

quite hopeless. You cannot have even the possibility of paying your American debt unless you can restore peaceful conditions in Europe. We can go far to extend Empire trade, and I hope that everything will be done to do so. Without any revolutionary departure from the settled fiscal policy of this country, I think a great deal can be done to foster inter-Empire trade, and I hope that this Conference will register a very great advance in that direction. But it will naturally take many years before the British Empire could take the place of Europe in your trade. In the meantime you will have to carry all your burdens; you have to carry the present internal burdens, and also to carry the weight of this intolerable external debt. It is clear to me you will not be able to do it unless peaceful conditions are restored in Europe. I do not want to say any more, Prime Minister. I only wish that this Conference will be successful—that it will achieve not only the objects it has in view with regard to the Empire, but also with regard to that larger and more difficult situation which confronts us in Europe. It is not only you who wish to re-establish trade—we in the outer Empire want to do the same. We also had our markets in Europe, and they are largely gone. Therefore, even if there were no higher motive than mere self-interest, we should still try our very best to establish conditions of peace and quiet in Europe. But there is much more. Deeper human motives appeal to us. The same motives that carried us into the war continue to guide us in the peace. It is quite impossible for us to disinterest ourselves in the awful conditions which exist all round us as a result of the war. We shall require much patience, and it may be that it will take much longer than we thought possible to have the world restored to normal conditions. Let us exercise patience, but at the same time let us really pull our weight. There is a rapid worsening of conditions all over Europe. It may be that this will still continue for years and become an irremediable set-back to Western civilization. Even at this moment fundamental changes are taking place in Europe which will largely affect the future status and relations of the nations. I only hope that it may be possible to stay the rot before things have gone too far.

OPENING SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, IRISH FREE STATE.

Acknowledges Welcome extended to Representatives of Irish Free State.

Mr. Cosgrave: Prime Minister, I wish to express my very real appreciation of the welcome you have extended to us, and of the pleasing references you have made to our inclusion in this Conference. I also appreciate very highly the cordial welcome extended to us by Mr. King, Mr. Massey, and General Smuts, and the great interest in Ireland shown by General Smuts in his speech. He is perhaps the best able to appreciate the difficulties through which we have passed, as he also gave ready and most valuable assistance to bring about the position which leads to our presence here to-day.

Position of Free State.

In your statement, sir, you have referred to problems which, both in size and number, overshadow our own immediate difficulties, and it gives us hope that, besides settling our own affairs, we may give some assistance in the solution of problems affecting the whole world. We come to this Conference in good faith, with an earnest desire to render what assistance we can in the solution of the problems to be faced, and to carry out with good faith and good will our part of that undertaking which you on your side have faithfully honoured in the past, realizing that it is only in the exercise of these great attributes that it is possible for us to reach the desired end. This business is new to us, and it is not possible for us to express opinions upon the many great and important matters which have been mentioned in your speech. The troubles and difficulties of our present situation and the circumstances surrounding it make my immediate association with the Conference less than I would wish. You, Prime Minister, will appreciate that, and I am sure His Grace the Duke of Devonshire will do so also. I would say it is a very real pleasure for me to be here and to have witnessed such a cordial and whole-hearted reception. We realize our responsibilities, and we are prepared to take over and shoulder the burdens, which are common burdens. I was very much gratified with the concluding paragraphs of the Prime Minister's speech, and with the statement made by General Smuts that the real objective of this Conference is to further the cause of peace.

OPENING SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

Welcome to Representatives of Irish Free State.

Mr. Warren: Prime Minister and gentlemen, I just desire to thank you, sir, for the very cordial welcome that I have received. Perhaps, as representing Britain's first-born, it might come well from me to congratulate the newest Dominion, the Free State, and to assure Mr. Cosgrave, on behalf of Newfoundland, that he has many of his countrymen there who have the greatest sympathy for him, and they all sincerely hope that he may be successful in the task he has undertaken.

Position of Newfoundland.

I should like to say, sir, that the fact that I am here at all is a sign of what Great Britain has always stood for. I represent a small community, but we have never been impelled, coerced, not even, as far as I know, asked, to merge our political independence into that of a larger Dominion. We have been allowed to plough our own furrow, and we have every confidence that we shall be allowed to do so in the future. Perhaps after I have attended as many Conferences as my friend on my right, Mr. Massey, I may be able to speak with more confidence than I do this morning. I have to thank him for his reference to us. We all know that among Dominion Prime Ministers he is the