

# **Australia's Plan of Imperial *Kriegsverein* Versus Canada's Plan of Imperial *Zollverein* at the 1902 Colonial Conference: The Genesis of Joseph Chamberlain's Tariff Reform Campaign**

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In 1897 and 1902, the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, held Colonial Conferences, which were attended by representatives of all self-governing colonies. Chamberlain, an ardent imperialist, used these conferences to reach consensus on his vision of imperial unity. The author of this article analyses the negotiation strategies adopted by Britain, Canada, and Australia at these two conferences, with an emphasis on the 1902 conference. Australia's Prime Minister Edmund Barton and Defence Secretary John Forrest advocated their plan of 'one fleet for the Empire's Naval Defence,' or imperial *Kriegsverein*. Although Chamberlain showed considerable interest in imperial *Kriegsverein* at the 1897 conference, he dismissed it at the 1902 conference. On the other hand, Canada's Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier advocated imperial preference, or imperial *Zollverein*, at the 1902 conference. For Britain to introduce imperial *Zollverein*, it was necessary to impose food tariffs to give favourable treatment to imports from the colonies. Although Chamberlain distrusted Laurier and recognised that food taxes would be unpopular with the British, he ultimately sided with Laurier and supported imperial *Zollverein*. The following year, Chamberlain launched a tariff reform campaign. This article demonstrates that Laurier's manoeuvring tactics, not the Australian government's unskilful negotiations, led to this result.