

leaving out of the picture considerations which will grow in importance as the present century advances. The comparatively recent developments of mutual trade between Canada and the West Indies, between New Zealand and Canada with Fiji, are but the first steps of the realization of the need for a more comprehensive Imperial vision of our mutual economic inter-dependence.

In Great Britain we are specially alive to the need of becoming less dependent on the United States of America and its dependencies for such essential tropical materials as cotton, sugar, and tobacco at a time when we have to make large annual payments to the United States on account of a debt contracted on behalf of our common effort in the Great War. It is to the interest of the whole Empire that we should all co-operate in developing the vast potential resources of our tropical possessions, human as well as merely material, and that we should not only direct production to the most needed channels, but also do what we can to use within our Empire the varied products of our Empire.

#### **Productive Possibilities of the Empire.**

In this last connection I was informed only last week that hardly an ounce of the copra of Samoa (now a ward of the Dominion of New Zealand) is shipped to British ports, practically the whole of this immensely valuable raw material being bought in Hamburg and utilized in Germany. We already produce within the Empire the greater part of such materials as rubber, copra, palm-oil, palm-kernels, and cocoa, and it is obviously to our advantage to secure as far as possible for our own populations the profits and employment that can be built on the manufacture of those products. Given the application of capital and trained intelligence we could produce those materials such as cotton, sugar, flax, and silk, of which there is either a world shortage or which are at present in the main produced outside our Empire. Better transport facilities (both internal and external), better education (both of the skilled direction, whether in production or marketing, as well as the training of the actual native producer) are urgently called for. There is a real demand to-day for capital and that spirit of commercial adventure which was formerly so characteristic of the British peoples if our object is to be achieved. If we do not take the opportunity others will step in and reap not possibly a quick profit in the first few years, but a certain profit and secure advantage in the long-run.

All that can be done by Governments to stimulate and direct, whether by preference or otherwise, the fuller use of Empire products in the various Empire markets and Empire factories should receive our consideration, and if Governments give this lead it is to be hoped that private enterprise will respond.

Having been chosen to follow your deliberations from the angle of vision of the Crown colonies and protectorates, and on occasions to submit propositions on their behalf both to the Conference and, in some cases, separately to the delegations of particular Dominions, I have just formed an Advisory Committee composed of some of the leading persons engaged in the trade of particular tropical colonies or groups of colonies who can assist me during the Conference with expert knowledge of commercial conditions and potentialities. My chief object is to endeavour to bring before not only the representatives of Great Britain, but also of the overseas delegations the growing importance to the Empire as a whole of our great tropical dependencies.

#### **OPENING SPEECH BY MR. BRUCE.**

I have read the transcript very carefully, and it appears to me that we have not caused a delay which is going to affect us in getting through the work, and I certainly wish to thank the Conference for the courtesy and the consideration they have shown us by so arranging their programme that we would be able to take part in any decision of any moment that was arrived at. I also welcome very much the opportunity which is being given to me now to speak upon the general debate which arose out of Sir Philip's introductory speech, and I should like, if I may, to express my appreciation of the extraordinary clearness of that speech, and also of the impartial and open-minded manner in which Sir Philip and the British Government are prepared to approach all these questions of Empire importance and of transcendent importance to the Dominions.

#### **Markets of Paramount Importance.**

I entirely agree with the manner in which Sir Philip stated the case, and I do not propose to cover the same ground. I think it is unnecessary, but I would like to make one comment, and that is that I was particularly pleased to see that he considers the question of markets as being one of paramount importance. He stresses it, of course, with regard to Great Britain, but he indicates that it is also of paramount importance to the Dominions.

We certainly welcome that statement as coming from the British Government, and we welcome, even more, Sir Philip's statement that the solution of the market trouble is through the medium of the development of the Empire as a whole. That, of course, is the view that Australia holds, and I am inclined to think it is the view held by every one of the Dominions.

On the general question I could, of course, deal at very great length with the necessity for economic co-operation within the Empire, and I could stress the possibilities of Empire-development solving all our problems in a general way; but in view of the very sympathetic tone of all the speeches that have been made I think that it is rather unnecessary, and it would be preferable, I imagine, if I contented myself with saying that I entirely endorse the attitude that has been taken up and that I do not propose to stress it on my own behalf.

I think the best course I can adopt is to try and deal with the matter on a rather more definite basis, so that we may, if possible, immediately endeavour to find some concrete proposals which might effect a solution of the problem in which we are all so very much interested.