

His Majesty's Government, I may explain, have for some years past been in the habit, when concluding commercial treaties with foreign Powers, of stipulating for both the separate adhesion and the separate withdrawal of the various dominions and colonies. In these cases, therefore, the dominions can be set free whenever they so desire. From the older treaties, however, the dominions, as already pointed out, are unable to withdraw separately. At the Imperial Conference which was recently held in London, and which was attended by the Prime Ministers of the self-governing dominions—viz., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and the Colony of Newfoundland—a resolution was unanimously passed by the Conference requesting His Majesty's Government to open negotiations with the several foreign Governments having commercial treaties which apply to the oversea dominions, with a view to securing liberty for any of these dominions which may so desire to withdraw from the operation of the treaty without impairing the treaty as respects the rest of the Empire.

His Majesty's Government are naturally, in the common interests of the United Kingdom and the foreign States in question, most unwilling to denounce existing treaties entirely, and they therefore trust that it may be possible as an alternative to arrange with the Government to which you are accredited so to modify their treaties [treaty] with Great Britain of as to give the self-governing dominions of the Empire that power of independent action which they enjoy under all the treaties concluded in recent years by His Majesty's Government. The simplest method of attaining this end would probably be found in the signing of a protocol on the lines of the draft herewith enclosed. Such protocols have, as you are doubtless aware, been already concluded with certain countries.

In the case of such dominions as may exercise the suggested right of withdrawal from their present obligations under the treaty, His Majesty's Government will, of course, if it is desired, consider, in consultation with them, the negotiation of a fresh agreement to take the place of the present treaty. In fact, a convention regulating the commercial relations between a single dominion of the Empire on the one hand and a foreign Power on the other hand would be no new departure, for His Majesty has already, at the request of the Canadian Government, concluded a commercial convention with France, and informal arrangements have been made with other countries.

I request that you will explain to the Government to which you are accredited the reasons which have prompted His Majesty's Government to raise this question, and that you will at the same time inquire of them whether they are prepared to sign a protocol to the proposed effect.

DRAFT PROTOCOL.

Declaration between the Governments of Great Britain and , relating to the Amendment of the Treaty [Treaties] of Commerce of

WHEREAS it is desirable that liberty should be reserved to certain of His Britannic Majesty's dominions to withdraw from the treaty [treaties] between Great Britain and of without impairing the validity of the treaty [treaties] as between on the one hand and the United Kingdom and those other parts of His Britannic Majesty's dominions which may desire to remain bound by the said treaty [treaties] on the other, the Government of His Britannic Majesty and the Government of hereby agree that the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and the Colony of Newfoundland may withdraw from the treaty [treaties, or any one of them] separately, at any time on giving twelve months' notice to that effect. Nevertheless, the goods produced or manufactured in each of the said British dominions shall enjoy in complete and unconditional most-favoured-nation treatment, so long as the British dominion in question shall accord to goods the produce or manufacture of treatment as favourable as it gives to the produce or manufacture of any other foreign country.

In witness whereof the undersigned have signed the present declaration and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done at

No. 126.

New Zealand, No. 378.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 9th November, 1911.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for the information of your Ministers, the enclosed copies of regulations [not printed] governing wireless equipment on ocean passenger-steamers which were issued by the United States Department of Commerce and Labour on the 15th June last.

I have, &c.,

L. HARCOURT.

Governor the Right Hon. Lord Islington, K.C.M.G., D.S.O., &c.