2. Working with Bruce

Summary

The Australian Dried Fruits Association took the campaign for tariff preference, summed up in a memorandum by McDougall, to the Premiers’ Conference late in 1921. The Federal Government was persuaded to raise the issue of increasing preference with the British Government, which refused to consider a measure increasing the cost of food. A delegation to help clear stocks of Australian tinned fruits in London included McDougall, who gained the approval of Stanley Melbourne Bruce, a young and very new Federal Treasurer in 1922, for his continuing to campaign for tariff preference while in London. By the time McDougall reached London, Bruce had replaced W. M. Hughes as Prime Minister. McDougall reported regularly to Bruce on the progress of his lobbying, and was asked to assist him prepare for the 1923 Imperial Conference. He helped write Bruce’s major speech to the Imperial Economic Conference, calling for imperial economic cooperation through the provision of ‘men, money and markets’. Soon after the conference, British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin sought endorsement of further tariffs at a general election. McDougall assisted Bruce in his support for Baldwin’s case and also urged Bruce to ensure that Australia’s rural industries were organised for efficient marketing. With the election lost and an anti-tariff minority Labour Government in power in London, Bruce summoned McDougall to Australia in 1924 to help prepare legislation for organisation schemes for industries including dried fruits. It was agreed between the two that McDougall should return to London, paid partly by the Federal Government for lobbying work and partly by the new Dried Fruits Export Control Board, of which he would be the London Secretary. By this time Bruce and McDougall had developed a solid working partnership, the nature of which is discussed at the end of the chapter.

November 1921: ‘A California within the Empire’

ADFA delegates from four States conferred in the temporary federal capital, Melbourne, in October 1921, and resolved to seek federal and State help in ‘agitating’ for a preferential duty on dried fruits in the United Kingdom. As ADFA deliberations concluded, senior ministers from all States were arriving for a premiers’ conference. On its first day, Barwell requested consideration of an additional agenda item concerning ‘some matter’ from the ADFA Conference.
An ADFA deputation wished to see the Prime Minister. H. D. Howie of Renmark and a Mr Victorsen of Clare saw Hughes at his home on Tuesday, 1 November, the Melbourne Cup Day holiday.1

Barwell’s ‘matter’ was yet another version of the paper that had occupied McDougall throughout 1921. A preliminary statement submitted to the conference set out the problem: London prices were already falling to half the wartime level, and might reach a point where export would not pay. The present acreage was expected to increase more than sevenfold, and ADFA’s expensive three-year advertising campaign had brought sales in Australia to saturation point. With the paper was McDougall’s six-page memorandum prepared for Northcliffe, headed ‘A California within the Empire’. It presented the case from the British point of view, including likely returns from fruit-growing for a settler and opportunities for British investment. Both depended upon a preference rate of 3d per pound. The paper suggested, as a quid pro quo, an invitation to British returned soldiers to work side-by-side with ‘old comrades in arms’, to enjoy the healthy lifestyle and community spirit of an industry already established for them. It answered objections to taxing food: even at a high price of one shilling per pound, dried fruits would constitute the cheapest form of fruit food. The Imperial Exchequer would benefit from customs duties until ‘a great producing centre has been built up within the empire which can supply all its needs’.2 McDougall already understood the advantage of propounding the vision from a central point of view.

Hughes promised ADFA delegates full support.3 But next day he told the assembled premiers he held ‘no hope whatever’ of a British Government agreeing to increase the price of the people’s food. Nor did Barwell. The premiers spent much of that day seeking other means to sell more Australian fruit. Stories of poor-quality fruit and packing, inadequate advertising and poor comparison with Californian fruit were shared round the table. All agreed ‘immediate action is imperative’. ‘We cannot attack a more serious problem’, said Victoria’s Premier, H. S. W. Lawson.4 Their decisions formed the major part of Hughes’ statement at the conclusion of the conference. The Federal Government and State Governments would work with producers to ensure a standard product through uniform inspection and grading, and would jointly fund commercial representatives overseas. Migration and marketing were linked, said Hughes: ‘successful land settlement involves more than merely placing men upon suitable

1 Argus, 31 October 1921; MP, 4 November 1921; NAA, A9504/1, 3, 31 October 1921.
2 NAA, A458, K500/2, part 1.
3 MP, 3 March 1922.
4 NAA, A9504/1, 3, 2 November 1921.
areas...We must find remunerative overseas markets for what they produce. ‘This was particularly true of the fruit industries, whose very success ‘now threatens us with disaster’.5

Although politicians had written off preference, ADFA persisted. Its conference had appointed a committee of five to pursue the campaign. McDougall, one of the five, explained his vision to his sister. Once the Federal Government was brought ‘into line’, it might send a full statement of the case, ‘nicely printed’, to England, followed by representatives ‘to push the matter, to lobby in the House, and to try and get the necessary backing...The committee all say that I must be the one to go to England.’6

ADFA had discussed the idea of sending irrigation pioneer William Chaffey and McDougall to England early in 1921, but ADFA funds were low after a poor season and the expense of the publicity campaign, so the idea was put aside.7 Almost a year later the idea remained in doubt. South Australian delegates favoured the trip but Chaffey did not. McDougall wondered, without much hope, whether the Federal Government could be persuaded to share the cost. He was reluctant to go without his family and foresaw jealousies within ADFA.8 Official travel overseas was a rare and costly privilege, avoided as far as possible by making use of Australians already overseas on other business. It could very easily create resentment.

A two-day Premiers’ Conference in January 1922 dealt with matters left over from the November meeting. Barwell, with support from Victoria’s Lawson, fulfilled a promise to his State Assembly to continue pressure on preference. Hughes had confirmed with Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill that a British Government would not tax the people’s food. Hughes suggested ‘a first class business man’ could achieve sufficient market share in Britain without preference. Barwell countered that a preference on dried fruits already existed; it was simply not high enough. He recalled the proposal to make fruit-growing land available for settlement in exchange for preference. Still doubtful, Hughes promised to telegraph Churchill again.9

Much of the cable sent on 28 January might well have been drafted by McDougall himself. It extolled the ‘almost unlimited’ possibilities of the dried-fruits industry, the capacity of the British market to absorb the product, its economic importance to the Empire and its direct bearing on settlement of British ex-soldiers. Australian ministers in conference urged British assistance

