

a Committee. The Imperial Shipping Committee had been quoted as a precedent. He thought it would be a mistake to go on organizing permanent bodies as the outcome of a friendly Conference as to the conditions existing in different parts of the Empire. At the next Conference it would, no doubt, be suggested that this Economic Committee be made permanent, and in its turn it would be quoted as a precedent for the setting-up of further machinery to carry on work for which, in the view of Canada at any rate, ample machinery already exists. The Chairman had suggested that some of the work could be done in the intervals between Conferences. Mr. Graham thought, however, that the fact of matters being referred to the Committee, and their having dealt with certain things in advance, would lead to the Committee's advice being presented to the Conference as a complete and crushing argument. This would, to his mind, take away much of the freshness and originality of the Conference, and would be an impediment to its work rather than a help.

Possible Reactions of Committee on Fiscal Autonomy.

Fiscal policy was not a matter about which the advice of any body of that kind would be sought; nor would Canada, at any rate, submit to advice being tendered to her on that subject by such a body. The suggestion, so far as that portion of the work of the Committee was concerned, seemed largely to resolve itself into a proposal for a Tariff Commission for the Empire. But tariffs and dumping were matters for the Governments themselves and their constituents to consider. He could not agree to an arrangement whereby such a Committee might investigate something referring to a particular Dominion which that Dominion had not referred to them.

The Chairman, on this point, explained that the Committee would have no power to entertain a complaint from one Dominion against the tariff policy of another. What was contemplated as regards tariffs was merely that if, for example, some question arose as regards a preference given between one Dominion and the Mother-country, they might agree between them to ask the Committee to advise what the practical effect of that preference was. It would be a *sine qua non* that any matter affecting two Governments could only be referred to the Committee by common consent.

Mr. Graham felt that the Committee would interfere, he believed not in a helpful way, with the rights of the different parts of the Empire to manage their own affairs and fiscal policies. Next to having executive functions, advisory functions are the most powerful, and once a Committee of this kind advised that certain things should be done, immediately those who were not in favour of that course would be put on the defensive. There was no need for new machinery; the existing organizations, touching every angle of trade and relations between the oversea Dominions and Great Britain, should be sufficient. He did not desire to prevent the Conference adopting the resolution and appointing the Committee if it saw fit, but he was not at all convinced that it was the proper thing to do.

New Zealand supports Proposal.

Mr. Massey supported the resolution for several reasons, one being the unqualified success of the Imperial Shipping Committee. He would not, however, ask such a Committee to report, for example, upon the New Zealand Customs Tariff. He took it that the work of the Committee would be to some extent in the nature of giving effect to the work of the Dominions Royal Commission. He thought the Conference had done good work, but necessarily quite a number of proposals were being left simply in their initial stages and would have to be taken up at the next Conference. It would be the business of the Committee to carry on and continue the work as far as possible. He thought that the whole question of the beef trade should be gone into, since it was a very serious state of affairs if this country were to be allowed to drift into the position of being dependent upon a foreign market for its beef-supplies. The Committee should be able to take this matter up and investigate the position and let the public know how things stand. The question of the proportion of British labour and material required in imported goods as a condition of their having the benefit of Imperial preference was another matter which should be looked into. There was also the question of inter-Imperial Exchanges, which ought not to be lost sight of. As regards marketing, what was wanted was to see that producers got a fair price for their products, while not being guilty of even the suggestion of exploitation as against the consumers. As Prime Minister of New Zealand he had had a certain amount of experience in this direction. About two years ago, at the time of the serious slump, it had been decided to set up an organization to look after the marketing of New Zealand products, particularly meat products. It was only an experiment, but at the time it gave rise to much adverse criticism. If a Committee such as that now proposed had been in existence he would have been very glad to have referred this matter to the Committee, in order to satisfy people that the New Zealand producers were not out for exploitation. They simply went in for an improved system of co-operative marketing, and he was glad to think that it had been a success. If the Committee was to be constituted he would be very glad to refer the work of the New Zealand Meat-control Board to the Committee to report upon. *Mr. Massey* also referred to proposals for similar boards in connection with dairy-produce and fruit, and said he would like some organization to exist to which their system of working might be referred so as to reassure the public.

The Chairman suggested, in order to meet the points which had been raised, that the following words should be added to the resolution: "provided that no question which has any reference to another part of the Empire may be referred to the Committee without the consent of that other part of the Empire."

Modified Resolution receives General Support.

Mr. Burton thought the Committee might prove a useful body if its functions were restricted to what he understood *Mr. Bruce* meant and as defined by the Chairman—viz., a voluntary organization