than of another, it is surely to those of Liberalism. The accepted commonplace of almost every Liberal politician is the practical identity of interest between different portions of the community. The assumption lies at the bottom of all Free Trade teaching, and forms the basis of every protest against legal or artificial restriction. Among the most pressing tasks of Liberalism has been that of demonstrating to different sections of the people the true identity of their interests, and denouncing the barriers which custom, ignorance, or prejudice have erected between those whose interests are really the same.

Apply these commonplaces, as we are bound to apply them, to the British Empire, and every single argument in favour of encouraging its different sections to form themselves into independent nations instantly falls to the ground.

If ever a case existed in which interests were identical, it is that of the various sections of the same people which are now growing up in different parts of the world.

Our great "Interest."

Of all British interests, the greatest and the most unvarying is that of peace. Every one knows that between nations communicating only through the ordinary formalities of diplomatic representation, jealous on either side for their national dignity, and animated by all the force of national pride, questions of the simplest nature are constantly magnified into the most serious and dangerous disputes. It ought not to be so, doubtless, but the history of the world tells us that it is so, and we may be sure that when once we begin to conduct our relations with our great Colonies on these terms the same difficulties and the same dangers will arise which have arisen in other international disputes; and the very character of the disputants would render a peaceful solution difficult of attainment.

Once let there be war between two English-speaking peoples,

and in the fulness of time they may become friends again, allies again, but one people never more.

Danger Ahead!

At the present moment there is absolutely no method by which any matter in dispute, save a purely judicial question, can be rationally arranged between Great Britain and the Colonies, or between any two of the Colonies. Any day may find us face to face with a danger which it would be impossible to avert. Time therefore presses. It is of the essence of the question. What is to be done should be done quickly; it is worth while, therefore, asking what can be done, how it can be done, and how far the newly convened Imperial Conference is capable of doing it.

In order to obtain a correct idea upon these points, it will be necessary to make some examination of the *personnel* of the Conference, and to inquire under what commission they appear in London as representatives of their respective Colonies. Having satisfied ourselves as to the correctness of their credentials, and the nature of their powers, it will then be advisable to explain the method by which they can most effectively work; and, lastly, to discuss in some detail the chief points to which, according to the published programme of their deliberations, they are devoting their attention. We propose in subsequent articles to follow this method of inquiry. It is right that the attention of Englishmen should be called to the immense importance of the Conference; it is right that they should be reminded how vitally they are themselves concerned in the settlement of the matters which are at present under debate; and, lastly, it is essential that they should be convinced—as, indeed, they will require to be convinced—that the methods which they are asked to approve are rational and practical, and that the objects which they are invited to promote are not only attainable, but are in themselves of obvious value and profit to the United Kingdom and to the Empire. We shall endeavour to satisfy these reasonable requirements.

II.—THE DELEGATES AND THEIR WORK.

Who are the Men ?

In a previous article we spoke of the origin of the Imperial Conference, and dwelt upon the enormous possibilities of profitable work which lay before such an organisation, provided its members were men of the right stamp, and that its operations were conducted in a practical fashion. At this point we are naturally led to inquire how far these essential qualifications have been fulfilled, and to what extent we are justified in anticipating a successful result from the deliberations of the delegates now assembled in Whitehall. Who are the men? And what are the methods? The first is the most important question. Who are the men whom the great self-governing Colonies have sent to the Old Country in response to the invitation of the Executive? Has the response which the Colonial Governments have made been a perfunctory acquiescence in an unpalatable demand? Or has it been an enthusiastic acceptance of a welcome and honourable invitation?

A glance at the list of the delegates will furnish a ready and a complete answer to any doubts which may arise upon these points. Our countrymen across the sea have done honour to themselves and honour to us in sending their best, the chosen leaders of their own active and growing political life. History does not afford any precedent by which we can gauge the value and the significance of this new assembly. Over and over again some brilliant Congress, some influential Conference, has been held in which the great States of Europe have been represented by distinguished nominees of the Sovereigns under whose commission they acted.

Such representatives have received, as they were entitled to receive, respect and attention; but their credentials were in every respect inferior to those of the delegates recently selected to attend the summons of the Colonial Office. The men who have been sent represent emphatically the free choice of a great and free people. They are men, every one of them, who have qualified for the high position which they now fill by long, arduous, and successful work in the service of their country.

