

crimination against them in foreign markets was not regarded as serious, and as the exports from foreign countries to the colonies are mainly manufactured articles it was recognised that if such discrimination did take place the colonies had an effective remedy in their own hands.

#### MUTUAL PROTECTION OF PATENTS.

The Conference also discussed the subjects of the mutual protection of patents, and the purchase of ocean cables which had been suggested by the Government of the Commonwealth. In regard to the first of these subjects, the accompanying memorandum prepared by the Comptroller of the Patent Office (Appendix X.) had been circulated to the members; and, while it was felt that it was of too technical a nature for effective discussion at the Conference, there was a general feeling that it was desirable that the recognition throughout the Empire of a patent granted in one part of it should be facilitated, and that an inquiry should be instituted as to how this could be effected, and the following resolution was passed:—

“That it would tend to the encouragement of inventions if some system for the mutual protection of patents in the various parts of the Empire could be devised. That the Secretary of State be asked to enter into communication with the several Governments in the first instance, and invite their suggestions to this end.”

#### PURCHASE OF OCEAN CABLES.

On the question of the purchase of ocean cables, the report of the recent departmental committee on the subject of cable communications, and a memorandum by Sir Sandford Fleming (Appendix XII.), advocating the establishment of a complete system of Government cable communication between the various parts of the Empire, had been laid before the Conference. The attention of the members was directed to the risk pointed out by the committee of hampering and checking the construction of cables by private companies if any general scheme of State construction or purchase were adopted, and the decision arrived at was expressed in the following resolution:—

“That it is desirable that in future agreements as to cable communications a clause should wherever practicable be inserted reserving to the Government or Governments concerned the right of purchasing on equitable terms and after due notice all or any of the cables to which the agreements relate.”

#### MERCHANT-SHIPING LAWS. STAMP DUTY ON COLONIAL BONDS.

The question of uniformity throughout the Empire of merchant-shipping laws which had been suggested for discussion by the Government of the Cape was not, in the absence of the Prime Minister of that colony, taken up, nor was that of Imperial stamp charges on colonial bonds which had been proposed by the Government of the Commonwealth, Sir E. Barton having explained that his principal object in putting it forward was to indicate a possible manner in which His Majesty's Government might give some return to the colonies for any tariff preference which the colonies might accord to British goods. A memorandum explaining the present position of the law on this subject was prepared by the Department of Inland Revenue and laid before the Conference (Appendix XI.).

#### WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

In regard to Government control of wireless telegraphy, the Admiralty explained that it was desirable that some system of general application should be in force everywhere, so that a ship might be able to communicate with any station all over the world, and also that there should be some regulation to prevent “interference” and to insure control in time of war. It was not desired that the Conference should take any action in the matter, but that the Governments of the colonies should not commit themselves to any particular scheme or system without previous communication with His Majesty's Government.

#### METRIC SYSTEM.

In addition to the commercial matters of which previous notice had been given, two subjects were brought forward by the Canadian Government during the sittings of the Conference—the adoption of the metric system of weights and measures, and the question of the postal charges on newspapers and periodicals. The following resolution was passed in regard to the metric system:—

“That it is advisable to adopt the metric system of weights and measures for use within the Empire, and the Prime Ministers urge the Governments represented at this Conference to give consideration to the question of its early adoption.”

#### NEWSPAPER POSTAGE.

The resolution on the subject of newspaper postage was as follows:—

“That it is advisable to adopt the principle of cheap postage between the different parts of the British Empire on all newspapers and periodicals published therein, and the Prime Ministers desire to draw the attention of His Majesty's Government to the question of a reduction in the outgoing rate. They consider that each Government should be allowed to determine the amount to which it may reduce such rate and the time for such reduction going into effect.”