

difference, if any. But nevertheless I say that we are treading on very dangerous ground, and I say this to him : We have achieved this wonderful progress—and it is wonderful progress—along certain lines. Is he not satisfied with the progress we have made ? The difference between the status of the Dominions now and twenty-five years ago is very great. We were Colonies, we became Dominions. We have been accorded the status of nations. Our progress in material greatness has kept pace with our constitutional development. Let us leave well alone : that is my advice. We have now on the agenda-paper matters which mark a new era in Empire government. We, the representatives of the Dominions, are met together to formulate a foreign policy for the Empire. What greater advance is conceivable ? What remains to us ? We are like so many Alexanders. What other worlds have we to conquer ? I do not speak of Utopias or of shadows, but of solid earth. I know of no power that the Prime Minister of Britain has that General Smuts has not. Our presence here round this table, the agenda-paper before us, the basis of equality on which we meet—these things speak in trumpet tones that this Conference of free democratic nations is, as Mr. Lloyd George said yesterday, a living force.

OPENING SPEECH BY GENERAL SMUTS.

GENERAL SMUTS : I should like to associate myself with what has been said by the Prime Minister of Australia in regard to the speech which you made yesterday, and, in particular, speaking on behalf of South Africa, I should like to thank you very, very much for the reference you made to General Botha. General Botha was not only a great South African, but a great man, and his name will remain as one of the greatest men in the history of the British Empire, and I think the references made to him yesterday were fully justified.

You opened yesterday, Prime Minister, in a speech, if I may say so, of such power and brilliance that it is very difficult for us—in fact, impossible for me—to follow on, but we agreed yesterday that the Prime Ministers should each make a general preliminary statement, and so I proceed to make a few remarks upon the topics on which we are called upon to deal here.

NEED FOR PEACE.

I think a discussion like this may be useful, because it will disclose in a preliminary and general way the attitude taken up by the Dominions on the topics which we have come here to discuss. I shall not attempt to break fresh ground in the few remarks I am going to make. I am going to adhere more or less to the tenor of what I said in the South African Parliament when the subject-matters of this Conference were under debate. What I said was generally approved in Parliament and by the public in South Africa, and I shall therefore adhere to what I said there. I said on that occasion that what the world most needs to-day is peace—a return to a peaceful temper and to the resumption of peaceful and normal industry. To my mind that is the test of all true policy to-day. Peace is wanted by the world. Peace is wanted especially by the peoples of the British Empire. We are a peaceful Empire ; our very nature is such that peace is necessary for us. We have no military aims to serve, we have no militaristic ideals, and it is only in a peaceful world that our ideals can be realized. It should therefore be the main—in fact, the only—object of British policy to secure real peace for the Empire and the world generally. Now, the Prime Minister stated in his speech what progress has been made towards the attainment of this ideal. He pointed out that some of the matters which gave us the greatest trouble in Paris had been settled. The question of reparations, which was, perhaps, the most difficult and intricate with which we had to deal in Paris, has finally, after some years of debate and trouble, been eliminated in a settlement which, I venture to hope, will prove final and workable. That is a very great advance. The other great advance that has been made—and it is an enormous advance—is the final disarmament of Germany. That the greatest military Empire that has ever existed in history should be reduced to a peace establishment of 100,000 men is something which I considered practically impossible. It is a great achievement, so far-reaching, indeed, that it