

Mr. Massey : I agree with the scheme, Mr. President, and on behalf of New Zealand I accept it and will endeavour to make use of it at the earliest date possible.

Mr. Burton : I have already indicated, I think, to you that I am quite satisfied with the scheme. If the proposals of the British Government do not result in business, then all I can say is I do not see how we can expect it to make any more favourable terms in order to get the business done.

Mr. Riordan : I entirely agree also.

Sir Patrick McGrath : As I understand our Prime Minister was at the meeting this morning and agreed to it, I do not think there is anything for me to add.

Mr. Innes : I think, sir, that everybody must recognize that this is a very liberal scheme, and the Indian delegation will make it their business at once to place the scheme before the Indian Government and the local Governments, and I hope some of the local Governments may be able to make use of it for particular concrete schemes now held up for lack of funds.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore : I do not think I need to say very much except that we shall convey this to each of the Governments of the various colonies and protectorates, and ask them if they, as Governments, can suggest any schemes where this would be of assistance. Further may I say I am very glad you have put in either publicly or privately controlled schemes, because we are most anxious in the colonies and protectorates to attract enterprise and capital to supplement Government efforts in this matter? I think that in that respect this assistance may be most encouraging and helpful.

The Chairman : I think we are all unanimous. I take it the Conference will adopt the report of the Committee and recommend the scheme, and probably, now this is definitely adopted and with our full agreement, you would wish to communicate it home so that the terms of it might be known to your Government Departments as soon as possible?

Mr. Bruce : I think publicity is essential if anything is going to come from it. If it is only limited to the knowledge of the Commonwealth and State Governments there is no possibility of any municipality or private enterprise endeavouring to avail themselves of it. I suggest the earliest possible publicity. I will communicate with Australia at once if that is decided.

The Chairman : Then that is adopted.

TARIFF PREFERENCE.

This subject was opened by Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame at the Fifth Meeting of the Conference, held on the 9th October, 1923, the discussion proceeding as follows :—*

The Chairman : I think the Conference will agree that there could hardly be a more apposite or comprehensive prelude to a detailed discussion on preference in all its aspects than the speech delivered by the Prime Minister of Australia this morning,† and, as he truly said, the principle of preference is definitely established, and we want to do all we can, all that is possible, in applying that principle to developing inter-Imperial trade.

British Industry convinced of Value of Preferences accorded by Australia.

Mr. Bruce said, "Were we convinced of the value of the preferences accorded under their tariffs to us?" There should be no doubt about that. There is nobody, I believe, in this country in business to-day who has obtained the benefits of these preferences who is not fully alive to the value of them, and intensely anxious that they should be maintained and, as far as possible, extended; and I think there are very few people who in this country, whether engaged in business or not, who do not hold the same view. They have been, and I hope will continue to be, of the most intense value to British trade and to British industry, and I think it is also true that they have increased our capacity to buy from the Dominions.

Extension of Existing British Preferences of Mutual Advantage.

In the same way the Government here realize to the full that in so far as we can increase and make more effective the preference which we are now giving, that will not merely be of value to you, but will be of value to us also, because it will increase the whole interchange of trade between us. I do not think Mr. Bruce puts it at all too strongly, and it has been put by General Smuts and by others, while we, in approaching this question, have realized this too: that it is impossible to expect the Dominions to absorb settlers in vast numbers unless you are reasonably sure that your settlers will find a market for that which they produce.

Question not approached in a Bargaining Spirit.

Therefore we do not approach the question of preference in any bargaining spirit—any more than you did in establishing the preferences which you gave to us many years before we established the principle in our own tariff—but with a desire in this, as in other matters, to work out to the best of our ability practical steps that could be taken to improve the producing and the trade prospects of any part of the Empire. If I might put it in this way, I would say that we look at each as playing as a side and for the side.

* A summary statement of the preference proposals put forward by His Majesty's Government is given on page 119 *et seq.*

† See opening speeches, page 28.