

the Empire. We fully realize that the questions which you shall have to deliberate upon are questions requiring the greatest zeal, the closest examination of details. When we are to consider questions relating to the promotion of trade between the different colonies, trade with the mother country, the facilities of communication throughout the different portions of the Empire, we realize that while there is ample field for the widest patriotism and the warmest loyalty, there are matters of pure business, needing the closest examination and the closest scrutiny, matters connected with trade, with steamboats, and with telegraphs, in order to arrive at a practical result, and which will require the most patriotic deliberation of the gentlemen who are assembled to-day ; that they may be guided to a practical conclusion with regard to all these matters is the great ambition to-day of every portion of the Canadian people among whom they are assembled. We realize that the great aim which we shall hope to see advanced by the conclusions at which the deliberations of the Conference shall reach is that the ocean which divides the colonies shall become the highway for the people and for the products that the colonies produce. (Applause.) Your Excellency has recalled some conferences between colonies which preceded this, and which Your Excellency has truly said have preceded this rather than given examples for us. We cannot but recall, in recollecting colonial history, that conferences have taken place between the colonies, when they met after years of great development and great progress to consider whether the relations which bound them within the Empire were not too restraining for their future progress, and whether the time had not come when a separation should take place from the motherland. We are in the fortunate and happy position of meeting these gentlemen to-day at a period in the history of the Empire when the result of long years of perfect self-government, of greater progress and development than any colonies of the Empire have ever seen in the past ages, is that we shall meet not to consider the prospects of separation from the mother country, but to plight our faith anew to each other in the future—a faith that has never yet been broken or tarnished, and will be plighted anew with the motherland. Under these circumstances, I beg to express, as Your Excellency has done in our behalf, the welcome to the delegates who are assembled, and the heartiest aspirations of the people of Canada that their deliberations may result in wise and practical conclusions, which shall have the effect of binding the colonies together in greater strength, and of making the people in the motherland feel that their Empire is becoming greater and stronger with the practical growth and development of self-government of her colonies