

## THE PRESENT SITUATION OF ENGLAND

## A CANADIAN IMPRESSION.

(Nineteenth Century.)

The events connected with the jubilee in London this summer would lead the casual observer to the conclusion that the British empire was world-wide in its extent, that it had planted its flag in every corner of the earth, that wherever its flag flew there were loyal subjects of her majesty, true to the common empire, and ready to rally to its support and die for its safety. The naval review impressed one with the mighty sea-power of our empire—in vessels, in men, in armaments, in splendid officers and in the warlike and national spirit that makes for national greatness. The navy was never so strong and so efficient. No nation ever had such coaling stations, such fortified naval bases, so widely scattered and so well placed. One could not but feel that our great maritime strength.

The colonial and Indian contingents impressed the imagination with the great reserve force, of the 11,000,000 Anglo-Saxon colonists, and the hundreds of millions of other races, all giving their allegiance to the same sovereign. 40,000 troops were lined the streets of London and the splendid mounted forces who marched through them gave an idea of military strength; while the display of decorations in the streets, the dresses of the crowds, the lavishly profuse and luxurious hospitality in which money was poured like water by our fellow-countrymen to welcome the gathering of the family, as it were, at home—and the evidences of wealth shown in a hundred other ways, gave one the impression of a nation wealthy beyond parallel in history. In fact, outwardly everything tended to prove that our empire stood upon solid ground, prepared for all contingencies, and prosperous and progressive.

After seeing all the great displays of the celebration in London and the festivities of the tour of the colonial premiers in the great cities of the north, to which I had the good fortune to be invited, I was for a month moving about in the agricultural districts, and endeavoring to form a correct opinion of the real condition of affairs. In fact, both in London and in the country I was busy inquiring into the condition of England, as to its manufactures, its agriculture, its foreign trade, and its food supply. The result was somewhat depressing. It may be interesting to hear the opinion of a Canadian on these points, for sometimes an on-looker sees most of the game.

In addition to all the outward manifestations of national strength and stability to which I have referred, it was also apparent that the workmen in England were not prospering. On reasonably good wages in the towns. The engineering trades were exceptionally prosperous, as was proved by the great strike which commenced while I was in England. I heard constantly that business was flourishing, and the money was circulating well. I attribute this prosperity, so called, to the immense activity in the building of war-vessels during the last few years.

I was informed that all over the United Kingdom, every dockyard, public and private, was working to its utmost capacity in building war-ships of every type. I understand that no less than fifteen large war-vessels are now being built for Japan, and nineteen for other foreign nations. Besides a great number for the British navy, the large expenditure of capital, both British and foreign, which is mainly paid out in wages, has helped greatly for the time being to improve the condition of the working classes, and has given an unreal, fictitious, and temporary prosperity to the nation as a whole.

In Canada, we understand thoroughly this type of prosperity. When a town or city borrows largely to carry out great public works it always, during the expenditure of the money, experiences a period of inflation termed a "boom." In the money is spent, depression follows. After the boom, the original state of affairs, and the "boom" is then said to have "burst."

The present temporary prosperity in England, which is not based upon a solid or permanent foundation, unfortunately tends still more to create the belief in the public mind that the state of affairs in England is satisfactory. I wish to draw attention to what seems to me the weak points in the present condition of the mother country. I had always been led to believe that the free trade policy of England was the secret of her success, and the foundation of her wealth and greatness. I was a free trader in Canada in 1878, and opposed the national policy at that time; and while I still believe that free trade was an advantageous policy for England at the time when Cobden and Bright advocated it, and that it has in the past added much to the prosperity and power of England by increasing immensely her trade and manufactures, yet I fear that experience has shown that there are weak points in the system, and that, like everything else, it has its faults as well as its advantages. If all nations had adopted the principle, as Cobden and Bright fully expected, it might have worked better; but free imports from the mother country, and high taxes upon British exports into those countries, certainly cannot be called either "free" or "fair" trade.

