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CURRENT TOPICS.

The festival in connection with the opening of the Massey Music Hall next week, will be an event of importance to all lovers of music, for two reasons. The intrinsic attractions of the festival itself will, it cannot be doubted, be of the highest character, while the fact that it celebrates the opening of the splendid hall which the liberality of a citizen has provided for the use of the citizens of Toronto, will give to the occasion a special interest of quite another kind. The City Council has done well to honour the donor of this magnificent gift in the most emphatic way. The citizens will not fail to take this, the first opportunity, of showing their appreciation of their fellow-townsmen's generosity.

We have before us pamphlet No. 1, issued by "The Imperial Federation (De-

fence) Committee." This pamphlet deals, and deals very succinctly as well as very ably, with the theme, "The Colonies and Imperial Defence." We can but glance at it to-day, but shall take an early opportunity of dealing at greater length with the question it discusses, which is manifestly the crucial question, to be settled before any real progress in the direction of federation is possible. That question is, we need scarcely say, whether the self-governing colonies are willing to take their share in bearing the cost of an adequate system of maritime defence, based, of course, upon the indispensable condition that they must have a proportionate share in its administration and control. Though we have never been convinced of the practicability, and have sometimes been inclined to doubt even the desirability of the proposed federation, we have always clearly recognized the fairness, the simple justice, of the view advocated in the pamphlet before us, viz., that if the colonies are not willing to bear their share of the cost of a common system of defence, that is the end of the matter. In view of the approaching Ottawa Conference, where the subject is pretty sure to come up, directly or indirectly, the time is favourable for a re-discussion of the question.

The tariff, at least for the next year or two, is now virtually fixed, and the removal of the paralyzing effects of uncertainty upon trade and industry will, it may be hoped, be speedily followed by increased activity along all lines. The net result of the tariff changes is a substantial reduction upon a few articles of importance, a trifling reduction upon a much larger number, and the old rate, or even an increase, upon many. How the reform, falling as it must do very far short of the expectations which had been aroused throughout the country, will be received by the people, cannot be definitely known until the day of reckoning, the next general election. Meanwhile, if that is delayed for a year or two, as is probable, there will be time for many things to happen which will be potent factors in determining the issue. Should the country be favored with returning prosperity, it may be predicted with a good deal of confidence that the Government will be sustained. On the other hand, should the "hard times" continue or become still harder, the chances of the Government will be very seriously impaired and its defeat become probable. And this result, in either case, will follow without much regard to the question whether the policy of

the Government is or is not in any large degree responsible for the country's prosperity or adversity. "After this, therefore on account of this," will be the unconsciously but practically decisive argument in the minds of many.

If we failed to comment last week upon the resolution moved in the House of Commons on the 21st of May by Mr. Edgar, supported by both the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, and unanimously adopted by the House, it was certainly not from any lack of sympathy with the spirit and purpose of the resolution, or from any disposition to belittle the importance of its enthusiastic adoption by the representatives of five millions of Canadians, albeit their country is but a colony. The speech in which Mr. Edgar supported the resolution was worthy of the subject. Full of sober sense and free from impracticable sentiment it presented fairly as well as forcibly the extent to which and the limits within which such resolutions have a real value, endorsed as they are by the rulers and people of the two great English-speaking nations, and re-echoed by the largest dependency of that one of them whose empire is world-wide and still enlarging. It would be well if that speech, and those made by the two party leaders upon the occasion, should be pondered well by those among us—unhappily there are a few such—who are disposed at times to speak or write words which tend to embitter rather than to improve the relations between the people of the great nation at our doors and ourselves. They would do well to reflect particularly upon that part of it which relates to the unique influence which Canada has, by reason of her peculiar position and intimate relations to those two great nations, as a promoter of good-feeling, or the opposite, between them. Perhaps the most significant and hopeful circumstance in connection with the hearty passage of the resolution by the Canadian Commons is the fact that Canada, though just now smarting under the disappointing results of an arbitration between the two great powers, that her faith in the peaceable and Christian method of arbitration is still unshaken.

There can be no doubt, we suppose, that the new French Cabinet is seriously displeased by the recent acquisition by Great Britain of a strip of territory from the Belgian domain in Africa. But it seems hardly necessary to accept the rumour cabled by Mr. Smalley, that France is angry chiefly because she herself had been medi-