

16 June, 1911.] COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND BRITISH SHIPPING.

[10th Day.

Mr. HARCOURT—*cont.*

each"—was directed, as we saw from his remarks, more to such matters as the embargo on cattle, and cognate subjects which have given some inconvenience and dissatisfaction to Canada; but the words are a little wide, and might possibly be misunderstood by people who saw only the Resolution and not the discussion by which it has been accompanied; and I would propose, therefore, to add at the end of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's motion these words: "and by what methods consistent with the existing fiscal policy of each part, the trade of each part with the others may be improved and extended." The object of this is to show that this Royal Commission is not one which is launched in order to inquire into, or to make recommendations on, the policy of the Dominions or of the Mother Country; and especially these words will show that no recommendations are required on the fixed fiscal policy of the Dominions themselves or of the Home Country. I think if that is made clear the Commission will probably serve a most useful purpose in correlating the views of the Dominions in other trade matters, and putting the whole Empire on a better basis for further co-operation between its units.

Mr. FISHER: I find no fault with Sir Wilfrid Laurier for substituting this proposition for the proposals of the Commonwealth Government; indeed, I think it is a more practical way of dealing with a rather difficult set of questions, and I see no reason why the addition proposed by Mr. Harcourt should not be made, because if a Commission of this kind is to be of any service at all it should be free to look into every matter that would be likely to give full and accurate information about the production, manufacture, and distribution of wealth in the United Kingdom and the other Dominions, and it ought not to dogmatise as to the right way for each and all of them to conduct their own affairs.

I am rather pleased with this practical way out of a difficulty that exists at the present moment, and if it is approved by the Conference it may remove perhaps some of the disabilities that we quite unwillingly bear, because we do not understand the views of the other Dominions. I commend it all the more freely because I want, with the permission of the Conference, to later on submit a Resolution inviting the co-operation of the Government of the United Kingdom to allow, before the next Conference meets, some of their colleagues to visit the oversea Dominions and see for themselves, and by that means aid and give assistance to a Commission of this kind, even if one of them cannot accompany it. I do not wish to overpress that, because I know the arduous duties that they perform here; but it is not out of place on a motion like this to say how much we should prize and value a visit from a responsible Minister of the United Kingdom in the distant parts of the oversea Dominions. We feel that we lose a great deal by our not being personally known, just as we feel we miss a great deal by not being here more frequently.

It may be asked: Would it be within the powers of this Commission to inquire into the shipping arrangements and means of transport, &c.? I suppose it would be.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, clearly.

Mr. FISHER: I only mention that as one of the big questions. The reference to the Commission would be wide and general.

Mr. HARCOURT: The Resolution says: "The trade of each part with the others."

Mr. FISHER: As I read it, it is exceedingly wide and general. That it has not prescribed limits, to go into a groove, entirely suits my opinion. I believe a Commission composed of the quality of the men who would constitute it, would largely have its labours wasted if it were circumscribed, and if the reference confined the members of it to pursue their inquiries in certain grooves. Therefore I commend it all the more because that has been wiped out. I should like to go further when speaking of getting more accurate information on these matters. I do not think it would be out of place for the Government of the United Kingdom to seriously take into their consideration whether the time is not coming when even Conferences