

As a common sentiment, a common feeling is developed among the peoples of the component parts of the British Empire, the solution of the questions that arise will be found appreciably easier. I can think of no greater service any of us could find it possible to render than that perhaps of taking back to our Parliaments, and through our Parliaments transmitting to our people, much of the information which we will gather here, information which will be helpful in interpreting to those whom we represent the difficulties and problems with which other parts are concerned. Similarly, I feel positive that no contribution can be rendered to this gathering of greater value or of greater permanent worth than that as representatives we should seek not merely to express our own individual views, but, so far as we can do it, set forth the views of our Parliaments and the views of the people represented in our Parliaments, with reference to the affairs of the Empire, and of the different countries that compose it.

Empire stands for Peace.

I think, Prime Minister, that throughout the British Dominions there will be very great satisfaction at the emphasis which you have placed upon the desire which actuates us all here, not only to further good will and harmonious relations between the different parts of the Empire, in working out our own problems, but also to make what contribution we can towards peace and justice in the world. That, I think, is the pride we all feel in the British Empire, that it has stood for peace, justice, and good will among men, and, in so far as we can make a contribution that will be of benefit to mankind, it seems to me that it will come in largest measure through the circumstance that, representing different countries, scattered in different parts of the globe, we nevertheless are all one in our aims and in our purpose, and that the purpose which you have just set forth in such eloquent terms.

OPENING SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. Massey : Prime Minister, I do not intend at present to comment upon matters to which you have referred in the very clear and very exhaustive statement which you have just given to the Conference. I say that because I think better and more suitable opportunities will offer later on, and I would just like to express a hope that before this Conference comes to an end we shall be able to do something definite and satisfactory in the way of solving as many as possible of the problems that have arisen during the last few years. I just wish to join with you, Prime Minister, and with the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Mackenzie King, in the welcome which you have extended to each and every one of the new members who have appeared at the Conference table to-day for the first time. I have no doubt they will be able to do good work, and as one of the older members I can say for myself, and I know General Smuts will join with me, we shall be very pleased to have their assistance in the many matters that are certain to be brought before us during the next six weeks or two months.

OPENING SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Welcome to Representatives of Irish Free State.

General Smuts : Prime Minister, I join with my colleagues here in expressing with what great interest we have listened to you. I also join with them in welcoming our friends from Ireland to this Conference. You have painted a very dark picture of the present state of affairs in Europe, and yet the presence of the Free State here goes to show what the spirit of good will can effect. Two years ago, when we had our last Imperial Conference, the state of affairs in Ireland was about as black as anything which exists in Europe to-day; but the difficulties were resolutely grappled with, and as a result we have the Irish Free State represented here at this great Conference, sitting at this Board of our Commonwealth and collaborating with us on the problems which face us all. A case like this is to me a proof that nothing is really as bad as it looks, nor perhaps is Europe as bad as it looks. I join most heartily and most sincerely in welcoming our friend President Cosgrave here to-day. He will find in this Conference, I am sure, sympathy and support from all of us. The difficulties which Ireland has passed through, and will continue to pass through, are difficulties which are not peculiar to her. He will find that many of those questions which confront Ireland are common to the whole Empire. Here he will find help and assistance and sympathy in the consideration of his own problems, and he will find that this Conference, this High Court of our great Commonwealth, is the best forum for the discussion of his problems.

I am also glad that Mr. Massey has been able to come. I know he has had to face great difficulties in coming. However, he has triumphed, as he always does, and I hope that, now we shall have a full Conference, we shall be able to do really good work, and that a real advance will be registered on this occasion.

Situation in Europe.

This is a most important and solemn occasion in the history of our great Commonwealth. The picture which the Prime Minister has painted to us to-day in his able and interesting speech is a very black one. The world is undoubtedly in a bad way. Instead of the peoples drawing together as we hoped they would after the war the tendencies are the other way—the passions which the war has let loose are still rampant everywhere, and if ever there was a time when a helping hand was needed by the world, and Europe especially, it is now. Our Commonwealth is still there; it has stood many a storm; it has laid down many a great precedent in the history of the world; and the present situation in Europe more than any previous one calls for a great united effort on its part. I trust it will really pull its weight and make a great contribution to the solution of the questions which are confronting the world.