

1894.
NEW ZEALAND.

OTTAWA CONFERENCE.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR TRADE AND TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE COLONIES.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The GOVERNOR-GENERAL of CANADA to the GOVERNOR of NEW ZEALAND.

MY LORD,—

The Citadel, Quebec, 8th September, 1894.

I have the honour to transmit for your Excellency's information copy of an approved minute of the Privy Council for Canada, submitting a summary report by the Minister of Trade and Commerce of the proceedings of the Conference of colonial representatives which recently met at Ottawa to consider the questions of trade relations and telegraphic communication between the colonies.

I have, &c.,

ABERDEEN.

Enclosure.

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE HONOURABLE THE PRIVY COUNCIL, APPROVED BY HIS EXCELLENCY ON THE 24TH AUGUST, 1894.

THE Committee of the Privy Council have had under consideration the annexed report of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, dated 21st August, 1894, with reference to a Conference of colonial representatives, held in the City of Ottawa, Canada, in compliance with the formal invitation embodied in an Order in Council dated 5th February, 1894.

The Committee concurring in the said report advise that your Excellency be moved to forward a copy of this minute, if approved, together with a copy of the proceedings of the Conference, to the Right Honourable the Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, and also to the Governments of the different colonies represented at the International Conference held in Ottawa on the 28th June, 1894, and following days.

All which is respectfully submitted for your Excellency's approval.

JOHN J. MCGEE,

Clerk of the Privy Council.

THE Minister of Trade and Commerce has the honour to report :—

1. That on the 28th June, 1894, and following days, a Conference of colonial representatives was held in the office of the Minister of Trade and Commerce in the City of Ottawa, Canada, in compliance with the formal invitation embodied in an Order in Council bearing date the 5th February, 1894.

2. That the Conference was composed of the following duly accredited delegates, namely: The Right Hon. the Earl of Jersey, representing the Imperial Government; Hon. McKenzie Bowell, Hon. Sir Adolphe Caron, Hon. George E. Foster, and Sandford Fleming, Esq., C.M.G., for Canada; Hon. Nicholas Fitzgerald, for Tasmania; Hon. F. B. Suttor, for New South Wales; Sir Henry de Villiers, Sir Charles Mills, and Hon. J. H. Hofmeyer, representing Cape of Good Hope; Hon. Thomas Playford, for South Australia; Alfred Lee Smith, Esq., for New Zealand; Sir Henry Wrixon, Hon. Nicholas Fitzgerald, Hon. Simon Fraser, for Victoria; Hon. A. J. Thynne and Hon. William Forrest for Queensland. The credentials of the delegates having been duly presented and filed, the Conference was organized by the election of the Hon. McKenzie Bowell, President.

3. That the Conference was called for the purpose of considering the trade relations existing between Canada and other British colonies, and the best means of extending the same, and of securing the construction of a direct telegraphic cable between those colonies and the Dominion of Canada.

4. That trade relations between Great Britain and her colonies, and between the colonies themselves, was the first subject considered, and that, after full discussion and mature deliberation, the following resolutions were passed :—

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Suttor, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Fitzgerald, and resolved, "That this Conference is of opinion that any provisions in existing treaties between Great Britain and any

foreign Powers which prevent the self-governing dependencies of the Empire from entering into agreements of commercial reciprocity with each other or with Great Britain should be removed."

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Foster, seconded by Sir Henry Wrixon, and resolved, "That this Conference records its belief in the advisability of a Customs arrangement between Great Britain and her colonies by which trade within the Empire may be placed on a more favourable footing than that which is carried on with foreign countries."

The resolution was adopted on the following division: *Yeas*, 5—Canada, Tasmania, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia, and Victoria. *Nays*, 3—New South Wales, New Zealand, and Queensland.

5. The Minister desires to draw attention to the discussion in the Conference upon the principle involved in the second resolution quoted above, from which it will be learned that the representatives of New South Wales, New Zealand, and Queensland did not object to affirming the principle of intercolonial trade upon the basis of differential tariffs, but did not wish to commit themselves to a resolution which affirmed the "belief in the advisability" of asking Great Britain to join in such a union, on the ground that England, being a Free-trade country, would not adopt such a principle, affecting, as it would, in their opinion, the greater trade of the Empire.

