

difficult thing to enforce by statute, because when you come to interfere at all by statute, at any rate in this country, which is not fond of governmental interference, you have got to make the thing practicable, and you have got to justify it on fairly broad grounds. Now, there is a great justification for saying that where an article is to be marked at all the purchaser should know whether it is British or whether it is foreign. That is the great broad distinction, and the purchaser who wants to buy British goods—and he is in the majority—will then buy British; but I am not sure that one can go further and say we must make it compulsory that we should not only label the thing “British” in its origin, but particularize with minuteness its source; nor, indeed, probably would it always be possible to do so. This was considered very carefully, and there was a very strong consensus of opinion in favour of having it “Empire” and “Foreign,” and, as a matter of fact, there was a great volume of commercial opinion—industrial opinion—here against the “country of origin” alternative as regards manufactured goods. But I think there is a practical way of meeting the case. We propose, under the Act, to say the thing has got to be marked. The commodity has got to be marked “Empire.” The Marketing Board and the Economic Committee have suggested that one of the expenses of the Marketing Board might be incurred in providing the retailer with suitable and attractive labels. I see no reason why, in the case of the productions of any Dominion or any colony which desires to have its commodities specially labelled, it should not say to the Economic Committee and to the Marketing Board, “Will you provide special labels for such of our commodities as we want to carry a particular identification?” The general Act will have said it has got to be marked “Empire,” and then it is up to the Dominion to follow it up still further, and to say, “Having got that safeguard, we propose, as our business, to see that it is still further marked with the country of origin.”

Cotton-growing in the Empire.

There were one or two points made by Mr. Havenga on which I will say a few words. The Empire Cotton-growing Corporation will appreciate the tribute which he paid to their work and to the co-operation of their officers. It is not a very hopeful outlook at the present moment for cotton-growing in the Empire. We have had one enormous and flooding American crop, and it looks like being followed this year by another. But that kind of thing cannot last. You are not going to have bumper crops of that kind regularly coming from the United States, and I am perfectly certain that the foresight of the Dominions and the colonies, and the foresight of the Lancashire cotton trade itself, which has contributed so much by its levy to making this possible, will in the long-run be found to have been worth while.

Forestry.

As regards forestry, there will be a particular opportunity of discussing that, because one of the proposed committees which we are to have is a Committee on Forestry, under the chairmanship of Lord Lovat, so that those particular points can be discussed there.

Value of Stabilization of Preferences.

We appreciate very much what Mr. Havenga has also said about the value of the preference on fruit and sugar. While those preferences are valuable in themselves, the fact that they have been stabilized, and that people know in their growing and in the setting-up of machinery and the laying-down of land that the preference is not for one year or another year but is stabilized for a period of years, will greatly increase the value.

Uniformity of Law and Practice in Shipping Matters.

We were gratified to hear that the South African Government are proposing to go on with legislation for carrying out the carriage of goods at sea resolution which we agreed upon last time and with the other maritime conventions. As Mr. Havenga and Mr. Chadwick said, and I am sure it is true, it is a great advantage to all the Empire to get uniformity of law and practice. When it comes to shipping matters it is vital to us that we should get as far as we can uniformity of law and practice over the whole field of shipping, and one of the greatest incentives to foreign countries to come into line with any variation of law and practice is when they find that the British Empire has not only passed unanimous resolutions, but has taken unanimous action.

Improving Trade Prospects in India : Lancashire and the Abolition of the Cotton Excise Duty.

We all welcomed the statement Mr. Chadwick made confirming what I ventured to say yesterday of the improved prospects in Indian trade, production improving and prices bettering, or, at any rate, the price as between the goods they buy and the goods they sell approximating. We are glad of it in this country. We are glad of it for the sake of India; we are glad of it also selfishly in our own interests, because we have found that, if you take cotton goods for example, when India is poor she buys the coarser types of goods which we do not so much manufacture, and that as Indian prosperity increases so the purchases tend more and more—in so far as she cannot supply them herself—towards those finer classes of goods in which we still have a great predominance. So there is, indeed, a very close link between the prosperity of India and the interests of the textile trade here. I am sure the textile trade in Lancashire, passing through, as it is to-day, one of the deepest periods of depression which it has ever encountered, will look forward hopefully to increasing prosperity in India and will be appreciative to-day of what Mr. Chadwick has said about the way in which Lancashire accepted, and accepted with an understanding good will, the removal of the excise duty. There have been times when that would not have been so. There have been times, I think, when Lancashire was