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5 Argus, 5 November 1921.
6 NLA, MS6890/1/7, letter, probably to Kit. Page one is missing, but the content suggests it was written before the second Premiers’ Conference, probably in November or December 1921.
7 Ibid., letter to Mother, 7 March 1921.
8 Ibid., undated letter to Kit of November–December.
9 NAA, A9504/1, 3, 17–18 January 1922.
A New Idea Each Morning

to the industry in the form of a preferential tariff of one and a half pence per pound on currants and twopence on other fruits.\textsuperscript{10} The amount was less than ADFA wanted, but the British Government baulked at such an increase over existing rates. To achieve Australia’s request, the existing duty on foreign currants must rise from 2 to 14 shillings per cwt, assuming empire fruit was admitted duty-free. Duty on other fruits would almost double to at least 18 shillings and 8 pence.\textsuperscript{11} Britain would not accept so great an increase in the cost of a food largely consumed by the working classes, nor a possible loss of customs revenue if imports of foreign fruits liable to duty were to decrease in favour of free-entry empire produce. Despite ‘every sympathy’ with the object of the request, it was ‘quite impracticable’.\textsuperscript{12}

The ADFA committee would not give up. The proposals put to London had been ‘half-baked’ and bound to fail, claimed the Murray Pioneer. McDougall determined to answer the case against preference with more information, better presented. He asked the Commonwealth Statistician to help calculate just what effect an adequate preference would have on the British Exchequer. Armed with a conclusion that revenue would in fact increase by some £1,600,000 per annum, McDougall prepared a new, longer statement: ‘The Case for Preference.’\textsuperscript{13}

### The Fruit Delegation

In May 1922 McDougall was summoned to Melbourne to address ‘a special Ministerial Conference’ of the Murray States, arranged by Lawson to discuss preference. The conference requested further negotiations with London. It also agreed that the States should prepare ‘an attractive immigration offer as a quid pro quo’, and that States and Commonwealth together should fund a delegation of ‘practical men’ to put the case before influential people in England. State ministers for agriculture endorsed the proposals in Perth later that month.\textsuperscript{14}

A national conference of fruit-growers was called in August 1922 to effect measures to improve standards in the industry. It was attended by ministers for agriculture, more than 100 growers, and Hughes himself on the final day. The conference agenda included establishment of an Australian Advisory Fruit Council and State Advisory Boards, a national trademark, and inspection of

\textsuperscript{10} NAA, A11804, 1922/232; text reprinted in Argus, 28 January 1922.

\textsuperscript{11} Figure 7 shows that London wholesale prices in 1919–22 for lexias and currants ranged between £60 and £80 per ton (60–80 shillings per cwt). Prices for sultanas had been almost double that at their highest, but fell sharply after 1922. McDougall stated in his paper ‘A California on the Murray’ that the highest retail price was about one shilling per lb (equivalent to 112 shillings per cwt).

\textsuperscript{12} NAA, A11804, 1922/382, 24 March 1922.

\textsuperscript{13} MP, Editorial, 9 June 1922; report of McDougall’s speech to growers, 23 June; a version of ‘The Case for Preference’ published 7, 14, 21 and 28 July 1922.

\textsuperscript{14} MP, 12 May 1922; NAA, A457, Y300/7, McDougall to conference of fruit-growers, 14 August 1922.
grading and packing, storage and handling. But it was also required to approve ‘an urgently pressing matter’: the sending of a delegation to Britain in time to negotiate effectively for the new season’s deliveries. Arthur Rodgers, Federal Minister for Trade and Customs, dismissed suggestions that ‘either the Agent-General or the High Commissioner are the men for this job…it requires men who can go, with the weight of life-long experience and supported by the governments, to fight for every branch of the industry’.15

McDougall shared the platform with Rodgers, giving the meeting an account of negotiations with governments since the January Premiers’ Conference. Fellow South Australian, ADFA delegate A. E. Ross, countered any lingering reluctance: the real beneficiaries of the venture would be new ex-service growers who, without preference, would ‘make an unholy failure’ at ultimate cost to the taxpayer. The motion in support was carried unanimously.16 The delegation, comprising two irrigation growers, McDougall and Chaffey, and C. E. D. Meares, General Manager of the Coastal Farmers’ Co-operative of New South Wales, left for London on 20 November 1922, their work funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the States. Members would be paid a daily living and entertainment allowance of five guineas once they reached Britain and two guineas per day on board ship.17 McDougall left his block in the hands of his half-brother Norman.

The Murray Pioneer credited government support for the delegation to McDougall’s ‘able advocacy’ and ‘tireless persistence’. Speakers at a farewell dinner described him as ‘a technical expert in the question of preference’, a man of ‘bulldog tenacity’ and ‘dogged persistence’. McDougall replied modestly, but did claim to have ‘worn holes in about all the ministerial doormats in Melbourne and Adelaide’. The task of ‘preparing the British mind for preference’ would be an easy one if a Conservative Government were returned in a general election set for 15 November, ‘very difficult but not hopeless’ under a Labour/Liberal Government: ‘if British Labour men meant half of what they said it should not be impossible to convert them to a policy which had for its object the maintenance of a decent standard of living.’18

Before the Fruit Delegation left Melbourne, Rodgers handed them formal instructions. They were to advance sales of Australian dried, fresh and canned fruit. They were to consult with the Australian High Commissioner and State Agents-General on a campaign of persuasion and ‘judicious propaganda’ to

15 MP, 1 September 1922; NAA, A457, Y300/7, report of conference, pp. 72, 77.
16 Ibid., pp. 77–84.
17 NAA, M111, 1925, statement attached to McDougall’s letter to Bruce, 14 December 1925. See also LFSSA, 45, 14 December 1925, pp. 129–30.
18 MP, 10 November 1922.
merchants, brokers and large eating houses, and on means of disposing of stocks of canned fruit already built up in London. They were to report fortnightly to Rodgers, and the period of the mission was limited to six months.

