

**Imperial Communications.**

Imperial communications have always rightly been a subject of discussion at our Conferences. A previous Conference established the Imperial Shipping Committee. We shall have the opportunity of considering the valuable work which it has accomplished, and which is set out in its reports. I would refer particularly to the proposal for the establishment of an airship service to Egypt and India, a proposal designed on the commercial side to secure an acceleration in the mail-service, on which so much insistence has been laid in the past and with regard to which we have already taken action. Again, there are the steps which have been taken to secure unification in the rules relating to bills of lading, following upon the original proposals of an earlier Imperial Conference. As practical men we shall, I know, discuss these questions of shipping and communications in a practical way and with due recognition of the economic factors which govern them. It is obvious that cheap and efficient sea services depend on practical considerations; the reasonable certainty of obtaining cargoes on the outward and the homeward voyage; the rates levied in ports and harbours visited; the measure of taxation imposed. And, as we come to review the questions which affect our Imperial shipping, it will be proper that we should consider what steps we can take to secure the co-operation of our Governments in safeguarding the overseas carrying trade of the Empire against discrimination by foreign countries.

**Further Steps for the Improvement of Mutual Trade.**

Other subjects designed to improve our mutual trade are: Co-operation in commercial intelligence; the facilities accorded to traders in such matters as the free circulation of trade catalogues and samples; the preparation of Imperial economic statistics; the reciprocal enforcement of judgments; co-operation in the registration of patents, designs, and trade-marks; the valuation of goods for Customs duties; questions of currency and exchange as between the different countries in the Empire; co-operation in technical research; the immunity of State enterprises. We shall also have occasion to consider Imperial policy with regard to the import and export of live-stock.

**The Need for a Permanent Advisory Body.**

If we can frame practical proposals and can work out a common and complementary policy on many of these matters the Conference will have accomplished work of real and lasting value. But I believe that, as the Conference proceeds, as we record our recommendations and work out our policy, we shall feel the need of establishing some machinery by which we can maintain a closer contact on economic questions than has been possible hitherto. We are aiming at a closer policy of inter-Imperial trade and development. We hope, as the result of our deliberations, to take steps, legislative or administrative, which will promote and foster that development. But the policy we seek to pursue will be carried out not merely by the acts of our Governments, but in the daily work and business, the production and commerce of our people. If we are to pursue our policy to the best advantage, should we not try to establish some advisory or consultative body for consultation and discussion on matters arising out of our policy and the action which we take to give effect to it? Certainly at this stage I do not seek to dogmatize or to define what form it should take. I have no doubt that a similar idea is present in your minds, and it may well be that you have clearly defined suggestions. But I am sure that it is a problem which we shall feel increasingly deserving of our consideration. There is always some risk that a Conference of this kind may fail somewhat in its purpose by passing resolutions which are not adequately followed up and made effective. There is perhaps also a risk, having regard to the time at its disposal, that it may become unduly involved in matters of detail. It is, I am sure, our desire and our purpose to avoid both those risks. But the time at our disposal is necessarily limited. The field we have to survey is wide. There are many subjects on which we wish to take action or to make action possible in the future. We wish to achieve definite results, and to lay down lines of policy which will be progressively followed. If therefore, we can, as a result of this Conference, take such action as is possible in the immediate future on the important matters which will come before us, and also establish some means of facilitating, both for our Governments and for our producers and traders, the better pursuit of our common aim, the Conference will have fulfilled its purpose.

I think I should interpret aright the powerful speeches delivered yesterday if I say that the twofold theme which ran through them all was the vast possibilities that lie within the Empire itself and the great part which the Empire can play in the appeasement and reconstruction of the world. Wherever we look the problems of to-day are largely economic problems. And how can the Empire play its part better in its own interest, and in the interest of the whole world, than by developing to the utmost the rich resources that lie within its borders?

**OPENING SPEECH BY MR. MACKENZIE KING.**

President of the Board of Trade and Gentlemen, the President has referred to some precedents of which mention was made yesterday. Among the number is the precedent that the representative of the senior Dominion is supposed to be the first to take part in the discussion of different questions that may be raised. For that reason I venture to say just a few words following on the very able representation of the proposed work of the Conference to which we have just listened. I regret that my colleagues Mr. Graham and Sir Lomer Gouin are not here to-day. I had hoped that they might have been the ones to speak for Canada; they will be here in a day or two, and no doubt they will then have opportunity of speaking more in detail than I care to at the moment with reference to some of the subjects which have been mentioned.