

in regard to the trade between that country and Canada; and the Cape Colony has also entered into a customs union with the neighbouring independent republic, the Orange Free State.

3. Although the area within which such agreements are possible is now but limited, owing to the network of commercial treaties by which the nations are bound together, there are still some powers, such as France, with which agreements of the kind could be made, either because no commercial treaty exists between them and this country, or because some of the colonies have not adhered to the existing treaty. It appears desirable, now that the same liberty of tariff legislation has been accorded to the Australian Colonies as has been enjoyed by Canada, the Cape Colony, and New Zealand, and that the Colonies generally are considering the question of extending and increasing their external commerce, that the views of Her Majesty's Government on this question should be generally known.

4. In the first instance it is advisable that the international position of such agreements and the procedure to be followed in regard to them should be made clear and in this connexion I desire to quote from the able speech delivered by Sir Henry Wrixon at the meeting of the Conference on the 10th of June.

5. Referring to this question, he said :—

“I do not know that I have ever thoroughly understood the position which the Imperial Government takes with regard to the power which they have already allowed to Canada and the Cape, because we all know that nations can only know one another through the supreme head. Each nation is an entity as regards any other nation, and I have no knowledge of how you could recognize a part of an empire making arrangements for itself. If you look at the thing in the last resort, supposing conflicts arose, or cause of war, the foreign power that had cause to complain of the breach of a commercial treaty must naturally look to the head of an empire; and they could not be put off by telling them to look for satisfaction to the dependency. If any foreign power made an arrangement with the Cape, and had cause to complain, and wanted to enforce any proviso, they must go to the Empire of Great Britain; and, therefore, as far as I can understand it, I am quite against any attempt to recognize the right of a dependency of the Empire to act on its own behalf. Everything must be done through the head of the Empire when we are dealing with foreign nations. One nation is one individual, and it can only deal with other nations on that basis; therefore I deliberately excluded any reference in my motion to that subject, and I may only add that I think it is quite unnecessary to refer to it, because we can have no doubt that the Imperial Government will extend the same consideration to all the dependencies of the Empire that it has already extended to Canada and the Cape, if in any case any dependency of the Empire shows that it has good ground for entering into a commercial treaty outside. I have not the slightest doubt that the Imperial Government would do for other dependencies what it has already done for the premier colony of Canada and the Cape.

“Hon. Mr. FITZGERALD.—Do you wish it done by legislation?

“Sir HENRY WRIXON.—No. I do not understand how it can be done, because I have no idea of a nation as anything else than one complete unity with regard to an outside nation, and I cannot understand a dependency of