But then the instructions took a surprising turn. At the fruit-growers’ conference Rodgers had explained that the delegation would ‘convince the consuming public of Britain, the merchants and the British Government that it was a wise thing to give preference to Australian fruit’. In Rodgers’ presence, McDougall had spoken at length on lobbying for preference. Now, the written instructions forbade it:

You are, under no circumstances, to approach the Imperial Government, British Ministers, or organised bodies on the question of Imperial Preference. This matter, the Commonwealth Government can delegate to no private individual. You may, of course, say that Australia will be represented by a full supply of choice fruits at the British Empire Exhibition…you should make no communications to the press either privately or otherwise.19

There was no recorded explanation for the reversal. The letter would have been drafted by Rodgers’ department, which had taken a conservative position in regard to preference throughout the preceding debate.20 It may have been bureaucratic inability to deal with an unorthodox proceeding. McDougall’s comment suggests something of the sort: ‘Rodgers tried to wind red tape around us but I had an eminently satisfactory interview with Bruce as to aims and objects.’21

Bruce

Stanley Melbourne Bruce was then Australia’s Federal Treasurer and was shortly to become Prime Minister. Bruce was born in Melbourne in 1883, the youngest child of John Munro Bruce, partner in the prominent softgoods importing firm Paterson, Laing and Bruce (PLB), and his wife, Ann. He was educated largely in Melbourne, though the family spent some time in England during his childhood. After his father’s death in 1901, he moved with his mother and invalid sister to England, studying law at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Bruce’s academic achievements were outweighed by his success in rowing; he was a member of the winning crew in 1904 and subsequently coached Cambridge crews. He was admitted to the English Bar and developed a practice in company

19 NAA, A458, 1500/2, part 1, Rodgers to Meares, Chaffey and McDougall, 9 November 1922.
20 NAA, A458, R508/1, various examples.
21 NLA, MS6890/1/8, letter to Norman, 10 November 1922.
PLB was substantially funded by British shareholders; Bruce became its London Chairman in 1906, while his brother Ernest managed the Australian operation.

In 1913 Bruce married Ethel Anderson, elegant daughter of a prominent Melbourne family. The marriage was a close and devoted one. The couple had no children, but took a keen interest in their many nieces and nephews. Bruce was commissioned in the British Army and fought in the Gallipoli campaign. He was awarded the Military Cross for leading a rescue of 42 isolated comrades and the *Croix de Guerre avec Palme* for support his battalion had given to the French. In October 1915 he suffered a severe knee wound and spent 18 months in hospitals before returning to Australia in 1917, still on crutches, to take over PLB after Ernest enlisted. After Ernest’s death in 1919, he became responsible for both the London and the Melbourne offices. He oversaw PLB’s increasing expansion and profitability, and also ensured a profit-sharing scheme was extended to junior staff.

During the war the Australian Labor Party had split on the issue of conscription. Prime Minister W.M. Hughes left the party with almost one-third of its MPs, and joined with the pro-conscriptionist Liberals to form the Nationalist Party. In 1917 the Federal seat of Flinders on the outskirts of Melbourne became vacant and Bruce was persuaded to stand for the Nationalists at a by-election. Despite a myth that he stumbled unwillingly into politics, it has been argued that he had a clear agenda and, using the ‘guise’ of a businessman who disliked politics, he was able to criticise the Government and yet accept most of its legislation. He claimed to stand for ‘efficiency and economy in the conduct of affairs’; he urged ‘business methods’ in government development of industry and government promotion of immigration and irrigation. He was elected to the House of Representatives on 11 May 1918, one of very few returned soldiers at that time. In 1919 he was sent by the Government to investigate repatriation systems in Britain, the United States and Canada. In the general election campaign at the end of that year he claimed to stand for maintenance of the British Empire, a living wage, a health insurance scheme, soldier settlement, development of markets in Asia and tariffs to create new secondary industries.

In the 1919 general election, the Nationalists won 37 seats and Labor 27; 11 Country Party members generally supported the Nationalists, without formal agreement. In 1921 Bruce was obliged to spend several months in London on PLB business. While there, he was appointed senior Australian representative at the League of Nations, where he spoke graphically of the horrors of war, saying: ‘If the League of Nations goes, the hope of mankind goes also.’ As Bruce returned

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to Australia in October, Hughes offered him the post of Minister for Trade and Customs. Bruce refused, but did accept a subsequent offer of Treasurer. Members of the National Union, backers of the Nationalist Party, wanted the appointment of a businessman. Bruce resigned from PLB when his appointment was announced on 21 December. His only budget, in 1922, proposed reduced income and company taxes, reduced tariffs on imports of galvanised iron, wire and tractors, and a bounty for local production of these essential products for farmers. He established a sinking fund to redeem the domestic war debt within 50 years, based on the practice of other developed countries. He claimed that his measures were inspired by resolutions of the International Financial Conference in 1920. He also paid special attention to war service homes and soldier settlement.23

Many members of the National Union were critical of Hughes’ policies as extravagant and socialist. The leader of the Country Party, Earle Page, disliked him. At the general election in December 1922—the first to use preferential voting widely—Nationalist numbers fell to 28 seats. Labor rose to 30, leaving the Country Party with 14 seats and holding the balance of power. That party decided not to support any government led by Hughes. Bruce, aged thirty-nine, became Prime Minister on 9 February 1923. He has been called the ‘architect’ of the enduring coalition between Nationalists (later United Australia Party and subsequently the Liberal Party of Australia) and the Country Party (later the National Party and now The Nationals). His policies appealed to interest groups including business and returned servicemen; his speeches, though workmanlike, impressed with solid content; one observer described him as ‘ponderous and measured…at his best when addressing Chambers of Commerce or trade meetings’.24 But no doubt his courteous and reserved demeanour, enhanced by a commanding stature, contrasted favourably with that of the mercurial and sometimes irascible Hughes.

Although he would come to be respected and influential, and to have wide access at high levels in British and international politics, Bruce was not naturally gregarious. For much of the time he and Ethel lived quietly, enjoying travel, golf, theatre and the company of family and close friends. It has been suggested that his obduracy and apparent aloofness may have masked ‘a sense of insecurity and melancholy’, and even at times depression. His family life had been marked by loss: his father committed suicide in 1901, as did his brother Ernest in 1919. His sister died in 1908 and his mother four years later.25

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24 Lee, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, p. 20.
Bruce had been marked out from his schooldays as a leader; in his military career and at PLB he demonstrated a natural ability. He valued ‘order, tradition, structure and discipline’. His primary loyalties were to nation and empire, the interests of which he believed to be inseparable. As a leader, he could look beyond political boundaries and personal oddities to make use of talented individuals. He had formed a government with Page and worked constructively with him despite Page’s ‘habitual incoherence and tendency to giggle’. While he could inspire loyalty and confidence in his supporters, and respect even more widely, his lack of a ‘common touch’ and refusal to bow to opinion created enemies. Opponents would characterise him as a conservative Anglophile and representative of big business. He ‘saw himself as a modern man’ looking to international cooperation to prevent future wars and build a more prosperous world. As a businessman depending on international trade himself, he would always aim to facilitate and encourage its expansion. As a political leader of a country dependent on primary exports, he understood the needs of the rural sector and the importance of marketing its products. In the later years of his prime ministership, his determination to take a hard line with maritime unrest strengthened the forces against him.