They are the representatives not of a dynasty, not of a party, but of the good-will and sympathy of Imperial England—the trusted spokesmen of eight millions of the most active and intelligent population on the world's surface.

The Colonies have, indeed, sent us their best. No less than seven of the delegates have been, or are, Prime Ministers of the Colonies on whose behalf they speak. In Sir Alexander Campbell, Canada sends an ex-Speaker, a Senator, and a Lieut.-Governor—a man who has passed successfully through every department of the public service, and who has occupied with approbation the highest offices which it was in the power of the popular vote on the one side, and of the Royal Prerogative on the other, to bestow. Mr. Sandford Fleming comes to us with a double distinction, scientific and academical—the one confirmed by his selection as the engineer of the great Canadian Pacific Railway, the other vouched for by his position as Chancellor in the Queen's University of Canada.

Sir Graham Berry and Mr. James Service have both attained an eminence, in the high office of Prime Minister of Victoria, which has made their names familiar far beyond the limits of Australia.

In Sir Patrick Jennings we have another Prime Minister, representing the great Colony of New South Wales; while Mr. Robert Thorburn has held similar office in Newfoundland. The energy and ability of Mr. Upington, who speaks on behalf of Cape Colony, will not be doubted by those who are acquainted with the history of the Administration of which he was the head.

What are their Credentials?

It would be useful, and it would be interesting, to exhaust the list of the delegates, and to discuss at greater length their respective qualifications. Space does not permit of such an inquiry. But what is true of one is true of all. The delegates are, without exception, known men, experienced men, and men who have during the course of an active life claimed and secured the confidence and the support of the great body of the people. Their credentials should, beyond all doubt, command for them the respect and sympathy of every party in this country. They have been commissioned under circumstances which compel us to accord serious attention to their propositions, even though we may not all sympathise with what the majority of them have declared to be their hopes. To those who share these hopes,

the active and willing participation of such men in a serious attempt to advance the cause of Imperial unity must be a source of the most profound gratification and encouragement.

So much for the men. We now come to the consideration of the methods.

The Nature of the Conference.

The meeting at the Colonial Office is a conference in the strict sense of the word. The delegates appointed to attend it are not plenipotentiaries; they have power to consult and to advise, but they have no power to act without reference to their Governments. This is well. No wise action can be taken without careful deliberation; and, extraordinary though it may seem, the matters which are now before the Conference have never yet been seriously debated by any qualified or competent assembly.

How the End may be Attained.

Those who are either the enemies of the cause, or who are ignorant of the elements of the question involved, are often heard to suggest that it is the object or the duty of the Imperial Conference to elaborate forthwith a complete and cut-and-dried scheme of Federal Government. Nothing is further from the fact. In the fulness of time such a scheme may be completed. If so, it will be the consequence and not the cause of the measures which alone can give true unity to the Empire.

It is possible—nay, more, it is highly probable—that a time will come when, by the very force of circumstances, the various branches of the Imperial administration throughout the world will have become uniform and systematic; conducted everywhere upon the same principles, by the same methods, and with the same objects. When that time arrives, Federation will be an accomplished fact. The mere names and phrases which we may apply to the new *régime* will spring up of themselves. We shall describe the fact because the fact will be there. But we shall not hasten this consummation one hour by any make-believe. Federation will not be brought about by a royal proclamation, or by a single Act of Parliament; it can only be the outcome of long, careful, and conscientious work done by those who care for their country, and who have realised the right way of serving it. What, then, is the nature of this process? It is a process which is familiar to any man who in any station of life, in any department of science, art, or industry, has brought to a successful

termination the work upon which he was engaged. It is the old process of the application of mind to matter. The Imperial Conference has been summoned to discuss the best means of dealing with those matters which are of common interest to the Empire. But it is not convened to create these common interests. They exist already—they have long existed; and each day that we live their number and their complexity are increasing. In every branch of private as well as of national life, examples are to be found. In trade, in commerce, in agriculture, in science, in literature; among all the religious bodies, in the humblest concerns of domestic life, the intercommunication between the various parts of the British Empire is growing with amazing rapidity.