Protection in foreign countries has fostered and encouraged their own manufactures to such an extent as to reduce very much the imports of English goods, and to enable them to compete very successfully with the English trader, and cut down his trade as well as his profits. To prove this we need only look at the imports and exports of the United Kingdom, and compare the figures of the year 1878, for example, with those of last year. We find that in 1878 the total imports were £271,237,872, and that in 1896 they had risen to £441,807,335, an increase of £70,569,463. In 1878 the exports from

the United Kingdom were £255,164,603, while in 1896 they had fallen to £229,922,207, a decrease of £25,242,396; so that while the balance of trade against the United Kingdom in 1878 was £116,122,769, in 1896 it had risen to £201,885,126. I was informed also, on the best authority, that even this reduced trade is carried on at a very small profit indeed to the manufacturer. These figures show that a population larger by some 7,000,000 produces for export less merchandise at less profits, while it purchases from abroad £70,569,463 more than when its business was greater and more remunerative. At present England is living on her own fat, so to speak—the balances being made up by expenditures of capital, and interest on the earnings and profits of years gone by.

The feature of the Free Trade policy that is most to be deplored is its effect on the great agricultural interests of England. The ill-effect is widespread, and is evident in every direction. No one can travel through England without feeling sad at the evidences that crop up everywhere of the disastrous results threatened by this policy. The agricultural population is diminishing, the acreage under cultivation every year getting less, and the food-supply grown within the islands gradually trending towards the vanishing-point. Every year the population is drifting more and more into the manufacturing towns, increasing competition and making life harder to bear. Paupers are increasing in number every year, and the poor rates constantly going up. According to the *Statesman's Year-Book* for 1897, the number of paupers in receipt of relief in 1892 was 951,375, at an expenditure of £10,814,918. The number receiving relief in 1896, only four years later, was 1,025,384, at an expenditure of £11,919,324. In addition to this, the children of the children of England, instead of being reared in the open country, under the dome of heaven, are being huddled in crowded towns, under a pall of factory smoke, among the soot-stained walls of narrow courts and alleys paved with cinders, without a blade of grass or a green leaf to be seen. The foul air and crowding in ill-ventilated houses must be affecting the physique and stamina of the race, and the day will soon come, if it has not yet come, when England in defending her national existence will no longer be able to rely upon the rural population of the type of those yeomen who drew the long-bow at Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, or of those farmers' sons and village lads who in their solid squares hurled back the pride of France in our last great struggle at Waterloo.

An Englishman cannot appreciate the intensely depressing effect of the manufacturing districts upon the Canadian tourist. Accustomed as we are to the clear, pure atmosphere and bright blue skies of our native land, the black country of England seems unnatural and unhealthy, reminding one of the infernal regions, and arouses a sad sympathy for the poor human beings who have to live under such conditions.

I was at the depot of an English regular regiment this summer. There were about 200 men drawn up, and I walked up and down the line to examine them closely. I found I could easily look over their helmets, and that they were slight, short lads, almost all in their teens. They looked like a lot of schoolboys. I suppose they will be kept at the depot until they are old enough to join the regiment, and until good food, regular habits and physical exercise will improve and strengthen their constitutions. I could not help thinking that the prophecy of the historian Froebel, written a dozen years ago, was being rapidly fulfilled. Speaking of the crowding into manufacturing towns, he said:

The native vigor of our temperaments might defy the influence of such a life for a quarter or for half a century. Experience, even nature, however, would not permit the grandchildren of the occupants of these dens must be sickly, poor, stunted wretches, whom school-bellows, however brilliant, could save from physical decrepitude.

I could not help thinking of these sentences as I saw these undersized, weakly looking boys, dressed in the historic red coat of England, and felt that upon them the safety and honor of our great Empire might at any time depend. I thought of Horace's lines upon the growing degeneracy of the Roman citizen in his time, caused by the fields being abandoned and the people crowding into cities:

They did not spring from acres like these  
The noble youth who dyed the seas  
With Carthaginian gore.  
Who great Antiochus overcame  
And Hannibal of yore.

