

hoped, will yet be advantageous. I am equally confident that we shall be able to put the Bill now in suspense in such a shape that it will prove acceptable to our Parliament and people. We meet these reverses and disappointments if not more frequently than larger Parliaments, bearing them more lightly. We face them more cheerfully, because our methods of politics permit us to face the same questions again in a comparatively short time. If we do not succeed this year we will next. A project in our country is rarely crowded out. Our hands are freer. I merely mention this as a reason why we do not regard this situation as seriously as such circumstances in this country would be regarded. A lost opportunity here does not perhaps recur again for years, but with us it may recur in a few months, or it is a rather unusual delay if it does not happen the next year.

The papers before you show we have accomplished with South Africa what we hope to accomplish with New Zealand and Canada, and then we shall so far have completed our chain of relations. Generally, may I say that whatever is possible in the way of preference within the Empire we hope to achieve.

For the last time, I repeat our realisation that preference begins as a business operation to be conducted for business ends. That is the preliminary of it all. We firmly believe that the very best possible business open to us is that which builds up this Empire and maintains its independence, securing its political and social heritages of freedom and culture, and enlarging its beneficial influence. To us it seems certain that these great ends can only be accomplished by joint action and effective action, which shall embrace the centre and all its parts. We live in the hope that we shall be economically, industrially, and productively raised to the highest power of which each portion, and therefore of the Empire as a whole, is capable. We wish to see British people of British stock as far as possible kept to our own vast territories, living under civilised conditions enabling them to multiply, prosper, and advance. Such conditions, we believe, can be found to the same degree nowhere else in the world. We hope that our preferences will affect population as well as trade, and that in the diffusion of population the other parts of the Empire will get the full advantage of it, so far as it can be controlled without impairing individual freedom. Preferential trade appeals to us as a potent influence to aid this growth.

I have already said that we do not limit this principle to trade, but also apply it to the channels of trade. Whatever treaties may now hamper our movements, and we are encouraged by the recent Navigation Conference to hope that under your colleague, and with his help, we shall see encouragement given to British shipping as compared with foreign shipping until all its troubles that we can remove are removed, placing it, if possible, in a more unassailable position than it occupies to-day. That with us is associated with preferential trade as an integral part of the policy. While we maintain our shipping we have one of the very strongest, if not the strongest, means of maintaining our over-sea trade. In the same way, with regard to cable communications, to which I have already alluded, and with regard to many other matters upon which it would be inappropriate to touch, they are of a different character but with the same aim. When we speak of preferences in trade, our interest and enthusiasm are not devoted only to trade as the most important of its practical agencies. We include every means of co-operation within the Empire—shipping, cables, Suez canal charges, freights, emigration, conferences making for national unity and power. Every kind of co-operation is good as far as it is genuine without soreness or unrequited sacrifice on either side, and establishing the permanence of our trade and other relations. We think that each of those means would help the other, and that united they would form a very powerful series of links uniting the extremities with the

Ninth Day.
1 May 1907.

PREFERENTIAL
TRADE.
(Mr. Deakin.)