From every one of these departments of human life and interest we learn the same lesson. Neither business nor pleasure, neither the colossal operations of commerce nor the humblest details of private communication, can be transacted, or are transacted, without some form of reasonable organisation, based upon common sense, and calculated to economise time and labour and to diminish friction.

The Line of "Least Resistance."

In other words, wherever voluntary effort has been appealed to, an application of mind to matter has been the invariable consequence. Already five-sixths of the work of Federation is being done to our hand. The poets are doing it, the ministers of religion are doing it, the merchants, the engineers, the soldiers, the sailors, the great trade societies, and a host of private correspondents are all engaged upon it. The Empire is being federated along the line of least resistance. In one department, and in one only, has common sense never obtained a footing. In one department of our Imperial communications alone has the ordinary experience of practical men been disregarded. To one class of persons alone has the idea of applying mind to matter never yet occurred. It is sorrowful to reflect that, unless the incompetence and want of forethought which have hitherto been exhibited in this one quarter alone can be replaced by a more intelligent and more reasonable system, the whole of the good which has been accomplished under our eyes, by private enterprise, and by the pressure of favourable circumstances, is in danger of being undone. It is in the departments of Government and administration alone that no effort has hitherto

been made to organise and to arrange upon a reasonable basis the necessary work of the Empire. That the relations between the administration of the Mother Country and that of the Colonies should have been in the first instance formless and improperly organised is, indeed, not unnatural in view of the chequered history of our Empire. That no serious attempt should have been made up to the present time to remedy so unsatisfactory a state of things is almost incomprehensible. If no effort be made in the future to do so, it will not only be a mark of our incapacity for an Imperial position, but will be the sure sign that we are laying up for ourselves a future of danger and difficulty which it is sorrowful to contemplate.

The True Method.

The work, therefore, which the Imperial Conference has to do is marked out plainly enough. It has got to go through, step by step, the various departments of administration both here and in the Colonies. It has got to select those matters which are of common interest to all parts of the Empire; and it has got to suggest methods by which the work which is done avowedly in one interest and with one object can be most effectively done, most uniformly done, and most economically done.

At this very day there is a career open to the head of any Government Department who would devote his attention to merely utilising his existing opportunities of extending the procedure of his office, and to bringing it into harmony both in form and sentiment with that in other parts of the Empire. But the heads of departments are apparently either unable or unwilling to avail themselves of their opportunities. It will be the work of the Imperial Conference to suggest, to prompt, and to advise. We shall show, in a subsequent article, to what points they can most profitably direct their attention, where the need is sorest, and where the hope of obvious and immediate advantage is the greatest.

III.—PERILS BY SEA.

The First Step.

It is not easy to predict where the work of the Conference will end, or to assign a limit to the operations which it may profitably undertake. But as to the point at which it should begin there can be no doubt or difficulty whatever. All other matters can be allowed to wait, but the question of Imperial defence cannot be allowed to wait for a day. This may seem a strong proposition; it is, however, a mere statement of an obvious fact. It is true that for years the matter has been neglected, that every practical recommendation on the subject has been overlooked, and that the Empire notwithstanding still flourishes. It is also true that uninsured premises not unfrequently flourish till the day they are burnt down. It is possible to postpone indefinitely the steps necessary to secure absolute protection. But the necessity for taking them is equally pressing and equally immediate on each succeeding day that is allowed to elapse. It is beyond contradiction or argument that at no period in the world's history were interests so great and so important as those of the British Empire safeguarded by defences so miserably inadequate as those which we now possess. The matter is one, as we have said, about which there could not under any circumstances be a shadow of doubt. But, as if it were necessary to make assurance doubly sure, we have in our usual odd fashion made an elaborate official inquiry into the whole question; have demonstrated to our own satisfaction that every reasonable precaution has been grossly neglected, and have even gone so far as to tabulate the measures which ought to be taken to make us safe in the future.

Sinning Against the Light.

