

America and Germany, and the ever-increasing exports of the products of these countries to British communities as gauged by the increased import to this colony as hereinbefore mentioned, are prepared again to give generous help, for we feel the danger to the Empire to be much greater than any reverse that could have happened in respect to the war in South Africa.

Statesmanship and prudence are essential in this trying epoch within the Empire. Country, not party, should be the watchword. With this obtaining all will be well. Alien countries whose fiscal barriers obstruct British trade may take exception from a business standpoint. They would prefer present conditions, but otherwise will admire those in the British colonies endeavouring to bring about closer trade relationship with their kindred in the parent land. Are we in our friendly desires to be repelled by our own countrymen? Time will determine.

#### IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

Members are now fully conversant with the result of the recent Conference held in London, and matters of a far-reaching and important character were considered and dealt with. Summarised they were as follows:—

1. Conferences to be held every four years.
2. Views of the colonies to be obtained prior to entering on treaties that affect such colonies.
3. System for the mutual protection of patents to be devised.
4. In future agreements as to cable communications, the right of purchase be reserved to Government or Governments concerned.
5. Facilities to be provided for admission to the skilled professions in the new colonies in South Africa.
6. The protection and safeguarding of the coastwise trade of the Empire; also a revision of the shipping laws of the Empire with a view to the promotion of Imperial trade.
7. Revision of the mail-services within the Empire: such steamers as may be suitable to be at service of His Majesty's Government as cruisers in time of war.
8. Preference to be given to colonial products in Imperial army and navy contracts.
9. The adoption of the metric system of weights and measures within the Empire.
10. Cheap postage on newspapers and periodicals within the Empire.
11. Increased number of colonial commissions in the navy and the army.
12. The adoption of preferential trade within the Empire.

I have in another part of the Statement dealt separately with the question of preferential trade. A Bill giving effect to the metric system of weights and measures has been passed. A Bill giving effect to the Australian and New Zealand naval agreement will shortly be placed before you, and, I am assured, will be approved.

Of the twelve subjects dealt with in the above resolutions, six were submitted by this colony, amongst them being that of holding periodical Conferences, which it has now been decided shall take place not later than every four years. This will lead ultimately to the establishment of an Imperial Council, in which the oversea dominions of the Empire will be represented, and at which they can bring to bear their local knowledge on matters of importance to the Empire. They will also be able to advise in respect to conditions obtaining and appertaining to subjects demanding the attention of the Imperial and Colonial Governments.

The question of the islands of the Pacific was introduced by the Secretary of State, and subsequently it was concluded that the matter was not one for the Conference to deal with.

The question of Imperial charges on colonial bonds was not proceeded with.

The question of army and navy contracts was dealt with, and I am happy to state that as a result the supplies, as far as possible, are being obtained from the colonies.