

willing service are diverted from constructive work into the sterile fields of useless controversy. Throughout the whole of the civilized world the story is the same. The parallel rise of trade-unions and employers' associations in mutual opposition has reached a point where it is generally recognized that the "normal condition of the world of industry is one of suppressed war." There is gradually growing, however, a feeling that such a state of affairs is wrong—wrong in that it does not, and cannot, produce the best economic results; and because it does not do that it cannot lead to the greatest possible measure of social justice. We think the time has arrived when it must be recognized that there is no longer in this country any such thing as primary or secondary industries. One could not come into being or continue without the assistance of the other. Practically all industries which are carried on are to some extent essential to the national well-being, and few, if any, of the industries already established could be eliminated without loss and inconvenience to all the others. If it be true—and it undoubtedly is—that to a large extent the economic well-being of this country depends at present, and will for a long time, upon the export of primary products, it is also true that management and labour in industries seemingly far remote from farming are essential to the production, marketing, and export of those products. All render a service, and the person engaged in industry or commerce has as great a right to demand that the actual production of the primary products shall be carried on in an efficient manner at all stages, and with due regard to the national well-being and in the interest of the individuals immediately concerned, as has the farmer to demand similar efficiency on the part of the purely commercial or industrial concern. If Conference will regard its task as part of the permanent necessity to adjust the economic and development policies of the country to meet the condition of a rapidly changing world, then this representative gathering and the help which its discussions can give in getting at the facts may well be regarded as one of the most important events of recent years. We think, however, it must not be regarded as an isolated event, but rather as one which must lead to and show the need for permanent machinery to carry on the continuous work of collaboration on the part of the parties to this Conference, who are also the parties to production and distribution, in the work of influencing and educating public opinion, and in assisting the Government to give effect to the proved needs not merely of any one section of agriculture, commerce, or industry, but to the needs of the country as a whole. Social justice cannot be secured or assured if any one section benefits for long at the expense of any other section or sections. Prosperity comes in proportion as all sections have worked to secure it, and its benefits being the result of the efforts of all, should be shared by the people as a whole, and not denied to any section or individual. The labour section of this Conference is anxious to help restore prosperity to this country; it can only do this effectively if it is assured that those whom it represents will, with other sections, share in the results of this prosperity.

*Hon. Mr. Barr* : I think you will all agree that, following on Mr. Bloodworth's report on behalf of the labour delegation, we should have a similar general statement by a representative of the employers. Unfortunately, such a paper has not been prepared, but I feel sure that if any representative on that side desires to make a general statement the employees' representatives would have no objection.

The Conference adjourned at 3.40 p.m.

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WEDNESDAY, 28TH MARCH, 1928.

The Conference met at 10 a.m.

#### Chairmanship.

*Hon. Mr. Barr* : My first business is to report on behalf of the committee to which was delegated the question of the chairmanship. It sat last night and decided to recommend that Mr. A. D. Thomson, who is well known to many of you, should be appointed Chairman of the Conference. I take it that this appointment will be acceptable to you.

*Voices* : Yes.

*Hon. Mr. Barr* : I gather from the applause that you approve of the selection. I will now introduce Mr. Thomson to you. I feel sure that you will give Mr. Thomson that attention that the rules of debate lay down.

*Mr. A. D. Thomson*, after taking the chair, said : Gentlemen, I thank you for the great honour you have done me in inviting me to preside over this Conference. I am fully alive to the very great interests that are involved and to the very many important matters that will come before you. I must confess at present to a very great ignorance on the subject in many of its aspects. However, I am glad that I am not to take part in the deliberations, but I can assure you that I am a very good listener. I take it that what you want is a full and frank discussion of the various matters that will come before you. To attain that there must be mutual forbearance with regard to one another's opinions. That we must ever keep in view. And in order that there may be a full and frank discussion, and forbearance with regard to one another's opinions, I am sure you will agree that there must be a complete absence of personalities of any kind. You will support me, I am sure, in that, so that there will be, as far as possible, nothing of that sort. I read with very great interest the report of the Prime Minister's speech in the press last night and this morning, and I think that if we keep before us the aim and spirit in that address the deliberations of this Conference will have very important results and be of very great benefit to the community as a whole. I trust you will have a very harmonious and enjoyable time together, and I myself look forward to a very substantial increase of my knowledge of this important subject.