**Lobbying for Preference**

As Federal Treasurer, Bruce had visited Renmark with members of the Murray Waters Commission, a few months before his meeting with McDougall in November 1922, and just after a period of record rains. Despite being bogged and spattered with mud en route, Bruce was said to be impressed with the construction works in progress, and promised early attention to a telephone connection between Mildura and Renmark. There is no evidence that he met McDougall then, but the experience and a shared vision of the area’s potential gave them common ground. Bruce was persuaded to endorse McDougall’s plan of action. Writing just after Bruce’s appointment as Prime Minister, McDougall tactfully reminded him of their agreement:

...you were good enough to clearly state your views as to the best methods to adopt in England. Very briefly stated your views were that the main duty of the Delegation was to prepare the ground for further Preference proposals by the Commonwealth Government, and that the

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26 Ibid., pp. 9, 33.
28 MP, 12 May 1922.
best method to adopt was by personal interviews with the right people, and other quiet unobtrusive methods. My own views entirely concurred with your own.29

McDougall thus had two objectives: sales promotion with the Fruit Delegation as instructed by Rodgers, and covert lobbying for preference sanctioned by Bruce. He welcomed the return of a Conservative Government days before he sailed. By the time he reached England, however, Prime Minister Bonar Law had repeated his earlier pledge not to tax food. Undaunted by this difficulty, or by Rodgers’ instructions, McDougall used every spare moment from a busy round of sales promotion and investigation, ‘going very hard…seeing people morning noon and night’ about preference. No-one ‘uttered the word impossible, except the High Commissioner [former Prime Minister Sir Joseph Cook] who did not understand the scheme’, although in the City ‘one and all emphasise the very great difficulties that will have to be overcome’.30

This early period in London was effectively an apprenticeship, where McDougall applied himself to learn the skills of the lobbyist: putting a persuasive case, whether in person or in writing; mastery of his subject matter; and an understanding, even empathy, with those he sought to persuade. Talking, especially informally, came easily, but he claimed to find writing difficult. It was to become integral to his work, in a constant flow of memoranda and in the press. He began gradually, drafting replies, refutations and corrections to letters and public statements criticising Australian tariff policy, to be published over the signature of Australia House officials as he maintained a policy of anonymity. He cultivated journalists of like mind, particularly at The Times, and at first was content to ‘inspire’ articles. Very soon he was ‘doing much more journalism than I ever imagined would fall to my lot…I have no style and mightily little ear or eye for bad faults, and a 1500 word article is some joke to me’.31 With experience, and later the confidence of a well-received book behind him, he was to become a contributor of major articles, often in series of three or more. He spent a great deal of time in editorial offices; his articles in The Times were usually part of a coordinated campaign, timed to advantage and frequently echoed by editorials.

Within a few weeks, McDougall could report to Bruce sympathetic views from importers of dried fruits; a promising contact within the Colonial Office; an interview with the President of the Board of Trade; approaches to the Federation of British Industries, numbering 200 Members of Parliament amongst its

29 NLA, MS6890/1/8, copy of McDougall’s letter to Bruce, 8 February 1923, sent to Norman for circulation in ADFA.
30 Ibid., letters to Norman, 4 January and 8 February 1923.
31 Ibid., letter to Norman, 29 August 1923.
Working with Bruce

2. Working with Bruce

Membership, and to Lionel Curtis of the Round Table; editorial support from the Morning Post and Daily Mail; and favourable views at The Times. British commercial treaties with Spain and Greece, however, remained an obstacle.32

Bruce’s elevation to the prime ministership delighted him: ‘I hope...that it will be a new bright page on the history of Australia.’ He quickly sent a brief letter of congratulation with a longer letter, which included the reminder of their agreement quoted above, a report on progress and assurance that as the names of the delegates were not associated with preference, Rodgers’ ‘very hurriedly given’ instructions were being observed. But he also explained that the campaign had been ‘forced open’. Press support of Australia’s preference proposals had followed the ‘unexpected’ publication by The Times Trade Supplement of McDougall’s report to the most recent ADFA conference. He confessed to Norman: ‘I did not exactly write either article but I entertained the writers of both to separate dinners!! I hope I shall not sacrifice my figure on the altar of preference.’33

The Imperial Conference, 1923

McDougall began his mission hoping to stay longer than the six months allowed for the Fruit Delegation. Before leaving Adelaide, he had made tentative arrangements for his family to join him in the English spring. An Imperial Conference, expected in June, would provide the opportunity for pressure at the highest level to seal the preference campaign. He believed there would be work to do following up any broad decision, and hoped the task would be his. When the conference was delayed until autumn, beyond the six-month limit of the delegation, the NSW and Victorian Premiers, both then in London, were persuaded to send almost identical cables to the Prime Minister, stating that McDougall was doing ‘excellent work’, he should remain for the conference and the cost could be covered by financial arrangements made for the Fruit Delegation.34 The South Australian Government, lobbied by ADFA, joined in the request; South Australian winemaker T. C. Angove saw Bruce; and Meares, by then back in Australia, also dealt with the Federal Government. All governments and departments involved assented and the High Commission in London was formally notified of approval on 8 June. Chaffey departed and McDougall, still officially the Fruit Delegation, remained to prepare for the Imperial Conference.

An Australian Prime Minister could expect to return with some reflected glow from the glories of empire. But his electorate, and a modest federal budget,
could not accept undue squandering of funds for accompanying officials. The party of advisers accompanying Bruce would be small. He might well supplement his team with any likely Australian who happened to be in Europe, and would make good use of his long and expensive journey by staying on for several weeks, publicising and attending to Australia’s interests. All of this had occurred to McDougall. He wrote to Meares suggesting he join Bruce’s ship in Naples, to help brief him for the conference, but was told that his presence would not be required. Then suddenly, early in September, he was delighted to be ordered to meet Bruce’s ship at Port Said: ‘This will give me five days with Bruce, Wilson, Oakley and Fred and a splendid opportunity to press home the points I particularly want to make.’35 Senator R. V. Wilson, Assistant Minister, was the only other politician in the party travelling from Australia. Officials were the Comptroller-General of Customs, R. McK. Oakley, Solicitor-General, Sir Robert Garran, an adviser on defence and another on foreign policy. There were also secretaries to Bruce and Wilson and a publicity officer, F. M. [Fred] Cutlack, lawyer, journalist and author of a much-publicised volume of the official war history, who was also McDougall’s brother-in-law. Four prominent businessmen acted as advisers: Herbert Brookes and Claude Reading, both members of the Commonwealth Board of Trade; London-based John Sanderson, who represented Australia on a committee advising the British Board of Trade; and Walter Young, General Manager of Elders and an active promoter of orderly marketing, particularly of wool and wheat.

