

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE.

(From our Correspondent.)

London, April 13.

With the exception of Sir R. Bond, who will represent Newfoundland, and is not expected to reach London before the middle of next week, all the Colonial Premiers, attending the forthcoming Colonial Conference, are either already here, or will arrive today.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada, reached Liverpool at almost the same early hour this morning as General Botha, from the Transvaal, landed at Southampton. These two last arrivals are certainly the most interesting of all, especially that of Botha, a few years ago the military leader of the Boers and the wonderfully able opponent of Lord Kitchener in the field, now the honoured guest of the British Government, as the first Premier of the newest of our Colonies.

It is not so long ago that I repeatedly met Botha, in the company of two other famous Boer generals, De la Rey and De Wet, at the Strand Hotel which they had made their headquarters, during their negotiations with Mr. J. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain.

Between then and now, what a striking contrast! The contrast between the persons whom I, as a newspaper man, then met, both physically and morally, was not less striking. De Wet, rough and outspoken, was the type of the uncouth and shrewd business farmer, turned into a conspicuous and gifted Guerilla leader at a moment's notice, de la Rey, the type of the gentleman farmer, simple and entirely dignified, looking every whit a Huguenot of the old and aristocratic brand, whereas in Botha one could see the born diplomat rather than the military man, the polished man of the world, intended rather to lead than to be led, but politely stubborn and an extremely dexterous, also tactical, fencer.

I never spoke with Botha, or indeed with the two other Boer generals in anything else than Dutch, although Botha was as great a master of polished English as of "high" and "African" Dutch. He told me, more than once, that he persistently refused to speak anything else but Dutch when conversing with Chamberlain, which necessitated the constant employment of interpreters. This seemed to annoy "Joey" considerably, because he knew that Botha could speak English as well as the then Colonial Secretary. But the more irritated Chamberlain showed himself during the conferences, the greater became Botha's glee.

I see from the accounts of Botha's reception at Southampton, which was, of course, very cordial and brilliant, that he means to keep up this little game during the coming Conference. He spoke in Dutch, when replying to Southampton's address of welcome and good wishes, and his speech had to be translated into English by an interpreter! I am wondering what he is going to do in Whitehall next week.

What is highly interesting at the present moment is the circumstance that the above conferences took place in the very room, where the Colonial Conference will meet on Monday for the first time. It is a famous and already historic apartment, but not so famous and historic, it goes without saying, as the former conference room, at the old Colonial Office, which it replaced when the present Colonial Office was built. But one souvenir in it has been preserved by Lord Carnarvon. This is the magnificent marble mantelpiece which adorned the old room where Wellington met Blücher on a tremendous occasion in history. Oh! if that mantelpiece could but think and speak! What marvellous tales could it unfold!

Well, it is in this spacious apartment that the Colonial Premiers will be received on Monday next, and be welcomed by the Prime Minister with a short address. Here is a list of the Colonial Premiers and Ministers, with the exception (as stated) of Sir R. Bond.

CANADA.

The Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G. C. M. G.
The Hon. W. E. Fielding (Minister of Finance).
The Hon. W. Patterson (Minister of Customs).
The Hon. Sir F. W. Borden, K. C. M. G.
(Minister of Militia and Defence).

The Hon. L. P. Brodeur (Minister of Marine).

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

The Hon. A. Deakin.
The Hon. Sir W. Lyne, K. C. M. G. (Minister of Customs).

NEW ZEALAND.

The Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, K. C. M. G.

CAPE COLONY.

The Hon. L. S. Jameson, C. B.
The Hon. Dr. Smartt (Commissioner of Works).

NATAL.

The Hon. F. R. Moor.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The Right Hon. Sir R. Bond, K. C. M. G.

TRANSVAAL.

General Botha.

The programme after the speech of welcome by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, is not apparently fully settled yet. The Conference will make its

arrangements as it proceeds. The whole of the first sitting will be devoted to a discussion of the order of procedure to be adopted at subsequent meetings. It is believed that three sittings a week will be held, and that all the deliberations will be private. If the representatives of the Press are not admitted, it is probable that brief official statements covering the business transacted during the day will be issued at the close of each sitting.

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That is indeed demanded by all the Colonial Premiers and Ministers, but several would be glad if accredited representatives of the Press, British, Colonial, possibly also Continental, could be present, thus ensuring full publicity which many liberal journals also advocate.

Their contention is, and a good deal can be urged for that contention, that so many false statements about the Conference, its doings, and its issues, have been spread by the Chamberlain press, that it would be highly desirable to ventilate the much debated question for instance, of preferential trade between the Colonies, and to hear exactly what the Colonial Premiers have to say about it. The advocates of Fiscal Reform, only another term for downright Protection, as it existed before the abolition of the Corn Laws, have been busy lately exploiting the Conference for their own purposes, and in a way that has provoked the ire of more than one Unionist newspaper of the calibre of the *Morning Post*, and elicited warm protests, even from Colonial Premiers, who are staunch preferential traders themselves.

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It has been boldly asserted by journals like the *Standard* and the *Express* that the *conférenciers* have come over with the determination to "dictate" Preferential Trade to free-trade England, and that they would hold a separate Conference among themselves, if they were defeated in Whitehall next week.

