

APPENDIX V.

CONFERENCE ON STATE-AIDED EMPIRE SETTLEMENT.

JANUARY—FEBRUARY, 1921.

Record of Proceedings.

A CONFERENCE on State-aided Empire settlement was held at the Colonial Office on the 28th and 31st January, and on the 1st, 2nd, and 4th February, 1921, between representatives of His Majesty's Government and representatives of the Governments of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, and New Zealand.

His Majesty's Government were represented at the opening meeting by Viscount Milner, President of the Oversea Settlement Committee, and in his absence the chair was taken at subsequent meetings by Lieut.-Colonel L. S. Amery, M.P., Chairman of the Oversea Settlement Committee. Representatives of the Treasury, Ministry of Labour, and Oversea Settlement Committee also attended.

The following represented the three Dominions concerned: Canada—The Hon. Sir George Perley, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel J. Obed Smith. Australia—Senator the Hon. E. D. Millen; Mr. Percy Hunter. New Zealand—The Hon. Sir James Allen, K.C.B.; Mr. H. C. Cameron; Mr. V. Mills.

In opening the proceedings Viscount Milner stated that the Conference had been summoned in order to advise upon an enduring policy of oversea settlement which should tend to bring about the best distribution of the man-power of the Empire, and so to develop and strengthen the whole Empire. He pointed out that oversea settlement should not be regarded as a means of dealing directly with abnormal unemployment in the United Kingdom at any given moment, but as a means of remedying fluctuations of trade by developing our best markets and of permanently minimizing the risk of unemployment here and throughout the Empire. He emphasized the view of His Majesty's Government that no stone should be left unturned to secure for the Dominions the population which they require, and to ensure that the outflow of population from the United Kingdom should have opportunities for settlement under the flag, in countries British in spirit and British in their institutions.

The agenda submitted to the Conference for discussion was as follows:—

Part I.—To consider the general question of Empire development, including schemes for land-settlement on a comprehensive scale.

Part II.—To discuss the following particular proposals:—

- (a.) Advance of cost of ocean passages and railway fares to approved settlers.
- (b.) Advance of cost of outfit where required.
- (c.) Free passages for State-aided children.
- (d.) Preference to British settlers over foreign immigrants — *e.g.*, in respect of landing-money, &c.
- (e.) Arrangements for recruiting settlers in this country, and for their reception, settlement, employment, and welfare overseas.
- (f.) Appointment of representatives of His Majesty's Government overseas to co-operate with the oversea Governments in the reception, settlement, and welfare of newly arrived British subjects.

It was clear from the outset that in all the Dominions represented the openings available for workers of other classes depended upon the increase in the number of primary producers. It was consequently agreed that the problem covered by Part I of the agenda—*i.e.*, the problem of establishing settlers from this country as primary producers upon the land overseas—must be the basis of any policy of State-aided Empire settlement, and that the facilities for inter-Imperial migration generally, proposed in Part II of the agenda, would only be of limited value unless granted as part of a policy based on land-settlement.