6. At a subsequent stage of the proceedings the following resolutions were adopted:—

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Foster, seconded by Sir Henry Wrixon, and resolved, "That, whereas the stability and progress of the British Empire can be best assured by drawing continually closer the bands that unite the colonies with the Mother-country, and by the continuous growth of a practical sympathy and co-operation in all that pertains to the common welfare, and whereas this co-operation and unity can in no way be more effectually promoted than by the cultivation and extension of the mutual and profitable interchange of their products, therefore, resolved, That this Conference records its belief in the advisability of a Customs arrangement between Great Britain and her colonies by which trade within the Empire may be placed on a more favourable footing than that which is carried on with foreign countries. Further resolved, That, until the Mother-country can see her way to enter into a Customs arrangement with her colonies, it is desirable that, when empowered to do so, the colonies of Great Britain, or such of them as may be disposed to accede to this view, take steps to place each others' products, in whole or in part, on a more favourable Customs basis than is accorded to the like products of foreign countries."

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Hofmeyer, seconded by Sir Charles Mills, and resolved, "That, for the purpose of this resolution, the South African Customs Union be considered as part of the territory capable of being brought within the scope of the contemplated trade arrangements."

7. Referring to the resolutions moved by the Hon. Mr. Foster, and to the motion of the Hon. Mr. Hofmeyer, subsequently incorporated in those resolutions, Sir Henry de Villiers filed the following explanation of his position: "Sir Henry de Villiers desires it to be noted that, as he has no authority from the Orange Free State or other parties to the South African Customs Union, he does not vote on the motion."

The principles affirmed in the foregoing series of resolutions are—

(a.) That all existing treaties between Great Britain and any foreign Power which prevent self-governing dependencies of the Empire from entering into more favoured trade relations with Great Britain and each other should be abrogated.

(b.) That Customs arrangements between Great Britain and her colonies should be such as to give a preference to the Mother-country in the markets of the colonies and to the colonies in the markets of Great Britain.

(c.) That the stability of the Empire can be best secured by the adoption of a policy which would lead to the cultivation and extension of a mutual and profitable interchange of products.

(d.) That this could be best accomplished by a Customs arrangement between Great Britain and her colonies by which advantages would be secured in the markets of either not granted to foreign Powers.

(e.) That until the Mother-country is prepared to enter into such an arrangement all impediments in the way of the colonies adopting reciprocal arrangements with each other should be repealed.

(f.) That the South African Customs Union be included within the scope of any such trade arrangements.

These different propositions are of such an important character as to warrant the Minister in asking for them, on the part of the Imperial authorities, the most earnest and careful consideration, with a view to the giving effect to them at the earliest possible moment, so as to conduce to the greater and fuller development of trade between England and her outlying dependencies, and between the colonies themselves.

8. That, the question of cable-communication between the different colonies of the Empire exclusively upon British territory having been considered, the following resolutions were moved and adopted:—

Moved by Hon. F. B. Suttor, seconded by Sir Henry Wrixon, and resolved, "That, in the opinion of this Conference, immediate steps should be taken to provide telegraphic communication by cable, free from foreign control, between the Dominion of Canada and Australasia."

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Foster, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Fitzgerald, and resolved, "That, in view of the desirability of having a choice of route for a cable connection between Canada and Australasia, the Home Government be requested to take immediate steps to secure neutral ground on some of the Hawaiian islands, in order that the cable may remain permanently under British control."

The Hon. Mr. Playford desired to be excused from voting upon the question of cable connection between Canada and Australia, on the ground that South Australia had already made large investments in telegraphic connection by cables between England and that colony, and therefore was not

interested in the proposed new cable-line to the extent of the other colonies, and for other reasons explained in a speech recorded in the proceedings of the Conference.

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Foster, seconded by Sir Henry Wrixon, and resolved, "That the Imperial Government be respectfully requested to undertake at the earliest possible moment, and to prosecute with all possible speed, a thorough survey of the proposed cable route between Canada and Australia, the expense to be borne in equal proportions by Great Britain, Canada, and the Australasian Colonies."

Moved by Sir Charles Mills, seconded by Sir Henry de Villiers, and resolved, "That it is for the interest of the Empire that, in case of the construction of the cable between Canada and Australasia, such cable should be extended from Australasia to the Cape of Good Hope, and that for that purpose arrangements should be made between the Imperial and South African Governments for a survey of the latter route."

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Thynne, seconded by Sir Henry Wrixon, and resolved, "That the Canadian Government be requested, after the rising of this Conference, to make all necessary inquiries, and generally to take such steps as may be expedient, in order to ascertain the cost of the proposed Pacific cable, and promote the establishment of the undertaking in accordance with the views expressed in this Conference."