All this work was thoroughly and accurately carried out by Lord Carnarvon's Commission, more than five years ago. And until within the last few months absolutely nothing had been done to give effect to its recommendations. At last, however, public opinion has been directed towards the dangers of our position. No thanks, however, to the responsible persons who were and are paid to provide for the security of the country. There need be no mistake about this matter. Every single step in advance

that has been made during the last two years in the direction of strengthening our fleet and fortifying our ports has been the result of popular pressure and newspaper criticism, and not of official energy or enterprise. Now, for the first time, we have sitting in London a body of men capable of understanding, appreciating, and dealing with the great question of Imperial defence upon a uniform and rational plan. Such an opportunity has never yet occurred. Like other similar opportunities, it will pass away without result if we wait for the Government Departments to utilise it. Public opinion must be brought to bear in favour of action, and before the public can be expected to exert any pressure they must be fully informed of the greatness of the need.

The Perils of Ignorance.

It is occasionally pretended by persons of limited information that the people of these islands can not only afford to disregard what is taking place across the seas, but that there is something actually to be commended in an ostentatious indifference to the affairs of the outside world. The number of persons holding and expressing these views is, unfortunately, large; and the amount of harm that they have done by producing a false sense of security is not inconsiderable. The best way to destroy the illusion which they desire to create is to recall some of the facts of our national life, which can be most easily authenticated by a reference to any ordinary statistical table. It is no exaggeration to say that were it not for the supplies which we receive from over the sea, one man out of every two in England would be starving; and five out of every six would be out of employment. It is well sometimes to apply these facts to the circumstances of particular districts; and any town in the north of England will furnish an example of the extent to which we depend upon outside products.

Statistics to be Remembered.

Over 50 per cent. of our corn-supply is sea-borne: so also is every pound of our cotton, and the great bulk of our wool. Deprive Lancashire of its cotton, Yorkshire of its wool, and both of half their food, and it requires no word-painting to enable us to comprehend the result. Shortly put, it would be ruin.

But the danger can never arise.

This is just the mistake which those who do not know what

modern warfare means are accustomed to make. It is the mistake of pure ignorance. There is no man, and no body of men, laying claim to or possessing the slightest scientific knowledge, who would not assert that the dangers which we are running are of the very gravest and most terrible nature, and who would not add that the steps we have hitherto taken are ludicrously inadequate for our protection.

Public Enemies.

One of the commonest and most fatuous lines of argument which are taken in this matter is, that war being a bad thing and a thing to be discouraged, it is a waste of money to take precautions to protect ourselves from its consequences. If only the persons who strive to delude their fellow-countrymen with such absurdities would hold out any hope whatever that they or their friends would really relieve us from the danger of a hostile attack, they would deserve at least a patient attention. They do nothing of the kind, however; and until they do, they are simply, however unintentionally, public enemies, and should be so treated. Meanwhile, to those who are wise enough to free themselves from any illusions of this kind, the following facts will be of some interest. They will especially commend themselves to commercial men, and to all those who are accustomed to provide for the contingencies of the future by prudent action in the present.

Our Daily Bread.

We have shown how the very life of England depends upon the safety of her sea-borne commerce. The fact, however, is notorious, and needs no demonstration. Our great neighbour France has, like us, a certain amount of commerce, and some considerable colonies. It is a fact, that if every ship flying the French flag were swept off the sea to-morrow, and every colony belonging to the Republic were at the same time wrested from its allegiance, France would be palpably, demonstrably richer by the operation. It is not necessary to dwell upon the consequences of a similar fate, should it befall this country. It would be national annihilation. For every threepence that England spends upon its national insurance, in the way of protection for its sea-borne trade, France spends one guinea. It is scarcely worth while to heighten the contrast; but we may add that for every shilling England spends, Russia spends proportionately eight pounds. In other words, not to put too

fine a point upon it, either we are grossly neglecting proper precautions for our own defence, or foreign nations are deliberately expending money with the hope and object of injuring us and destroying our commercial supremacy. As a matter of fact, both suppositions are true. Granting, therefore, that the danger is great, that the risk is enormous, and that the need presses, can we truly say that the Imperial Conference supplies us with the means of lessening the danger and meeting the need? We shall endeavour in a future article to give an affirmative answer to this question.

IV.—“WHO WILLS THE END WILL FIND THE MEANS.”

It Does Matter.

