

years negotiations on such treaties came to be left more and more in the hands of the representatives of the self-governing Colonies. Certain elements of subordination remained, however. For example, agreements could be concluded only if "consistent with the general treaty engagements of the British Crown" (which in effect meant the Government of the United Kingdom) and if the prior approval of the Colonial Office and the Board of Trade was secured.

At the Colonial Conference in 1887 the New Zealand delegate, Sir Francis Dillon Bell, asked permission "to bring before the Conference the expediency of extending to the Governments of Australasia the same privilege which has been repeatedly granted to Canada, of entering into negotiations with foreign countries, under the sanction of the Foreign Office and in concert with Her Majesty's Ambassadors or Ministers at other Courts, in matters of trade and commerce." Sir Francis indicated that this privilege would enable New Zealand to commence negotiations with France on the subject of exporting frozen meat. The suggestion was coolly received by the Conference and was dropped in the face of general opposition from other delegates. The privileges already granted to Canada were, however, extended to New Zealand and Australia by a resolution adopted at the Colonial Conference of 1894. (The usual sequence from this time was that increased treaty-making powers were established first by Canada, and, the principle having been conceded, extended to other mature Colonies).

In 1907 the instructions contained in the despatch of 4 July to His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Paris from the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, in reference to the negotiation by Canada of a new commercial treaty with the French Government, recognized that, in commercial treaties which were of purely Dominion concern, the principal negotiators should be Dominion representatives, who would, nevertheless, keep the United Kingdom Government advised of the progress of negotiations.

The automatic inclusion of the self-governing Colonies in commercial treaties concluded by the United Kingdom came to be replaced by a provision which gave the Colonies the right to adhere to the treaty upon giving notice to that effect within a specified period. The last instance in which the Colonies were included without their consent in a commercial treaty was the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the United Kingdom and Serbia in 1880.