The foregoing resolutions bearing directly on the establishment of a Pacific cable were passed unanimously, and affirm the principles:—

(a.) That immediate steps should be taken to provide telegraphic connection by cable, free from foreign control, between the Dominion of Canada and Australasia.

(b.) That the Imperial Government be respectfully requested to undertake at the earliest possible moment, and to prosecute with all possible vigour, a thorough survey, the expense to be borne in equal proportions by Great Britain, Canada, and the Australasian Colonies.

(c.) That, in the interest of the Empire, any cable between Canada and Australasia should be extended to the Cape of Good Hope.

(d.) That, in case it should be found advisable to adopt a route *via* the Hawaiian islands, the British Government should be moved to take immediate steps to secure neutral landing-grounds on some of the said islands.

(e.) That the Canadian Government should take steps to ascertain the cost of construction of a cable between Canada and Australia.

The Minister desires to call special attention to the resolution in which the Government is "requested to take immediate steps to secure neutral landing-grounds on some of the Hawaiian islands, in order that the cable may," should that route be adopted, "remain permanently under British control," and respectfully suggests, in view of the desirability of action being taken at the earliest possible moment, that the Home Government be requested to send a special Commissioner or Commissioners to Hawaii for the purpose of securing by negotiation some one of the islands in that group upon which a cable could be landed. The Minister ventures the opinion that such a course would prove more effective in securing the concession desired than any other which might be adopted.

9. The Minister further desires to draw attention to the hope expressed by the Conference that the Imperial authorities will undertake and complete without delay all necessary surveys of the proposed route between Canada and Australasia, upon the terms set forth in the resolution passed upon that subject.

10. A fast and efficient mail-service between England and Australia, *via* Canada, being considered of such vital importance to the success of any scheme having for its ultimate object the widest possible interchange of commodities between the colonies and the full and complete unity of the Empire, the members of the Conference, after much deliberation, embody their views in the following resolutions, to the importance of which the Minister asks the earnest and favourable consideration of the Imperial Government:—

Moved by Sir Adolphe Caron, seconded by Hon. F. B. Suttor,—

(a.) "That this Conference expresses its cordial approval of the successful efforts put forth by Canada and New South Wales for the establishment of a regular monthly steam-service between Vancouver and Sydney, and affirms the advisability of the reasonable co-operation of all the colonies interested in securing the improvement and permanence of the same.

(b.) "That the Conference learns with interest of the steps now being taken by Canada to secure a first-class fast mail- and passenger-service, with all the modern appliances for the storage and carrying of perishable goods across the Atlantic to Great Britain and the large subsidy which she has offered to procure its establishment.

(c.) "That it regards such an uninterrupted through line of swift and superior communication between Australasia and Great Britain as is above contemplated as of paramount importance to the development of intercolonial trade and communication and to the unity and stability of the Empire as a whole.

(d.) "That, as the Imperial Post Office contributes towards the cost of the mail-service between England and Australia *via* Brindisi or Naples the sum of £95,000 per annum, while the sea-postage amounts only to £3,000, and to the mail-service between Vancouver and Japan and China £45,000, less £7,300 charged against the Admiralty, this Conference deems it but reasonable to respectfully ask that assistance be given by the Imperial Government to the proposed fast Atlantic and Pacific service, more particularly as the British Post Office, whilst paying the large subsidy of £104,231 a year to the line from Liverpool to New York, has so far rendered no assistance in the maintenance of a direct postal line between Great Britain and Canada."

11. That the following resolution relating to bankruptcy and winding-up of companies was, on the motion of Sir Henry Wrixon, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Fitzgerald, unanimously passed: "That this Conference desires to call the continued attention of their respective Governments to

the proceedings of the Colonial Conference of 1887 in regard to the bankruptcy and winding-up of companies, with a view to contemplating the necessary legislation upon the question therein raised."

12. That, with a view to the bringing of the proceedings of the Conference and the decisions at which the delegates arrived upon the various and important subjects submitted for their consideration before the Imperial authorities, it was moved by Sir Henry Wrixon, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Fitzgerald, and resolved, "That the Chairman be requested to forward the resolutions and proceedings of this Conference to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the colonies represented, and to take such steps as may be necessary for calling continued attention thereto."

13. The Minister, in compliance with the request embodied in the foregoing resolution, respectfully recommends that His Excellency the Governor-General be moved to forward to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies a copy of this minute of Council, if approved, together with a copy of the proceedings of the Conference, and also to the Governments of the different colonies represented at the Intercolonial Conference held in Ottawa on the 28th day of June, 1894, and following days.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

M. BOWELL.

Department of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa, 21st August, 1894.

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