In our last article we pointed out that the question of Imperial defence was one which no man and no party in England could afford to neglect; that it was in no sense connected with class interests or professional theories, but concerned the daily life and fortunes of every man, rich and poor, in the Queen's dominions. There is no doubt of the correctness of this view. *It does matter*; and those who believe, or pretend they believe, that it does not matter, are simply, after the fashion of the ostrich, hiding their heads in the sand, to escape the sight of the danger which they fear, but take no steps to avoid.

What can a Conference Do?

But, granting this much, what, it will be asked, can the Imperial Conference, or any similar body, do, to give us a security which our present arrangements do not afford? The answer is that it can do everything, and that, while every isolated effort of the Home Government, or of the individual Colonies, to guard against attack, must inevitably be a failure, the combined efforts of the various parts of our Imperial realm can create an offensive and defensive armament of such a strength that no Power in the world will be able to break through the chain which will connect British interests round the globe.

The proposition is scarcely worth arguing with any member

of the community save a Government official. Conceive for a moment one of our great commercial firms with branches in London, Calcutta, Montreal, Melbourne, and Hong-Kong, allowing the staff of each branch to transact business, to make contracts, to despatch cargoes, without any sort of reference to what was being done at the other centres of the firm's operations! In a commercial concern, which had not behind it the inexhaustible purse of a long-suffering people, ready to pay tenfold value for all its appliances, the result would be simply ruin.

A Lesson from Business-men.

The commonplace which has lain at the bottom of all modern industrial advancement has been the duty of co-operation. The telegraph has added almost infinitely to the application of the principle. A buyer in London learns that a commodity is cheaper in Calcutta than in New York. He buys therefore in Calcutta. A contractor learns that there is a demand for labour or railway appliances in South America or in Australia, and accordingly he transfers his energy and his capital to those places. But hitherto in that great business of defending the Empire, which by courtesy is supposed to be undertaken by our great naval and military departments, this obvious application of commonplace principles has been wholly wanting.

How Not to Do It.

A typical instance of the method of conducting business will be of interest. Not long ago, as the result of much pressure and much persuasion, it was decided to grant money for the purpose of making and fortifying a dock at one of our coaling-stations.

The dock was built — at the Cape. The fortifications were constructed — at Aden. The guns were sent — to Bombay, and there dropped over the side of the barge into the water, where they still remain—but it is not necessary to multiply examples.

“Wilful Waste makes Woeful Want.”

From the present system there can be only one result—a result with which we are all familiar—a spasmodic expenditure of odd sums of money, in odd quarters of the globe, without method and without arrangements. There is not one of the great Colonies which has not already some naval and military force at its disposal. The naval and military expenditure on the Imperial services is over sixty millions a year. It is no exaggeration at all

to say that the value of both the Imperial and the Colonial armaments might be doubled by the outlay, not of more money, but of that apparently much scarcer commodity, brains. In the year 1887 for the first time a serious attempt has been made to organise a naval intelligence department, and an annual pittance has been assigned for securing the due performance of a duty which the head of any commercial house in England would have considered the obvious preliminary to any outlay whatever. We know that there is material enough in the form of manuscript essays and approved schemes lying in the pigeon-holes of the Government offices to allow of a formal contradiction to the statement which we are about to make ; but the statement nevertheless is an absolutely true one—namely, that at this moment there exists no practical organisation whatever for utilising the strength of this country in time of war. The whole organisation of the war services of the country is a peace organisation. Our condition is that of a manufacturer who builds up his engine in a room just large enough to contain it when at rest, but which is altogether insufficient to allow of the slightest movement of crank or shaft when once the steam is turned into the cylinder.

Past a Joke.

This state of things would be ludicrous if it were not so serious. It is a state of things which concerns the Colonies as closely as it concerns us. What they send we receive, and many of them are actually exposed to the first brunt of an attack.

The Public must Help.

An unrivalled opportunity has arisen of arranging with the representatives of the great Colonies what part they will take in carrying out the work of defence. Already the Imperial Conference is engaged upon the task ; and nothing can aid them so much in bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion as the clearly expressed sympathy and approbation of the public. To sympathise the public must first understand ; and to understand they must take the trouble to learn. There are ample materials ready to their hand which will show them where the dangers lie, what is their nature, and what is their gravity.

