

The Agenda submitted to the Conference for discussion was as follows :—

Part I.—To consider the general question of Empire-development, including schemes for land-settlement on a comprehensive scale.

Part II.—To discuss the following particular proposals :—

- (a.) Advance of cost of ocean passages and railway fares to approved settlers.
- (b.) Advance of cost of outfit where required.
- (c.) Free passages for State-aided children.
- (d.) Preference to British settlers over foreign immigrants—*e.g.*, in respect of landing-money, &c.
- (e.) Arrangements for recruiting settlers in this country and for their reception, settlement, employment, and welfare overseas.
- (f.) Appointment of representatives of His Majesty's Government overseas to co-operate with the oversea Governments in the reception, settlement, and welfare of newly arrived British subjects.

It was clear from the outset that in all the Dominions represented the openings available for workers of other classes depended upon the increase in the number of primary producers. It was, consequently, agreed that the problem covered by Part I of the Agenda—*i.e.*, the problem of establishing settlers from this country as primary producers upon the land overseas—must be the basis of any policy of State-aided Empire settlement, and that the facilities for inter-Imperial migration generally, proposed in Part II of the Agenda, would only be of limited value unless granted as part of a policy based on land-settlement.

In this connection Senator Millen pointed out that there are considerable areas in Australia suitable for settlement, but at present entirely undeveloped, which could be developed by comprehensive settlement schemes at considerably less cost than would be involved in the purchase of land in districts already opened up. Such schemes would have the further advantage that the work of opening up an area by railways and roads, the construction of other public works, and the clearing of the land, &c., would find employment for many of the intending settlers, as well as an opportunity for getting acclimatized to Australian conditions. Opportunities for settlement on a very large scale would also be afforded by the irrigation works in progress on the River Murray. As an indication of what Australia might be willing to do, if she could secure the co-operation of His Majesty's Government, he put forward for consideration a scheme for establishing twenty thousand British settlers on certain selected areas, to be financed by a Commonwealth loan of £20,000,000 to be raised in five annual instalments. On the analogy of the assistance given by the Commonwealth to the Australian States in connection with the Australian soldier-settlement schemes, he suggested that the assistance of His Majesty's Government might take the form of a payment for five years of half the interest of each instalment of the loan.

Sir G. Perley and Sir J. Allen intimated on behalf of their respective Governments that they would welcome a policy of co-operation which would enable them to receive and establish on the land a larger number of British settlers than they could otherwise deal with. They had not received definite instructions from their Governments, and were not therefore in a position to submit definite proposals. They would, however, communicate with their Governments, who would no doubt formulate proposals before the meeting of the Prime Ministers in June. It was pointed out that conditions varied in every Dominion, and that what was desirable was agreement not on a uniform type of scheme, but upon the general principle of co-operation between the Governments concerned.

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, it was pointed out that the most convenient form of financial co-operation and the one most easily adaptable to various kinds of schemes would be in the shape of loans to individual settlers made through and collected by the Dominion Government or settlement agency concerned, thus diminishing the amount required to be found by the latter in respect of each settler. This was preferable to a direct contribution towards a Dominion-development scheme such as was implied in Senator Millen's suggestion of payment of part interest of a Commonwealth loan, and would achieve the same end.

In the discussion on Part II there was general agreement as to the satisfactory working of the system of co-operation between the Oversea Settlement Committee and the Dominion and State representatives in connection with the grant by His Majesty's Government of free passages to British ex-service men, and as to the desirability of any future joint scheme of assisted passages being conducted on similar lines. The need for assisted passages was more particularly emphasized by the representatives of Australia and New Zealand, Sir G. Perley explaining that Canada had never, in the past, contributed towards passages, and might possibly prefer some other form of joint co-operation in helping new settlers to sharing in a scheme for granting or advancing passages.

The special attention of the Conference was drawn to the successful results attending the Australian and New Zealand system of nominations for assisted passages of relatives or friends in the United Kingdom by settlers already established in those Dominions, as well as to the very satisfactory working of the Canadian system of settling and supervising State-aided and other suitable children from the United Kingdom.

It was generally felt that in present circumstances, at any rate, there was not sufficient justification for the appointment of permanent representatives of His Majesty's Government in the Dominions in connection with the settlement of newly arrived British subjects, and that the need for close personal touch with the actual work of settlement overseas could be sufficiently secured by periodic visits of representatives of the Oversea Settlement Committee.

As the outcome of the discussions of the various matters covered by both parts of the Agenda, the following proposals were submitted to the Conference by Lieutenant-Colonel Amery as a basis for discussion at the forthcoming meeting of Prime Ministers :—