McDougall was never so overawed by the great and powerful as to lose sight of their use to his cause. As he prepared papers and arguments aboard the Orsova steaming towards Port Said, he sensed the approach of a momentous leap for his cause and for his career: ‘I suppose the next six weeks are going to be immensely interesting, perhaps decisive as to Preference, Inter Empire Trade, Baldwin and Bruce’s governments and perhaps for FLMcD!!’ FLMcD had his objectives in order of priority and, while he placed Australian interests—preference on dried fruits, on canned fruit and on wine—first, Bruce should express his policy ‘in harmony with’ British agriculture and British consumers, and with broader imperial interests: the proper organisation of empire trade, giving empire producers competitive advantage over foreigners and eliminating price fluctuations.36 McDougall had prepared the ground with an article in the Yorkshire Post, written by ‘an Australian correspondent who has made a special study of the problems to be discussed at the Imperial Economic Conference’. It argued for reciprocal tariff preferences and access to British markets for Australian producers labouring in a sparsely populated continent of enormous potential.

35 NLA, MS6890/1/8, letter to Norman, 5 September 1923.
36 Ibid., letter to Norman, 26 September 1923.
one unlikely in the foreseeable future to become a significant manufacturing economy. Australia needed men and markets.\(^{37}\) The day before Port Said, he confessed to apprehension about the fate of his cause and his future:

> Everything is so dependent upon what is forthcoming next month. Tomorrow and the few days following will show me whether Bruce will be the man for the occasion. The occasion is here, I perhaps have done a little mite to prepare and to bring the occasion but Bruce can if he will bring it to the climax.\(^{38}\)

The Imperial Conference of 1923 was in some ways the first of a new era. No longer overshadowed by the Great War and subsequent treaty-making, it was in fact two conferences, held concurrently over some six weeks, seeking to define how the British Empire would meet the political and economic challenges of a difficult postwar world. The Imperial Conference opened on 1 October, chaired by the British Prime Minister, and dealt with foreign policy, defence, communications and legal issues. The President of the Board of Trade, Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame, chaired the Imperial Economic Conference, beginning the following day. Its agenda included financial assistance for imperial development, technical research and communication, commercial facilities, currency and exchange, forestry, livestock and the Imperial Institute. Bruce had worried that absence threatened his tenuous hold on office; he tailored parliamentary sittings to include a brief but busy session before his departure after which Parliament would not sit again until his return. The arrangement meant that Bruce could not reach London until a week after the conference opening; its program was modified to allow him to speak at the Economic Conference as soon as he arrived. He was met on arrival by Lord Milner, inspiration for the ‘imperial visionaries’, who became a close associate and encouraged him to promote imperial economic cooperation.\(^{39}\)

Bruce proved indeed to be the man for the occasion. McDougall had ‘worked up’ the opening address with him as they sailed through the Mediterranean. Its theme was an imperial vision very much along the lines of McDougall’s *Yorkshire Post* article, summed up in the words ‘Men, Money and Markets’. Its thesis was that markets were paramount; without them migration and development would at best be slow and limited. About one-quarter of it was devoted to figures drawn from McDougall’s increasing interest in proving the value of Australia’s tariff preference to British manufactures and of dominion markets to British employment. Bruce countered arguments against tariff preference on the grounds of harm to British trade relations, surveyed tariff practices of

\(^{37}\) Ibid., cutting from *Yorkshire Post*, 7 September 1923, with letter to Norman, 11 September 1923.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., letter to Norman, 26 September 1923.

other colonial powers and recommended his audience study, as McDougall undoubtedly had, the report of the US Tariff Commission. He quoted Cobden: ‘I doubt the wisdom, I sincerely doubt the prudence, of a great body of industrial people to allow themselves to live in dependence on foreign Powers for the supply of food and raw material.’ He described the threat from products of cheap labour and recalled the 1917 resolution on imperial preference: ‘the last expression of the view held by a Conference of this character.’ Australia would again subscribe to a similar resolution, but would prefer ‘something practical to give effect to what we actually believe in’. He described the potential of the Murray irrigation scheme and its increasing production dependent on markets: ‘if we have no markets we cannot have great migration, we cannot have great development in the near future.’ Interestingly Bruce altered McDougall’s order of objectives, placing assistance to the British farmer first, before dominion producers, with the British consumer last. He surveyed possible methods: tariffs, subsidies, import licensing or import control, and recommended an imperial royal commission to make recommendations on these alternatives. Finally he apologised for the length—26 typed pages—of his speech.40

McDougall sat watching the faces of British ministers as Bruce delivered the speech they had written together ‘extraordinarily well’. It was ‘a day of some personal triumph’. That afternoon, Lloyd-Greame, who less than a year earlier had declared increased preference impossible, announced a reversal of government policy, to allow full preference—10/6d per cwt—on all dried fruits except currants, about which there would be further discussion, and a new duty giving a preference of 5 shillings per cwt on canned fruit.41 The campaign, it seemed, had been won.