The work which Captain Colomb, M.P., has done in this connection is the result of many years' close professional study ; and no one who reads what he has written upon the defence of the Empire can plead ignorance of the facts of the case, or of

our responsibilities in regard to them. It must not, of course, be forgotten that material aid in the shape of ships, guns, and men, is not all that is required to secure the most effective co-operation of the Colonies in our national defence. They are sufficiently one with us in history and in character to be deeply influenced by sentiment and generous sympathy.

"Jacks in Office."

How easily these may be accorded, and with how little thought they are sometimes withheld, is well shown by an incident which occurred two or three years ago. One of the Australian Governments, having determined to add to its war fleet, ordered three vessels to be built in England. When completed, the squadron left for its destination under the command of a British naval officer, who had been allowed to undertake the duty. By the wish of the Colonial Government, and as a compliment to England, the ships hoisted the white ensign. Now, the white ensign is the flag of the Royal Navy, and was selected as such in deference to the strongly expressed preference of Admiral Nelson. It will hardly be credited that on arrival at Gibraltar the officer commanding the Colonial vessels received a peremptory order from Lord Northbrook (then First Lord of the Admiralty) to haul down his flag. It would be hard to conceive a more exasperating command. Its only possible justification would have been a plea of absolute necessity. Lord Northbrook, when interrogated, excused himself by saying that the law compelled him to insist on his prohibition. It did nothing of the kind. The matter was one entirely within the discretion of the Admiralty; and if any proof were needed, it would be afforded by the fact that very recently, without any statutory provision, the white ensign has been formally sanctioned as the flag of the Colonial navies. This anecdote is worth recording, for it is an epitome of the whole situation. It shows how much may be done towards unifying the Empire by any one in an official position who is ready to seize the opportunities which are presented to him in the ordinary routine of official life. It shows how much may be undone or prevented by any one who, through lack of knowledge or through lack of sympathy, neglects such opportunities. If we may slightly modify a French proverb, we would say that in this question of Imperial unity, "He who wishes the end will easily find the means."

V.—THE WORK WAITING TO BE DONE.

Cedant Arma Togæ.

It must not be supposed that because we have devoted two articles to the question of Imperial defence, the usefulness of the Conference is confined to the impetus which it is calculated to give to the completion of our naval and military preparations. Were such the case it would be a sorrowful and unfortunate fact. In the first place, it would immediately stamp the important assemblage now sitting in Whitehall as a specialised body with narrow aims and small possibilities ; and in the second place, it would certainly deprive the Conference of the sympathy of all those to whom war and all the preparations connected with war are highly distasteful. We have spoken of fleets and armies first because we are bound to take cognisance of the facts of the situation as they exist. Whatever may be our hopes or our preferences, it is no use pretending that we are safe when we are not safe. It *is* essential to protect our coasts, our commerce, and our Colonies from all attack. We have not done this, and it must be done. At the same time it must not be forgotten that all defensive warlike preparation is but a means to an end. It is the means by which we hope to carry on without interruption the manifold avocations of a great and peaceful nation. Granted that the Conference has taken the necessary steps to organise and to render effective the military strength of the Empire, it will merely have arrived at the threshold of the duties which it ought to undertake, and can undertake with advantage.

Work for Willing Hands.

Let us recall for a moment our definition of the method by which alone true progress can be made in the direction of Imperial unity. We said that it was the duty of our Government Departments to follow the example of the great leaders of private enterprise, and to apply mind to matter in the arrangement of all those questions which are of common interest to all parts of the Empire. Apply this method to the facts of the situation, and a moment's reflection will suffice to convince us that from this day forth no Minister and no Department need be backward

in treading the right path. In every branch of the Administration the opportunities of work lie ready to the hand of the willing worker.

British Empire—Postage One Penny.

Rapid and easy communication is the breath of commerce, and commerce is the life of the Empire. The duty of instituting an Imperial penny postage is one which presses upon every Postmaster-General; it is one which will most assuredly be undertaken when that office is next filled by some person of capacity, who is really acquainted with the work which passes under his hands. The excuses which have hitherto been given by the Department for not doing their duty in this matter are utterly unworthy. There is no need, however, to be the least disheartened by the gloomy prophecies or by the apathy of the officials of St. Martin's-le-Grand. No single great reform in postal matters—from the inland penny postage down to the sixpenny telegram and the parcel post—would have been secured if there had not been steady outside pressure upon the Post Office, and if the public had not insisted upon the needed changes in the face of the most categorical predictions of failure by the officials. The process will have to be repeated; the penny stamp will have to be printed bearing the legend, "British Empire. Postage—One Penny;" and the sender of a letter must be made aware that if his packet be destined for Manchester or Melbourne, for Hong-Kong or Hackney, the postage will in every case cost him one penny, because its destination is within his own country.

