

dealers at the expense of the consumers, the Governor-in-Council may commission or empower any Judge of the Supreme Court or Exchequer Court of Canada, or of any Superior Court in any Province of Canada to inquire in a summary way into and Report to the Governor-in-Council whether such trust, combination, association or agreement exists. The Judge may compel the attendance of witnesses and examine them under oath, and require the production of books and papers, and shall have such other necessary powers as are conferred upon him by the Governor-in-Council for the purpose of such inquiry. If the Judge reports that such trust, combination, association or agreement exists, and if it appears to the Governor-in-Council that such disadvantage to the consumers is facilitated by the duties of customs imposed upon a like article when imported, then the Governor-in-Council shall place such article on the free list or so reduce the duty of it as to give to the public the benefit of reasonable competition in such article.

COMMERCIAL INVASION.

There are other things than chickens and curses that come home to roost, and free trade as they have it in England is one of them; and while it may answer the purpose of an argument to say that Mr. Chamberlain would consider no proposition looking to Imperial preferential trade that did not include free entry for British goods into all Colonial ports, all intelligent people know that there has always been an element in that country averse to free trade as they have it there; that these "fair traders" as they call themselves, work for and look forward hopefully to the time when their ideas will prevail, and that at this time a reversion to a protective policy is quite imminent. According to the Manchester Textile Mercury, one of the strongest elements working in this direction is the Associated Chambers of Commerce, of Great Britain, and our contemporary tells of their aims and desires.

It says that these chambers since their somewhat recent organization, are attaining to something like the influence that ought to be theirs all through their history. During the period immediately succeeding the adoption of free trade in that country, they fell into insignificance, and practically became extinct. This arose from the fact that, owing to Britain's monopoly of the mechanical industries, at the time that country carried everything before it in foreign commerce, which the free trade party attributed to their policy. They therefore appealed to statesmen to be let alone—that they could do better without than with their assistance. Chambers of Commerce were not even wanted, so they fell into neglect and practically became extinct. All was left to private enterprise. This was all very well for a time, or until Continental and other countries whose markets Great Britain had invaded, gathered their scattered wits together and began to devise means to resist the commercial invasion which they concluded was depriving their people of their industries. Their first step was to procure British machinery and to imitate British procedures. They employed skilled British workmen to teach their own; but this did not suffice. They were wanting in knowledge and experience. They called upon their Governments for protection against the British invasion, and it was accorded by the imposition of tariffs, at first light, then heavier, and then heavier still, almost to prohibition.

It was through this period that efficient Chambers of Commerce would have been useful, but they had ceased to exist. There was no organization among merchants and manufac-

turers. British trade on the Continent ceased to expand, and had it not been that the markets of India and the East were open, the pressure of over-production, which began to show itself about 1860, would have been sooner and much more keenly felt. The outbreak of the American war stayed off disaster for a time, but ultimately made matters worse, as it resulted in the loss of the American market, particularly for manufactures of cotton. It was not until the denunciation of the commercial treaty with France, and the attempt that country made in 1882 to impose an impassable barrier against the importation of British manufactures, that the necessity for commercial organization became apparent. The struggle thus entered into against the French policy lasted for months, during which time there was an awakening and revival of the Chambers of Commerce. The British Government under its free trade policy was helpless. It could do nothing, having no knowledge of, and caring little for industrial and commercial interests. It had to the fullest accepted the dicta of the free traders and left commercial matters severely alone. The professional politicians of both parties agreed in this, for it saved them much labor. Since that time a fair degree of progress has been made in increasing the number and developing the usefulness of these Chambers of Commerce.

An important question now claiming the attention of these bodies is how best, if possible, to resist the commercial invasion of other countries by which Great Britain is being overwhelmed. It may be said that Ephraim, being joined to his idol, should be let alone; but those who have the best interest of their country at heart are not willing to have things continue as they are, and allow the free trade Old Man of the Sea to ride them to death. Stubborn pride inclines some to hold back, but common sense impels many to revolt and advocate a policy of fair trade, which means tariff protection, to which, without doubt, sooner or later that country will come.

CANADIAN—AUSTRALIAN PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

The British Trade Journal, discussing the question of preferential trade between Canada and Australia, says:—

Canadian manufacturers produce many classes of goods which the new Australian Commonwealth could exchange for its own special commodities, and such business would no doubt be facilitated by a tariff giving Canadian manufacturers an advantage in Australia, and Australian farmers and mine-owners similar advantages in British North America. The proposal must, however, be also considered from an international and a British point of view. United States manufacturers, who are building up a considerable hardware and machinery trade at the Antipodes, would not quietly submit to a preferential treatment there of Canadian hardware and machinery; and any tariff advantages which Canada may obtain from Australia would certainly in such an important market also be claimed by the United Kingdom.

Advices which reach us from Canada indicate a growing dissatisfaction among manufacturers there with the effects of the 33½ per cent. preferential tariff. Canadian firms must feel acutely the competition of British makers which is favored and stimulated by such a preference, and they naturally ask themselves and their agricultural friends what advantages have been secured for them in return. The Canadian manufacturer has received no direct benefit, but the farmer and dairy-owner of British North America has most decidedly benefited, not as the result of any discrimination in his favor on the part of Great Britain, but as the natural effect of a greater importation of manufactures from this country, and of his determination and "push" to develop his trade. The Canadian producer has successfully met the competition of the United States, of Australasia and of European countries in finding markets in the United Kingdom for butter and cheese, poultry, meat and cereals; and it is far more creditable to him that he should