The General Election of 1923

It was a brief triumph. Bruce learned next day that the decision on tariffs had been made by the British Government well before his arrival and that the new Conservative Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, long committed to tariff reform, intended to take the country to a general election on the issue. Baldwin believed a wider tariff policy offered a solution to the ‘gaping wound’ of unemployment—his government’s most pressing problem—as well as falling exports and dominion demands for secure markets.42 With further depression predicted for the approaching winter, Baldwin and his ministers sought means to stimulate industries. Suggestions included the visionary program: increasing

41 NLA, MS6890/1/8, letter to Norman, 11 October 1923.

Proposals to extend the McKenna and 1919 duties and to impose ‘safeguarding’ measures against dumping had been approved by Cabinet in August. Wider reform would break the 1922 pledge not to extend tariffs without another election. As imperial leaders gathered, the question in government had become not whether, but when, that election might be held. Besides aiding the economy, tariff reform might also heal a split in the Conservative Party and forestall a rumoured declaration of support for tariffs by Lloyd George. Senior Conservatives consulted Bruce as to ‘how far we can go at the Conference and also what we are to go to the country upon and when’. Cabinet members did not support immediate action; even keen tariff reformers like Leo Amery urged cautious and slow preparation. Baldwin hesitated, giving a ‘somewhat Delphic’ speech to his party conference on 25 October and choosing, on the final day of the Imperial Conference, not to deliver a prepared speech explaining a decision to go to the polls. Three days later, on 12 November, he sought a dissolution.\footnote{Barnes and Nicholson, \textit{Amery Diaries}, Vol. I, p. 348; Dilks, \textit{Neville Chamberlain}, pp. 341, 344; Middlemas and Barnes, \textit{Baldwin}, p. 23.}

Those who had advised caution were proved right. The party did not reunite; its case for tariff reform was unprepared; there was substantial press opposition and too little time to educate the electorate. Although the Liberal Party could expect to attract free-traders who normally voted Conservative, and to hold much of their working-class support for fear of ‘dear bread’, there was little else to distinguish Liberal policy from Labour, and Labour reaped the benefit. At the general election on 6 December, the Conservative Party lost its majority, but remained the largest party in the House of Commons, with 258 seats. Labour won its largest number to that date, 191; the Liberals were left with 159.\footnote{T. O. Lloyd, \textit{Empire to Welfare State: English History 1906–1985}, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986, pp. 127–8.}

Baldwin chose not to resign immediately, forcing the Liberals to decide which party to support. They chose Labour, possibly because the Liberal Party was more likely to survive a brief alliance with the left, whereas alliance with the Conservatives might encourage a move for fusion.\footnote{Ibid., p. 129.} Thus, a censure motion on 21 January 1924 brought a minority Labour Government into power. Labour tended to oppose tariffs to keep food cheap, and was now dependent...
on free-trade Liberal support. Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Snowden, a determined free-trader, abolished the McKenna duties and reduced revenue tariffs on sugar, tea, coffee and cocoa. The preference increases announced at the Imperial Conference, which involved no increase in duty, were to be put to a free vote in Parliament in June 1924.

McDougall had expected the election campaign to be a full-scale, measured debate to which he could apply ‘all the propaganda we can work to disarm hostility to our preference’. When the election date was uncertain, he suggested he should remain in England long enough to ensure the duties announced at the Imperial Conference survived the budget. Bruce agreed that he should stay at least until the election, and later extended his approval until the budget, due in May 1924. In the weeks after the Imperial Conference, Bruce toured the country, accompanied much of the time by McDougall, who drafted speeches and articles on the tariff question, expounded his own views on the needs of the dried-fruits industry, and developed the partnership begun on the Orvietto. The announcement of a December election, and its outcome, shifted their focus. The preferences announced at the Imperial Conference might now depend on Labour support, and McDougall congratulated himself on his foresight in establishing early links with Labour. At his first shipboard meeting with Bruce and his economic advisers, he had argued that agreement with Conservatives could not be permanent without Labour support, and wrote ruefully of the ‘rapid and cruel vindication of my prophecy’, adding, ‘but again, it’s interesting’. ‘I am now all out on propaganda for Labour. It was a damned wise move on my part to get in touch with Labour people before the Conference, as a result I have a leg in with them now.’ Rapidly developing as a skilful lobbyist, he was learning to tailor his arguments to a solution to the listener’s own concerns.

I have had [J. R.] Clynes [then considered a potential Chancellor of the Exchequer, but who became Lord Privy Seal] to lunch during the last week and also [F. W.] Pethick Lawrence and G. D. H. Cole. I hope to see Sidney Webb, [J. H.] Thomas and other lights, I am stressing to them the importance of Labour putting itself right with the nation on Empire matters, showing them the wonderful purchasing power of Australia and New Zealand for British Goods and the value of our preference.

He found little sympathy for the imperial vision amongst Labour intellectuals, and nothing developed from a tentative approach based on common problems of agriculture. He had more success on the issue of labour conditions, stressing the importance of supporting products of good working conditions against those of sweated labour. He found ‘among Trade Union MPs a clearer realisation

48 NLA, MA6890/1/9, letters to Norman, 30 October and 1 November 1923.
49 Ibid., letters to Norman, 10 and 24 January 1924.
of economic fundamentals than among either Liberals or the Labour intelligentsia’. But he did make some headway with the Liberals by focusing on their perceived need for an ‘empire policy’. Early in 1924, McDougall determined ‘to bring every argument and every battery to bear upon Parliament. When Bruce leaves I must start to see Chambers of Commerce, Trade Union leaders and represent the danger of losing the Australian preference on their own lines of commodities.’ Bruce lunched with leading Labour figures on 19 December and was ‘convinced that they are most anxious to put themselves right with the Empire’, although their election speeches had also convinced him they would find ‘preferences hard to swallow’.

In the event the free vote taken on the preferences announced in 1923 was narrowly lost. ‘Just fancy’, wrote McDougall, ‘a Free Trade majority of 80, the McKenna duties defeated by 62, and we get within six of our goal. It’s damnable but in some respects a triumph and at least argues irresistibly that in the near future we shall succeed.’

### Bruce’s ‘secret service agent’

McDougall wrote that Bruce’s biggest failing was of ‘imagination’—a term that for McDougall may well have included empathy with his own position. He knew from the beginning that he could not expect warmth or personal understanding from Bruce, whose ‘main disadvantage’ was a ‘lack of general knowledge and experience, powerfully offset by commonsense and a very considerable power for close thinking’. Yet, wrote McDougall, ‘one could work for him with enthusiasm, because he thinks and is mentally progressive’. On Bruce’s last evening in London, he and McDougall talked until 2 am. In that cosy intimacy, Bruce answered a question about the nature of the position McDougall was to hold while he remained in London: ‘Well McDougall, in your more uplifted moments you can call yourself the confidential representative of the Australian Prime Minister, when less inflated a secret service agent.’ Amusing and flattering as that reply might have been, there was no such designated position in the sprawling bureaucracy of Australia House and no comfortable line of direction for McDougall once Bruce departed. Bruce’s authority would be carried by Senator Wilson, who was remaining to oversee the British Empire Exhibition. Wilson was not well disposed to McDougall. Nor did Bruce’s joke hold any solution to the problem that had been nagging McDougall and his wife for many years.

