

Italy by—

The Chevalier T. Catalani, Italian Chargé d'Affaires in London.

The Netherlands by—

M. W. A. P. Verkerk Pistorius, Director-General of Direct Taxes, Customs, and Excise in the Department of Finance.

M. C. J. C. Van de Ven, Inspector of Customs and Excise at Rotterdam.

Russia by—

M. Kamensky, Real Councillor of State.

Secretaries to the Conference—

Mr. H. Farnall, of the Foreign Office, Mr. A. E. Bateman, of the Board of Trade, and M. Boizard, Sub-Director in the French Ministry of Finance.

Assistant Secretaries—

Mr. Eyre A. Crowe, of the Foreign Office, and Mr. C. A. Harris, of the Colonial Office.

Attachés to the Conference—

Mr. W. E. T. Lawrance, Private Secretary to Baron H. de Worms.

Mr. Edmund Gosse, Translator to the Board of Trade.

Mr. Algernon Law, of the Foreign Office.

The President states that Count Kuefstein, M. Catalani, and Mr. White much regret to be unable to attend the sitting.

The President addresses the meeting as follows:—

“Gentlemen and dear colleagues,

“We resume our sittings at the date fixed at our last meeting. I regret that we have not been able to transmit to you in the course of the month of March last the Memoranda of all the Powers represented at the Conference, because, I am sorry to say, we did not receive them in time. Nevertheless, Her Majesty's Government proposed to the different countries that the Conference should reassemble to-day, and this proposal was unanimously accepted. The Netherlands Government only suggested a further delay with a view to a more thorough examination of these important documents. This request was quite legitimate, and I can assure the Netherlands Delegates that Her Majesty's Government is always anxious to consider any proposals coming from their Government. But in the present circumstances Her Majesty's Government thought it best that the sittings should be resumed to-day, because the British proposal had already been accepted by the great majority of the Powers.

“You have already received, through the diplomatic channel, the German, Austro-Hungarian, Belgium, Danish, and Netherlands Memoranda. I now have the honour to lay before you those of France and Russia, as well as the diplomatic communications which Her Majesty's Government have received from the Swedish and Brazilian Governments.

“You will have observed that these Memoranda, and particularly those of Germany and Austria-Hungary, demand the adhesion to the proposed Union of all sugar-producing countries, Brazil and the United States being especially mentioned.

“I have reason to hope that the Conference will find all the guarantees desired in the note of the Brazilian Minister.

“As regards the United States, I beg leave to make a few remarks on their position in this question.

“The United States give a bounty, but it is a very inconsiderable one. Writing to the British Legation at Washington on the 21st March last, Mr. Bayard explains that the question of General Tariff and revenue revision is now pending in the House of Representatives, and that under these circumstances it would be contrary to the Parliamentary usage of the United States for the Government at this time to become a party to the proposed Convention as presented by the Conference. But Mr. Bayard adds:—

“Article VII of that draft provides for the subsequent adhesion of States not originally signing the Convention, so that an attitude of reserve in this regard does not prejudice the liberty of subsequent action by this Government in the premises.”

“These words allow me to believe that the United States will not remain outside the Union, although they prefer waiting for the moment when the other Governments may have definitively settled the details of the Convention.

“The United States are again represented at our meetings by their Chargé d'Affaires