

Another circumstance which may be noted was that the meeting of the Conference suggested some references to the races which are united under the British flag.

The Chief Justice of the Cape commented on the two-fold character of the population of his colony, and on the union which is being more and more cemented between the English and the Dutch. He was followed by the Canadian Premier, who bore striking evidence to the loyal conduct of the French-speaking Canadians, and by the leader of the Opposition in Canada, M. Laurier, a gentleman of the French-speaking race, educated and trained, as he observed, on French systems, who expressed in the warmest terms the loyalty and gratitude to the British crown of that important portion of the Canadian population.

I may also remark that the visit of the Australian delegates to Canada impressed them forcibly with the advantages which accrue from the federation of neighbouring provinces. Strong expression was given to this feeling by several of the delegates. Your Lordship is aware that the subject of federation has been much discussed in Australia, and that, though initial steps were taken to effect it, the problem has so far remained unsolved.

Without venturing to anticipate the eventual result, I think it is safe to say that the visit of the Australian delegates to Canada will give an impetus to the movement, and that the knowledge acquired of the details and working of the Dominion Constitution will be of great service to them in considering how federation can be effected in Australia.

On more than one occasion an indication of united Australasian opinion was lacking, and this, to a certain extent, made it impossible for the Conference to be as definite in its conclusions as was desirable upon those points which involved united Australasian support. In the event of its being considered advisable to carry out the resolutions agreed upon, this want of cohesion for the development of Australasian interests will stand in the way and may cause indefinite delays.

Before concluding these remarks on the preliminary proceedings, I should perhaps record my conviction that the sense of connection and cohesion between the various parts of the Empire has been of late years steadily growing stronger. The great discretion which has been observed at home in connection with the Colonies has inspired, and is continually augmenting, a feeling of confidence in and respect for the Mother Country, which is commercially and politically beneficial.

The subsequent sittings of the Conference, which were conducted in private, commenced on Friday the 29th of June, and concluded on Monday the 9th of July.

The Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, P.C., Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce, was unanimously elected President, and his able and courteous guidance was highly appreciated.

The discussions were substantially confined to three subjects specified by the Canadian Government when inviting the Conference, viz., the construction of a sub-marine cable from Vancouver to Australia, the establishment of a quick mail service between Great Britain and Australasia via Canada, and the trade relations of the Colonies with Great Britain, and with one another.

It may be convenient, in reviewing the work of the Conference, to advert first to the question of commercial interchange, and to the legislation and