It was, of course, an absurd canard, for the Colonial Premiers have neither the power, nor probably the will to "dictate" to the mother country, as any such attempt would irretrievably ruin all prospects of the Conference as a whole, frustrating even the aims and plans of those who, without "thinking imperially", are rightly of the opinion that imperial unity is feasible in many things, for example legislation, weights and measures etc., even if not attainable in such matters as imperial defence, imperial representation (by a Council), and Preferential Trade.

Yet, balked in their tactics in one direction the so-called Fiscal Reformers have tried another. But some of their methods have degenerated into childishness, not to call them by a worse name.

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Could anything be more naïf for instance than the question put on Thursday last to the Prime Minister, in the Commons, by Mr. Evelyn Cecil? He asked the Prime Minister whether his attention had been called to the resolution unanimously passed at the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, held in London on March 6, stating that the issue of the Colonial Conference would largely determine the nature of the future relations between the mother-country and the Colonies, and therefore praying his Majesty's Government to afford a warm welcome to the Colonial representatives, and so to conduct the negotiations that reciprocal trading within the Empire might be promoted and that the ties of sentiment might be supplemented by the equally strong ties of self-interest furnished by reciprocal trading; and what effect he could see his way to give to the resolution. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had solemnly to declare that "A cordial welcome will, of course, be given by his Majesty's Government to the representatives of the Colonies whom we have invited to come to London. It seems to be hardly necessary for this body of gentlemen who constitute the Associated Chambers of Commerce to crave such a reception", and "the subject of Preferential Trade, as the hon.

member is aware, occupies a prominent place on the list of subjects to be discussed."

It was, of course, nonsensical to put such a question, and Mr. Evelyn Cecil richly deserved a good snubbing, for he knew perfectly well, in fact everybody knows, that the treatment accorded and to be accorded to the Colonial Premiers, not only by the Government, but also by the merchant princes of the City and all the highest and best in the land, will be on a grand, indeed a princely scale.

They are to be entertained everywhere most lavishly, and the list of entertainments in their honour is a formidable one.

As a social event the Conference is bound to be a great success. But, whether it will also lead to large and practical results, political and fiscal, that is another matter altogether.

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CHURCH SERVICES.

ALL SAINTS' (ENGLISH) CHURCH,
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Wednesday, April 17th. 11.0 a.m. Matins and Litany.
Thursday, April 18th. 8.0 a.m. Holy Communion.
Friday, April 19th. 11.0 a.m. Matins and Litany.
Chaplain: The Rev. C. A. Moore, M. A., B. C. L.
Hon. assistant Chaplain: The Rev. M. S. Farmer, M. A.

THE AMERICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.

Reichsplatz 5, at the head of Reichs Strasse.
Friday, April 19th. Litany 10.0 a.m.
The Rev. J. F. Butterworth, M. A., Rector.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

Bernhard Strasse 2, at corner of Bismarck Strasse and Winkelmann Strasse.—Services every Sunday at 11.0 a.m. Communion on the first Sunday of the month.—The Rev. J. Davis Bowden, Minister, Bernhard Strasse 2, I.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES.

THE BRITISH LEGATION: Elisen Strasse 5c.
Minister Resident: *The Viscount Gough*.

THE BRITISH CONSULATE: Altmarkt 16.
British Consul: *H. Palmié, Esq.*

THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL: Ammon Strasse 2, p.
American Consul General: *T. St. John Gaffney, Esq.*

G. WIRSING, American Dentist. Graduate of the Milwaukee Medical College (Dental Department).
Sidonien Strasse 10 b, corner Prager Strasse. Tel.: 9987.

A KING'S TITLE.

The full title of Chulalongkorn, King of Siam, who has just sailed for France, is:—

"Most high, illustrious, invincible, and powerful Monarch, crowned with 101 golden crowns, each adorned with nine species of precious gems, greatest, purest, and most divine master of immortal souls, who sees all things, Sovereign-Emperor, under the shadow of whose wings lies the rich and incomparable Kingdom of Siam, King, to whom is subject the most fruitful of all lands lit by the sun, greatest of lords, whose palace is of fine gold and gems, divine master of the golden thrones, and of the white and red elephants, Sovereign god of the nine kinds of gods, King who is like unto the sun at its zenith, and like the full moon, King whose glance is more dazzling than the orb of the morning, King who is above all emperors, monarchs, and potentates of the universe, from the rising to the setting sun."

MORBID REALISM.

The struggle for unusual novelty in literature and drama has carried an Austrian playwright to a point which probably marks a record in this destructive competition. It has hitherto been regarded as still one of the canons that men and women, like the dumb beasts of the slaughter house, shall be permitted to draw their last breath before the post-mortem processes begin. Herr Voss, however, the well-known Austrian dramatist, looking around for subjects for professional dissection, cast his eyes upon Signor D'Annunzio and Signora Duse, and forthwith proceeded to work his will upon them. He has woven the poet and the tragedienne into a drama of love and art which we are assured, whatever its meed of success, will at least create a vivid impression. Only the play is a drama with no climax, as is fitting anyway in the case of personages still alive, though Herr Voss is said to be actuated rather by the prospect of a "sequel" than by any sense of reticence.

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