

of the globe are, for the most part, new countries, with immense undeveloped resources.

If, then, British enterprise were directed to the colonies, the possibilities of the expansion of their trade, their wealth, are absolutely unlimited. And this could only be done if the people of these colonies were brought officially into the closest connection with the capitalists and people of the mother country.

It may nevertheless be true that, for a limited time, the price of imported food into England would slightly increase. To the vast majority of the people this would entail but slight inconvenience, and that only temporary, and would be in some measure offset by a repeal of the present duties on tea, coffee and cocoa imported from the colonies: they are pretty heavy; and the question is merely whether they are willing to put up with such inconvenience for the accomplishment of the object contemplated by this policy. The English people have been called upon to make great sacrifices before now, and for less worthy objects than to build up their great Empire. They have submitted to heavy burdens of taxation for the carrying on of costly wars. Could they not bear something in the interests of their fellow-subjects beyond the seas? It would be only the investment of a prudent man, sure to make a handsome return in the future. In building up their colonies they would be providing a sure market for their future products; not trusting blindly to the chance good will or enlightenment of foreign nations for the removal of restrictions on trade, but with the certain that no restrictions would ever be imposed. They would, in fact, be laying up for themselves and for their children a heritage richer and more glorious than they could look forward to in any other way.

And at the same time as they were doing this, they would be wiping out their national debt out of the enormous revenues this system would bring into the coffers of the government. So that by the time other nations would have begun to think about combinations to offset their power, they would be relieved of the great bulk of their present taxation, and would have all the greater advantage over all competitors.

But what is supposed to attach the people of England peculiarly to their system of free trade, is that in the past it prevented and relieved distress. Suppose, however, they can be satisfied that there is another and a better way in which distress may be prevented and relieved. I have said that the majority of the people might have some temporary inconvenience. But it is possible there might be a fraction of the people upon whom it would bring a measure almost of distress. Well it is the interest of these people more than any others that this scheme may be said to have been devised. For, for those who are so ill of, so near starvation point that even a slight increase in the price of food would bring them into distress, surely the sooner they leave their present homes and take up a homestead in one of the British colonies, the better for all concerned. In this view, a slight hardship would be a blessing to mankind; for it would induce those who are now on the very verge of indigence to remove to those parts of the world where they are most wanted, and thus relieve the over pres-

sure of population at home. For it is an essential part of a scheme for the consolidation of the Empire, that no distress would be permitted, emigration (then it would be merely Migration) would be a stimulation to a degree that would effectually remove any possibility of hunger and want at home. And the removal of these people would simply be to provide a better market for all England produces, in a country where they would be able to make something with which to pay for what they consumed. And we have seen that every Canadian colonist is worth three Americans to the English producer.

Nor must we forget that the interests of some of the chief industries of the United Kingdom are identical with our own in this matter; and especially the agricultural interest. We know with how much difficulty the members of the Anti-Corn Law League persuaded the agriculturists of England to consent to the abolition of duties on farm produce. We could therefore count on the hearty co-operation of the farmers of the mother country who form, I need not tell you, one of the most important elements in the population. And this is the class to whom an extension of the suffrage is just being given in the new Franchise Bill. By the assimilation of the County and Borough Franchise, 2,000,000 voters chiefly in the rural constituencies, have been added to the Parliamentary electors. And those are the men whose interests are enlisted on our side in the endeavor, until we can get reciprocity from other nations, to keep the British markets for the British people.

But I think we may with confidence leave the English side of the question to the English people. I believe it has to come to this, that an Imperial Federation must at the outset be accompanied with an Imperial Customs Union. And I have no fear but that when the English people take hold seriously of this question, and make up their minds that the thing should be done, the difficulties will rapidly vanish away.

And now but one word in closing. Lord Roseberry in addressing the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen, told them that the Franchise bill was of small importance in comparison with the question of Imperial Federation. In the same way I am convinced that the question of free trade itself is of small importance in comparison with this. Mr. Bourne announced himself a free trader. I am myself a Free trader, even in the elegant language of Canadian politics a jug handle free, believing economically free trade is the best system even if adopted only on one side. But just as there are times in domestic life when consideration of economy are of secondary importance, so in national affairs, there are occasions when economic considerations sink into comparative insignificance. And this is one of these cases. I believe indeed that in the long run it will be true economic policy for England to establish a world-wide consolidated Empire, even though at the expense of some immediate sacrifice. For every interest of civilization will be greatly promoted by a grand far-reaching scheme by which so many of what must be the great nations of the future shall be brought into relations with one another of the closest and most enduring character.