

treaties which may control it, and then to the steamship and telegraphic communications which are closely connected with these commercial projects.

497. I.—TRADE RELATIONS.

As regards the measures recommended with a view to the extension of trade within the Empire, the following Resolutions were passed:—

(1.) "That provision should be made by Imperial legislation enabling the dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity, including, power of making differential tariffs, with Great Britain or with one another."

(2.) "That this Conference is of opinion that any provisions in existing treaties between Great Britain and any foreign Power which prevent the self-governing dependencies of the Empire from entering into agreements of commercial reciprocity with each other, or with Great Britain, should be removed."

(3.) "Whereas the stability and progress of the British Empire can be best assured by drawing continually closer the bands that unite the Colonies with the Mother Country, and by the continuous growth of a practical sympathy and co-operation in all that pertains to the common welfare ;

"And whereas this co-operation and unity can in no way be more effectually promoted than by the cultivation and extension of the mutual and profitable interchange of their products ;

A. "Therefore resolved: That this Conference records its belief in the advisability of a customs arrangement between Great Britain and her Colonies by which trade within the Empire may be placed on a more favourable footing than that which is carried on with foreign countries ;

"Further resolved: That until the Mother Country can see her way to enter into customs arrangements with her Colonies it is desirable that, when empowered so to do, the Colonies of Great Britain, or such of them as may be disposed to accede to this view take steps to place each other's products, in whole or in part, on a more favoured customs basis than is accorded to the like products of foreign countries ;

"Further Resolved: That for the purposes of this resolution the South African Customs Union be considered as part of the territory capable of being brought within the scope of the contemplated trade arrangements."

These resolutions occasioned considerable discussion, but were eventually carried unanimously, except that the first part of the third resolution (marked A. above) was opposed by the votes of three (Australasian) Colonies, as against five in its favour.

It was clearly the opinion of all the Colonial delegates that it is desirable that the Colonies represented should make arrangements with one another, and, if possible, with Great Britain, which would give British an advantage over foreign products, and that for this purpose any statutory or treaty provisions which stand in the way should be removed. It was felt by the delegates that, so far as might be possible, British subjects should take what they have to import from their own kindred rather than from foreign states.

As regards the Colonies themselves, this idea, so far as information possessed by the Conference went, does not appear to be attended by any