

assumed at the Conference will be referred to; but here it may be stated that this constituted the chief problem to be discussed, and that around it centred the subsidiary questions of the Pacific cable, mail-service, and other minor considerations. Thus the terms in which the invitations to the Conference were issued were "to consider the trade relations existing between Canada and the Australasian Colonies, and the best means of extending the same, and of securing the construction of direct telegraphic cable between those colonies and the Dominion of Canada."

It will be remembered that in or about December, 1893, the Canadian Government despatched their Minister of Trade (the Hon. Mackenzie Bowell) to Australia, for the purpose of making inquiries as to the possibility of closer trade relations being established between these colonies and the Dominion. Unfortunately Mr. Bowell had not sufficient time at his disposal to extend his visit to New Zealand, so that we had not the advantage of having his views put before us in person. But on his return to Canada he made a long and exhaustive report of his mission. Mr. Bowell has had the honour of being in his present official position for several years, and on that ground, and in virtue of other personal qualifications, his views on the subjects he examined are entitled to the highest consideration. Mr. Bowell's report—which is well worthy of study by those interested—was of a favourable character. He showed, in clear and undeniably convincing terms, that there were grounds for further prosecution of the objects in view. His Government, pursuing the same idea that had prompted them to send him to Australia, gave his recommendations a sympathetic hearing, and finally decided to advance the matter still further by forwarding invitations to the several Colonial Governments to attend a Conference to be held in their capital. This appeal met with an almost universally prompt and favourable response, and is the more noteworthy from the fact that the Imperial Government agreed to send a representative. Finally, after some little delay, caused by a desire to meet the general convenience in respect of time, the Conference was fixed for the 21st of June last, delegates from the following colonies being appointed: New South Wales, 1; Victoria, 3; Queensland, 2; South Australia, 1; Tasmania, 1; New Zealand, 1; Cape of Good Hope, 3; and the Dominion of Canada itself, 2. It only remains to be added that the British Government sent a well-known Colonial ex-Governor (the Earl of Jersey) as the Imperial representative.

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE.

In consequence of a delay caused by a breakdown of communication between Vancouver and the East, through some exceptionally heavy floods which had occurred in the Fraser River, the Australasian delegates were not able to reach Ottawa by the time fixed for the official opening—the 21st June. Postponement was therefore made until the 28th, by which date the whole of the members of the delegation had arrived at the capital of the Dominion. On the morning of the appointed day all the necessary preparations had been completed for the inauguration ceremony, the Senate House being set apart for this purpose. The assemblage in this room was of a most imposing character, arrangements having been made by the removal of desks, benches, &c., to accommodate the large gathering that filled the house, the proceedings being open to the public. His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada—the Earl of Aberdeen—presided, and delivered an address of welcome. He was followed by Sir John Thompson, the Premier of Canada, Lord Jersey, and the other members of the delegation in the order of their respective colonies' seniority of age. The addresses were all of an especially kindly and hopeful character, and the proceedings closed with an address to Her Majesty congratulating her upon having attained the fifty-sixth year of her coronation. The remainder of the day was passed in the enjoyment of agreeable and highly complimentary social entertainments.

On the next day—the 29th—the practical work commenced, members taking their seats at 10.30, in the Minister of Trade's official office. The Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, who has charge of that department, was unanimously chosen to preside. He opened the business by the delivery of a presidential address, in which he reviewed the circumstances that had led to the holding of the Conference, and also spoke at some length on the several subjects that were to come under consideration. The next business was that of deciding upon the order of procedure; the question as to the colonies' powers to make differential treaties between themselves, and the Pacific cable being the first subjects to be dealt with. Eventually it was agreed that notices of motion should be given in order that members should have an opportunity of giving them consideration. The rest of the day was occupied in determining the mode of voting, hours of sitting, and relations with the Press. With regard to this last question, your representative is of opinion that it was unfortunate that the decision to keep the proceedings secret was arrived at. In his view—which he freely expressed at the time—it would have been much more beneficial to have given full information to the Press on all the matters discussed. His feeling was that, as provision had been made to eventually publish a full and official report, it could have done no harm to, at least, have given matters of fact. The President, however, was allowed discretionary authority to furnish such reports to the Press as he might think fit; but, in view of the feelings of the majority of the members, he naturally was very guarded. Hence newspaper correspondents and others who had been specially sent to report were constrained to get what information they could from hearsay sources, with the result that it was, as a rule, very partial, and in some cases quite erroneous.

INTERCOLONIAL RECIPROCITY.

In accordance with the order of procedure determined upon, this subject was the first to come up for discussion at the commencement of the sitting on Saturday, the 30th June. The motion, which read as follows, "That provision should be made by Imperial legislation enabling the dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity with Great Britain or with one another without foreign nations being entitled to a share therein," was introduced by Sir Henry Wrixon, one of the Victorian delegates. This gentleman is in high repute as a