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50 Ibid., letters to Norman, 2 February, 2 and 29 April, 10 and 17 May 1924.
51 LFSSA, 2, pp. 4–5.
52 NLA, MA6890/1/9, letter to Norman, 24 January 1924.
53 NLA, MA6890/1/8, letter to Norman, 20 December 1923.
54 NLA, MA6890/1/9, letter to Norman, 19 June 1924.
months. Dwindling funds allocated for the Fruit Delegation could not last much
beyond his fortieth birthday in April. He knew now that ‘active fruit growing’
would not ‘be my calling unless as a stop gap…I do want to be in the big things
and I want to help Australia’.\footnote{Ibid., letters to Norman, 10 and 24 January, 7 February 1924; for Wilson, see letters to Norman, 13 July
and 4 September 1924.}

The Dried Fruits Export Control Board

Before the Imperial Conference McDougall had organised a committee in London
to discuss an organisation scheme for the dried-fruits industry. A 27-page
memorandum recording their views was sent to Bruce, McDougall privately
claiming responsibility for 65 per cent of the ideas in it. Contributors were Sir
James Cooper, A. H. Ashbolt, Agent-General for Tasmania, and M. L. Shepherd,
Official Secretary at the High Commission.\footnote{NLA, MS6890/1/8, letter to Norman, 30 July 1923.} McDougall had personally urged
Bruce that organisation was essential: ‘it will be impossible to get very much
improvement in the manner of marketing our fruit in London until we control
the fruit itself…until [ADFA] has been re-organised and is able to finance its own
shipments.’ Bruce had been ‘very much struck’ with the suggestion and asked
for more detail to be mailed to reach him on the journey home.\footnote{NLA, MS6890/1/9, letters to Norman, 24 January and 24 April 1924.}

At Sydney’s Royal Easter Show, he announced that some tariff revenue would be used to
assist struggling primary industries with marketing, freight subsidies, export
bounties and transport—all conditional on efficiency and organisation.\footnote{Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1924.} The
next day a cable instructed McDougall, through Wilson, to return to Melbourne.
Despite a second cable two days later, Bruce’s intentions were not clear, but
McDougall assumed, correctly, that he was to help establish an organisation
scheme. It was a request he could not refuse, reluctant as he was to leave London
before the parliamentary vote on preference in June.\footnote{LFSSA, 7 and 8, pp. 18–21.}

Having left his family in England, McDougall helped prepare short-term
assistance proposals for the dried-fruits industry and legislation for grower-
funded control boards for dried fruits, canned fruits and dairy products. Progress
was slow, giving the lonely McDougall leisure to worry about his own future.
Bruce agreed he might be of greatest use in London and promised a proposal,
but was slow to make a definite offer.\footnote{NLA, MS6890/1/9, letters to Norman, 19 June and 10 July 1924.} There were other options. Before leaving
England, McDougall had been offered a position with the Conservative Party,
presumably as part of a short-lived policy secretariat to be organised by Leo
Amery after the election loss, its purpose to prepare propaganda for preference
2. Working with Bruce

and ‘safeguarding’. A firm offer for a management position in Australia with ADFA remained open. After a delay of two months, Bruce could only offer employment in Melbourne for the rest of the year, for remuneration considerably less than that of the Fruit Delegation. He explained that while ‘he recognised my value Cabinet did not and that I must impress them. I said that as I had to hide my light under a bushel of obscurity how could I?’ McDougall believed Wilson, now Minister for Markets, was against him; the ADFA job would not do for that reason, and was, in any case, ‘off my track’. ‘What was I? Answer: an expert on Empire Trade and an artist at propaganda.’ He would best serve his cause by being in London ‘to work for Preference and for Empire Development’. Bruce accepted his suggestion therefore that he return to London to work part-time for the Dried Fruits Export Control Board (DFECB) being established by the new legislation. His remuneration would be shared between the grower-funded board and the Commonwealth Government, on behalf of which he would continue to lobby. It would be £650 per year less than he had received on the Fruit Delegation and inadequate, McDougall would later argue, in view of his lack of tenure, lobbying expenses and in comparison with salaries in other dominion marketing agencies in London—a sore point that would persist throughout the 1920s. The lack of permanency meant that his family lived in a succession of rented houses, often at considerable distance from London, and this may well have contributed to the disintegration of his marriage towards the end of the decade. ‘What we all want is a home and garden’, he would lament to his brother, less than a year after the arrangement began.

The London Agency of the Dried Fruits Export Control Board

The London Agency was responsible for ensuring that fruit was sold profitably, having regard to the state of the markets and the quality of the product. Its Chairman was London-based businessman Sir James Cooper. The agency employed technical staff to appraise fruit consignments and supervise provision of physical needs such as storage and fumigation. It liaised with importers, supervised traders’ records of sales, promoted the product, and sent a steady stream of reporting back to Melbourne. As its part-time secretary from April 1925, McDougall spent two busy days each week in the agency’s office at 2 Talbot Court, Eastcheap, close to the docks, until 1928, when members of the board in Melbourne became concerned that he was overstretched. Prompted to action by

61 NAA, M111, 125, statement enclosed with letter from McDougall to Bruce, 14 December 1925.
62 NLA, MS6890/1/9, letter to Norman, 19 June; NAA, M111, 1924, Bruce to McDougall, 12 May 1924.
63 NLA, MS6890/1/9, letters to Norman, 13 July 1924 and 3 January 1926; LFSSA, 16, 20 and 45, pp. 45–6, 55–6, 131–2.
an illness which, unusually, kept him away from work for some weeks, the Board Chairman, W. C. F. Thomas, in 1929 proposed a new position for McDougall of Deputy Chairman, freeing the board to employ ‘a real secretary’ and still provide McDougall with financial support and a status ‘more appropriate to his present functions’ and to ‘the higher work which he might yet be called upon to perform for the Government’.

McDougall was to be Chairman of the agency from 1936 to 1947. He maintained some financial involvement with the Renmark blocks, which continued to be worked by Norman McDougall, but was never to visit Australia again after 1924.

