

NEED FOR FRIENDLY CO-OPERATION WITH UNITED STATES.

We look confidently to the Government and people of the United States for their sympathy and understanding in this respect. Friendly co-operation with the United States is for us a cardinal principle, dictated by what seems to us the proper nature of things, dictated by instinct quite as much as by reason and common-sense. We desire to work with the great Republic in all parts of the world. Like it, we want stability and peace, on the basis of liberty and justice. Like it, we desire to avoid the growth of armaments, whether in the Pacific or elsewhere, and we rejoice that American opinion should be showing so much earnestness in that direction at the present time. We are ready to discuss with American statesmen any proposal for the limitation of armaments which they may wish to set out, and we can undertake that no such overtures will find a lack of willingness on our part to meet them. In the meantime we cannot forget that the very life of the United Kingdom, as also of Australia and New Zealand—indeed, the whole Empire—has been built upon sea power, and that sea power is necessarily the basis of the whole Empire's existence. We have therefore to look to the measures which our security requires : we aim at nothing more ; we cannot possibly be content with less.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS OF BRITISH EMPIRE.

I do not propose to deal in any detail with the agenda for this Conference to-day. We have no cut-and-dried agenda to present. We will discuss that amongst ourselves. The British Government has been under some suspicion in some quarters of harbouring designs against this gathering as a Conference. We are said to be dissatisfied with the present state of the Empire, and to wish to alter its organization in some revolutionary way. Gentlemen, we are not at all dissatisfied. The British Empire is progressing very satisfactorily from a constitutional standpoint, as well as in other ways. The direct communication between Prime Ministers, established during the war, has, I think, worked well, and we have endeavoured to keep you thoroughly abreast of all important developments in foreign affairs by special messages sent out weekly, or even more frequently when circumstances required. Indeed, at every important Conference, either here or on the Continent, one of the first duties I felt I ought to discharge was to send as full, and as complete, and as accurate an account as I possibly could not merely of the decisions taken, but of the atmosphere, which counts for so very much. I have invariably, to the best of my ability, sent accounts—some of them of the most confidential character—which would give to the Dominions even the impressions which we formed, and which gave you information beyond what we could possibly communicate to the Press.

MINISTER OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AT WASHINGTON.

Another change which has taken place since the war is the decision of the Canadian Government to have a Minister of its own at Washington—a very important development. We have co-operated willingly with that, and we shall welcome a Canadian colleague at Washington as soon as the appointment is made. We shall be glad to have any suggestions that occur to you as to the methods by which the business of the Dominions in London, as far as it passes through our hands, may be transacted with greater dignity and efficiency, though you will all, I think, agree that the Empire owes much to Lord Milner and Lord Long for their services in the Colonial Office during a period of great difficulty and stress.

ASKS FOR SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCT OF EMPIRE'S BUSINESS.

We shall also welcome any suggestions which you may have to make for associating yourselves more closely with the conduct of foreign relations. Any suggestions which you can make upon that subject we shall be very delighted to hear and discuss. There was a time when Downing Street controlled the Empire ; to-day the Empire is in charge of Downing Street. On all matters of common concern we want to know your standpoint, and we want to tell you ours.