Wanted, a Postal Reformer.

Meanwhile one or two facts with regard to postal questions must not be forgotten. England, which thirty years ago was in advance of every other country in the matter of postal facilities, is now behind such countries as Holland, Denmark, or even Peru and Brazil. Again, the figures given by the Postmaster-General with regard to the necessary cost of over-sea postages are either misleading or irrelevant. The present rate paid for letters to Australia is two thousand pounds per ton. We now pay five pounds for transmitting correspondence which could be conveyed as freight for three-and-sixpence. The margin for reduction is enormous. The question which has actually been under the consideration of the Conference during the last few days, with regard to a Government subsidy towards establishing a through

route to the East by way of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver, is another obvious instance in which official co-operation is required. We know now that Canada and Australia are ready to take a part in the enterprise, if reasonable terms can be arrived at. The Imperial Government is also prepared to assist. The Conference gives an admirable opportunity for discussing the terms and agreeing as to the methods.

"Pioneers and Founders."

The great religious bodies have already commenced the work of Federation, and have, without exception, extended their organisation throughout the Empire. It remains for another learned profession, that of the law, to follow the example set by their clerical brethren. Commercial law has practically been made by commercial men, and is therefore practically uniform throughout the Empire; but the criminal and civil laws of various parts of the Queen's dominions differ widely, not only in those points where local peculiarities demand exceptional arrangements, but in matters where the want of uniformity is simply an unnecessary cause of confusion and injustice. Here is work for the lawyers in council to undertake.

Diplomacy.

Turn from the law to the civil and diplomatic services. It is absolutely essential that the great civil and diplomatic appointments of the Empire should be put, not nominally only, but practically, within reach of any Englishman in the Queen's dominions. India, the great possession of our people, should be administered by Englishmen, not from these islands only, but from all parts of the Empire. Here is more work for the reformer. If once the feeling of possession with regard to India is brought home to Canada and Australia, our countrymen there will bring the infinite resources of their strength and enterprise to bear in assisting us to retain and to administer the great peninsula. Already a halting attempt has been made to systematise emigration. What chance is there of making it effectual unless and until we have the ready co-operation of our great Colonies? How is such co-operation to be obtained without mutual counsel and debate?

We might continue our list almost indefinitely; but this is a problem which every one is capable of helping to solve. There is no end to the possibilities of development and improvement

which are open to us. Once grant the desire to succeed, and the only difficulty will lie in choosing with proper judgment the most important out of the many roads which will lead us to success.

VI.—A SUMMARY.

A Tribute to the Federation League.

The Imperial Conference has concluded its sittings, and several of its members have already returned to their respective Colonies. It is not possible to review the precise details of the work which has been accomplished, for the proceedings have throughout been conducted in private. Enough, however, has been communicated to the public by the indiscretion of some person who was present during the meetings to give a fair general idea of the nature of the business undertaken, and of the spirit in which the various questions were approached. It is satisfactory to learn that, both as regards form and matter, the proceedings of the Conference were conducted in the strictest conformity with the principles which in these articles have been laid down as being calculated to ensure real and permanent success. There has been no attempt to create new and fictitious bonds of union between various portions of the Empire; the delegates have wisely recognised the fact that in organising and utilising the material which already existed, there was ample work ready to their hands.

The Defence Question.

The Defence question seems to have made real progress. This, indeed, was inevitable as soon as any responsible body was really brought face to face with the facts, and was prepared to co-operate towards achieving the desired end. The work of properly utilising the defensive resources of the Empire has undoubtedly received a great stimulus, but it will not do to allow our officials to go to sleep again. It is a good thing to be agreed as to what is best to be done, but it is better still to do it. It will be necessary to keep a careful watch upon the naval and military authorities, and the public must show itself both alert and distrustful. The Cape, King George's Sound,

Hong-Kong, and Singapore must be protected by something better than paper plans; and if, by dint of persistence, the authorities, Imperial or local, are compelled to erect fortifications, we must refuse any longer to be content that the fortifications should remain without guns, the guns without ammunition, and both without men trained to employ them. We have made a beginning only, and we must be watchful and persevering.

