

496. Accompanying is the report to the Imperial Government by the Right Honourable, the Earl of Jersey, G.C.M.G., on the Colonial Conference.

THE EARL OF JERSEY TO THE MARQUESS OF RIPON.

LONDON, 21st August, 1894.

MY LORD,—I have the honour to report that I arrived at Ottawa on the 27th of June, in order to take part, under the authority given to me by your Lordship, in the deliberations of the Colonial Conference appointed to be held there on the invitation of the Canadian Government.

The Conference was opened on the 28th of June by his Excellency the Governor General, who, in a cordial address of welcome, alluded to the unique character of the gathering.

The Premier, Sir John Thompson, in his no less warm greeting struck the chord, which I am happy to say vibrated throughout the proceedings when he said :

“ On this happy occasion these delegates assembled after long years of self government in their countries, of greater progress and development than the Colonies of any empire have ever seen in the past, not to consider the prospects of separation from the Mother Country, but to plight our faith anew to each other as brethren, and to plight anew with the Mother Land, that faith that has never yet been broken or tarnished ”

Speeches in acknowledgement were made by the representatives of the Imperial Government and of the Colonies of Tasmania, New South Wales, Cape Colony, South Australia, New Zealand, Victoria and Queensland.

In the evening the Canadian Commissioners to the Conference gave a banquet to the delegates and to a large number of Canadian gentlemen interested in political and commercial questions, and numerous speeches were delivered on this occasion respecting the general objects and business of the Conference.

There was a general feeling of satisfaction and pleasure at the meeting of the Conference, and there were many expressions of loyalty and devotion to the Crown, and of hope that the ties, both of interest and affection, between the Mother Country and her Colonies, and between the colonies themselves, would be preserved and strengthened.

The presence of representatives from the Cape of Good Hope gave much gratification, and an allusion to the fact that it was Mr. Rhodes' wish that she should be so represented was received with much applause.

The correspondence and negotiations which led up to the Conference had been practically confined to Canada and Australasia, and it did not appear that the Cape was in a direct or immediate sense interested in its main objects. It was felt that this very circumstance made the representation of that colony a gracious and significant act, and an evidence of the interest and sympathy which, on the score of national pride and solidarity, may be felt in one great colony for the aims and aspirations of other portions of the British Empire. In the result, moreover, the Cape delegates were able to take a very useful part in the proceedings, and to make valuable and interesting suggestions.

I regret to have to add, in this connection, that Mr. Hofmeyer was prevented by indisposition from attending the earlier sittings, but later on we had the benefit of his well-known ability.