

- (iii.) Trade catalogues ;
- (iv.) Valuation of goods for Customs duty purposes, and other matters connected with Customs formalities.

It was decided that the same Committee be also instructed, in connection with paragraph 4 (B) of the Draft Agenda—viz., statistics—to consider and report to the Imperial Economic Conference what steps can be taken in the light of the report of the British Empire Statistical Conference, 1920,* and of subsequent experience, to improve the trade statistics published by His Majesty's Government in order to increase their value from the point of view of the development of Inter-imperial trade ; and

That it be left to the delegations concerned, should they so desire, to nominate additional members to the Committee for the purpose of this part of the terms of reference.

Reports of Commercial Facilities Committee.

This Committee (the Commercial Facilities Committee) presented three reports. The First Report (see page 128), which contained four resolutions dealing with commercial intelligence services, commercial travellers' samples, trade catalogues, and price-lists, and matters connected with Customs formalities, was discussed at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Conference, held on the 24th October, 1923. The Conference adopted all four resolutions.

The Second and Third Reports of the Committee (see pages 130 and 138), dealing the one with certificates of valuation for Customs purposes and the other with statistics, were tabled at the Seventeenth Meeting of the Conference, held on Thursday, the 1st November, 1923. Resolutions V, VI, and VII, recommended for adoption in the Second Report, and Resolution VIII (on statistics), recommended for adoption in the Third Report, were adopted. In connection with Resolution VIII, the Conference reaffirmed the principle that the object of any work that was put in hand should be to make the trade statistics of the Empire as valuable as possible for trade.

Conclusions of Geneva Customs Conference supported.

The question of Customs formalities was again discussed at the Twenty-second Meeting, held on Thursday, the 8th November, 1923. The Conference had before them a letter, dated the 5th November, from Sir H. Llewellyn Smith, British delegate at the International Conference on Customs formalities, convened by the League of Nations, for the simplification and improvement of Customs procedure, together with prints of the Convention and Final Act adopted by the International Conference. The letter reported that the International Conference had completed its labours, and that the Convention was adopted *nem. con.* by the votes of thirty-two out of thirty-five delegations (including all six delegations from the States of the British Empire), with two abstentions and one absentee. Some of the States voting for the Convention did not possess full powers to sign at Geneva, but the Convention was signed on the 3rd November by the following twenty-one States (to which should be added Japan, whose signature was delayed at the last moment by the illness of the Japanese delegate) : British Empire, South Africa, France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Jugo-Slavia, Greece, Finland, Egypt, Morocco, Tunis, China, Siam, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. The letter further pointed out that the position of inter-Imperial trade and of the application of the Convention to oversea colonies, &c., was fully safeguarded.

It was decided to adopt the following resolution :—

That the Conference should take note of the work accomplished by the recent League of Nations International Conference on Customs and other similar formalities (the 15th October to the 3rd November, 1923), and that the conclusions of that Conference should be recommended for favourable consideration to the various Empire Governments concerned.

MEMORANDUM BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT ON CO-OPERATION BETWEEN HOME AND DOMINION GOVERNMENTS IN RESPECT OF COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE (I.E.C. (23)—5).

In connection with the general question of closer co-operation between the various countries within the British Empire, consideration has been given to the possibility of extending the facilities for the supply of commercial information required by the Governments of the Dominions and of India. The Commercial Intelligence Services overseas maintained by His Majesty's Government are the Trade Commissioner Service within the Empire and the Consular and Commercial Diplomatic Services in foreign countries.

The Trade Commissioner Service.

Occasion was taken at the Imperial War Conference of 1917 to call the attention of the representatives of the Dominions and India to the measures which were being adopted at that time to extend and strengthen the Trade Commissioner Service. As a result of a resolution passed by that Conference, the Governments of the Dominions and of India were invited to utilize the services of His Majesty's Trade Commissioners should they desire to do so. The present position is as follows :—

* See Cmd. 648/1920.