Postage.

With regard to postal reform, it seemed as if the Conference were about to separate without accomplishing anything at all. Happily, however, at the eleventh hour it has been announced that a great step in advance has been taken, and that there is a definite prospect of an over-sea mail to Australia being established, with a charge of 3d. instead of 6d. for each letter carried. Half a loaf is better than no bread, and no doubt the Colonies are perfectly right in protecting their own Exchequers from loss; but this matter will not end here. The facts in favour of penny postage are too strong to be disregarded, and it is a mere question of time how long it will be before the Postal Departments here and in Australia are convinced that the public convenience and the public purse will alike be gainers by the inevitable reduction.

Law.

The discussions which have taken place with respect to bankruptcy law, the probate of Colonial wills, and other legal questions, are not likely to strike public imagination. They are not, however, the less important on that account. On the contrary, they are in some respects the most useful outcome of the Conference. They furnish a proof, if proof were needed, that in all the details of administration and legislation there is room for improvement in the direction of harmonising and simplifying the law and the practice prevailing in different parts of the Empire. It is to these silent and unobtrusive methods that we must look for the binding together of the Empire by invisible but unbreakable bonds. If the line of action inaugurated by the Conference be steadily adhered to, we may look forward to the time when the unity of institutions, customs, and conveniences among all British subjects will be so much a matter of course, and their interruption so intolerable an interference with daily habit, that the very

idea of abandoning such a system will appear too unreasonable for serious discussion.

New Hebrides.

We will not attempt to enter here into the controversy arising out of the French occupation of the New Hebrides. The matter has been before the Conference, and it does not appear to have yet reached a satisfactory settlement. It is, however, a great step in advance that the responsible Ministers of the Crown representing the United Kingdom and the Australasian States have at least had an opportunity of a personal meeting, and an interchange of views otherwise than through the hopeless channels of official correspondence. As to the main proposition, that it is for the benefit of the Empire, of Australasia, and of civilisation at large, that the French should be got out of the New Hebrides, and made to fulfil their treaty engagements, there can be no doubt whatever. Public feeling at home, as doubtless in the Colonies, has been distinctly dissatisfied by the tone of the Prime Minister's language on this subject; but it will be recognised that there is room for much discretion and much care, as well as for much firmness, in the action which is taken to achieve the desired result.

The True Measure of Success.

After all, however, the value of the Conference is not solely to be judged either by that which it has done or that which it has failed to do. Its true value lies in the demonstration which it affords of the new conditions of our Empire. It has proved that responsible and able officials can be gathered together from all parts of the world, with the consent and approbation of their Governments, and without any serious dislocation of the political work of their respective Colonies. It has proved that a body of men so assembled can be relied upon to discuss the great questions of Imperial interest with sympathy, with reason, and in a thoroughly practical spirit. It has proved that the difficulties which were supposed to stand in the way of Imperial unity diminish rapidly as soon as they are confronted with courage and common sense.

Death of the "Colonial Office Demon."

While we in the United Kingdom have learnt much, the delegates themselves have also learnt something. They have seen that the baneful traditions so long maintained by the

Colonial Office have been broken down, and that the "Colonial Office Demon," to which Sir Henry Holland alluded, has been exorcised by the force of public opinion, which will no longer tolerate the mixture of apathy and bad manners which used to be considered the necessary qualities of all intercourse between the Home Government and the Colonial Ministers. The various delegates have learnt, as Mr. Deakin has told us, that there are other Colonies besides those from which they come, each with its own difficulties, dangers, and advantages; each with something to gain from co-operation: each with something to contribute to the common stock.

The Application of Mind to Matter.

And lastly, the lesson has been once more impressed upon the world that Englishmen are capable of doing business even when that business is not the work of the counter or the workshop, but of the legislator, the administrator, and the ruler: that in the work of government as well as in the work of buying and selling, manufacturing and distributing, the English people are really still capable of applying mind to the arrangement of matter.

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