Figure 8 The London Agency of the Dried Fruits Export Control Board meets British dealers and bakers in Liverpool, date unknown. Sir James Cooper is third from left in front row; J. S. Scouler, Agency Secretary, on far right. McDougall, then Vice-Chairman of the Agency, is third from left in back row; agency member A. E. Gough fourth from left; A. E. Hyland, Director of Australian Trade Publicity, is on the far right.

Source: E. McDougall.

64 National Archives of Australia, Victorian Branch [hereinafter NAAV], B4242, Thomas to Cooper, 8 February 1928.
The Partnership

McDougall’s first important idea—to secure an export market for the dried-fruits industry by more efficient organisation and by persuading the British Government to institute substantial tariff preference—thus had a mixed result. He almost certainly played a major role in persuading Bruce to establish and control the industry on a basis of efficiency. By his work in Melbourne and as London secretary, he contributed much to putting the idea into effect. The idea was in accord with those of efficiency and ‘practical progressivism’; Bruce’s ready acceptance is not surprising. The move seems to have been successful: both industry and organisation have survived.65

The tariff preference campaign was, in the event, only marginally successful. The Conservative Government returned to office at the end of 1924 removed duties on empire dried fruits, giving a preference of 10/6d per cwt on fruits other than currants, which were left at 2 shillings. It was below what the Federal Government had requested in 1922, and well below what McDougall had calculated as necessary. Sales, however, continued to be good, at least until 1927 when severe frost affected yield. The work of the agency on the periphery and publicity from the Empire Marketing Board at the centre helped focus public attention on the products of empire, until general tariff protection was achieved by the Ottawa Agreements of 1932.

For McDougall, the preference campaign had brought conviction that his place, physically, and to an increasing degree intellectually, was not on the periphery, but at the empire’s centre. He saw himself still as a servant of Australia, but knew he could not flourish in the Australian political arena. To be in ‘the big things’, which would help Australia and his own industry, he had to be in London and he returned assuming, probably correctly, a personal responsibility to the Prime Minister who had accepted an arrangement placing him outside the lines of conventional bureaucracy. He could perhaps be seen as a prototype of the modern-day political staffer. Certainly Bruce’s good-natured but vague designation as ‘personal representative of the Prime Minister…secret service agent’ set the pattern for their future cooperation.

During the 1920s McDougall wrote a least one letter to Bruce each week, and often more. The letters reported on his activities, but also contained gossip and frank comments and suggestions on policy. He presumed a special relationship and did not hesitate to approach Bruce with ideas, or indeed with complaints. Bruce responded in kind. He wrote infrequently, but took care when he did to

65 The Australian Dried Fruits Board became a subsidiary of the Australian Horticultural Corporation in 1987.
comment on every letter; one reply runs to 37 pages. He assured McDougall that ‘every one of your letters is read by me’, and he hoped McDougall would not be discouraged by the infrequent replies to letters that were ‘of the utmost interest and value to me’. He made use of some material McDougall enclosed in speeches. After a quick first reading, Bruce saved McDougall’s letters until he had time to read them carefully, usually at weekends; he often reread them months later. During a two-month tour of outlying States, he ‘read many of them while travelling in trains, and one even when travelling in an aeroplane’. His replies reported candidly on the political situation in Australia and his own activities and plans, occasionally sending copies of his correspondence with others. He happily joined in the gossip and sometimes vented, to the point of indiscretion, his dissatisfaction with events and people, at one time complaining about the ‘hopeless incompetence’ of the Prime Minister’s Publicity Department, at another describing fruitless efforts ‘to get some useful information from the Customs Department’. At times he asked for more information on particular issues; he engaged in discussion and referred to views and aims that he and McDougall shared. This extended to broad economic and social philosophy:

I read with considerable interest what you say with regard to the continuous harping upon the question of economy as if that was going to solve the economic problems the nations are up against. I agree with you that it will not: that the world is now so far advanced that we have to recognise we must face great expenditures upon social amelioration, and the only way to solve our problems is to adopt the same course that every modern business has been forced to, and that is of expanding our turn-over rather than imagining we can solve our difficulties by reducing our expenses.

Bruce frequently sent the suggested cable or took other action recommended by McDougall: ‘I am taking up the question you raise about the position of the standard of living in Australia and Great Britain…I will let you have the information…when I have received it.’ If he did not agree, he often explained why, or at least let McDougall down gently. He commended one memorandum McDougall had sent him, urging British cooperation in Australian development, as ‘very useful’, but rejected a suggestion that it be sent to British ministers: ‘on reading it carefully I think the time is hardly ripe for us to let the British Government have copies of it.’ On another suggestion, which McDougall had pressed more than once, Bruce was more severe:

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66 NAA, M111, 30 April 1929. Bruce’s letters are filed chronologically with McDougall’s in this series.
67 Ibid., 21 May and 15 September 1927, 16 January 1928.
68 Ibid., 10 February 1929, 26 September 1927.
69 Ibid., 30 April 1929.
You will have grasped from my not having taken any further action after receiving your letters, that I do not want to deal with this matter at the present time. I gave a lot of thought to it when your suggestion came through by cable, and I think for the present it would be better for you to drop the idea.\textsuperscript{70}

He was generous in his appreciation:

I have made a point of advising [the Minister for Trade and Customs] of the different actions you have taken...in the first place to bring home to him the value of the services you are rendering...

I read the Debate in the House of Commons with regard to Empire trade, and your trail could be seen very distinctly through the whole of the discussions.

...your work is extraordinarily interesting and extremely valuable, but you have to remember that everything depends upon your maintaining your health.

...after I have read [McDougall’s letters] I am certain that my mind subconsciously goes on thinking over the points that you have raised, and the conclusions that are arrived at are unquestionably very considerably influenced by what you write to me.\textsuperscript{71}

Bruce did, however, urge McDougall to keep enclosures to a minimum, because ‘the time which I have at my disposal for such a purpose is extraordinarily limited’.\textsuperscript{72}

In sum, the correspondence shows a solid partnership between men with common aims and mutual respect, despite their difference in status. Yet that difference was to be maintained over more than 20 years of working together. They could share a joke, but McDougall would never presume to address Bruce as anything other than ‘Mr Bruce’; Bruce called him ‘McDougall’, not the familiar ‘Mac’ used by his friends. The partnership, close and effective as it was, did not develop into easy friendship. The gulf between prime minister/high commissioner and ‘secret service agent’/economic adviser was never to be bridged by intimacy.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 12 December and 7 March 1927, 16 January 1928.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 30 April and 27 August 1928.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 21 May 1927.