

IMPORTANCE TO DOMINIONS.

I feel that this is a matter which, although it is confined to the Colonial Office and to this country at the present time, should more and more engage the sympathies and interest of the self-governing Dominions. I illustrate this particularly by the West Indies. In the summer of 1920 a trade agreement was made between the Canadian Government and representatives of all the West Indian Colonies. It is not merely a remarkable instance of Imperial preference, but it promotes unity with the Empire through the development of Imperial communications, which the Prime Minister will remember he and I have always considered one of the most promising lines along which we can advance, ever since the Conference which he, Sir Thomas Smartt, and I attended in the year 1907. Two lines of steamers, one entirely new, will now connect all the West Indian Colonies with the Dominion of Canada. I hope Mr. Meighen and the Canadian Government will advance with increasing confidence on this path, because it seems to me that for all the greatness of Canada and its tremendous producing potentialities, it is not a complete entity without connection with these semi-tropical islands. Compared to the United States, Canada lies wholly to the north with northern products, whereas the United States can produce all that Canada can produce, or very nearly all, and yet reaches down to Florida and regions which give her a semi-tropical sphere. But if the association between Canada and the West Indian Islands is developed and goes on, Canada becomes equipped with an immense range of products which makes her, from an economic point of view, a far more complete entity, and therefore I look forward to everything which tends to promote a close association between these West Indian Islands and the Dominion. It is not only from the point of view of commerce alone, but they are among the most beautiful islands in the world. They are salubrious and balmy, and it might be they would be a place of agreeable resort at seasons of the year when the climate of Canada is somewhat rigorous.

MR. MEIGHEN: Bermuda is the chief one from that point of view, and Bermuda has declined to ratify the reciprocity agreement.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

MR. CHURCHILL: We shall endeavour to use our influence as far as possible to secure the general acceptance of it. So far as the constitutional developments in the Colonies are concerned, progress has been continuous, and latterly, especially since the war, very rapid. We have every form of government, ranging from benevolent autocracies tempered by Downing Street, to two-Chamber systems, resting upon at least one of the Chambers being fully elected. For instance, the island of Bermuda celebrated its tercentenary of representative institutions dating from the day when the first General Assembly of the islands was made, and therefore can boast a seniority which no existing State in Europe or America can disdain. In Mauritius there was a movement to promote an agitation for a retrocession of the island to France, but this movement has received a decisive check at the recent elections, in which all the retrocessionist candidates have been signally defeated. There has been a strong movement in Ceylon for a more popular control over the government of the Colony, following upon the movement which Mr. Montagu and his predecessors have driven forward, fostered, and nourished in India, and a new Constitution has been granted which gives a majority in the Legislature to the unofficial element. In the Kenya Colony a new Constitution has been granted giving an elective basis for the unofficial members of the Council, instead of the nominated basis which existed hitherto. Uganda has reached such a state of development that they have a Legislative Council with nominated membership. In Malta a novel experiment has been tried by my predecessor, and we hope it will succeed. Everybody knows the argument against giving Malta a Constitution. It was said you might as well give a Constitution to a battleship. We have arrived at a dyarchical system—two Governments on the island, one elective, dealing with Maltese affairs, and the other dealing with purely military and naval interests.

RHODESIA.

General Smuts will no doubt wish to discuss, and Sir Thomas Smartt also, the conditions which prevail in Rhodesia. I hope that a delegation of Rhodesians will