Mr. Charles Dilke, in an article recently published, says:

Our breakdown is also evidenced by the lowering of the standard of enlistment. The guardsman is now habitually taken at 5 feet 7 inches, and the linesman at 5 feet 9 inches. The shapes of the men now enlisted for the line are more stunted than their small stature, and owing to our present system we are clearly drawing in an increased degree on inferior classes of the population.

This, in my opinion, has been one outcome of the highly vaunted Free Trade policy—a huddling of the people into cities, a gradual weakening of the agricultural interest, a great decay in the size and stamina of the masses of the population. For a time England no doubt prospered peculiarly, and great fortunes were made; but now, with imports almost double the exports, with the imports steadily increasing and the exports steadily diminishing, the nation is not even gaining in her manufactures, but is losing to other nations every day.

The design was to make England the workshop of the world; but why should that be the ambition of any nation? Why should the English be the serfs of the universe, and do the dirty work for mankind?

markets, while in England they have every freedom. The imports from the British possessions in 1878 were £265,830,510, the exports £70,001,520, or as 91.2 to 7. The imports from foreign countries into the United Kingdom were £231,159,448, the exports £155,888,492, or more than 2 to 1. I was informed that even to maintain this reduced export, the margin of profit was small, that the large establishments on an extensive scale, able to obtain capital at the smallest interest, could carry on business, and that the smaller factories were gradually going to the wall, and no one can foresee how long the margin of profit can be maintained. In some lines of production, such as the manufacture of tin plates, the profit has disappeared, and the industry has been entirely destroyed.

The net result of fifty years of Free Trade on the one-sided principle has been to diminish the agricultural population, to reduce the physical strength of the British race, while even the chance of becoming the workshop of the world, which was the goal to be gained, is being lost.

Mommsen, the great German historian, writing nearly fifty years ago, shows that the producers of grain in the influence of outside competition led to the destruction of the farming interests of that great Empire, and how this helped to bring about its downfall. I will quote from his *History of Rome*, vol. IV, p. 273:

Under the unnatural disturbance of relations with the producers of grain in the slave labor it would perhaps have been justifiable to impose a duty upon trans-

ported corn for the protection of the Italian farmer. The average price of wheat in the world shows that the producers of grain in a life-and-death struggle, and particularly if it were with Russia, the United States would be almost certain to throw in their whole strength against England. The belief which they have, that in combination with Russia they would with ease be able by a joint embargo to bring England to her knees, adds greatly to the danger of war. If England's food supply were safe within her empire, the United States government would be more inclined for peace, and their enormous time would at once become more courteous. Some thought that in case of war these nations would not put an embargo on food products because it would interfere with their trade, and that, having command of the sea, they could get the food. They seemed to forget that the command of the sea, these nations would have only one possible weapon, an embargo on food, and would be driven to use the only offensive action possible. Then some relied on the great warships, and that the demand would create the supply, and they thought would override all military conditions. I asked why the demand did not create the supply for the French in Paris in 1870. Then they admitted that war did sometimes upset trade theories.

I found a general confidence that theories of some kind, or trick, or kind Providence, or something, would bring them through all right; but I found no one able to satisfy me as to how England could be fed under the war conditions I have mentioned. No one seemed to appreciate that in the great wars with Napoleon the United Kingdom was able to feed itself, and that even as late as the Crimean war in 1854-5 the home production was, after deducting seed, 16,427,742 quarters and the imports only 2,883,000 quarters. The present condition of Great Britain is without a parallel either in its own history or the history of any great nation. England is living from hand to mouth more than people have any idea of. I found from the best authority I could get in Liverpool, that in August, when was there, the supply of wheat in the hands of importers was for between three and four weeks only—inquiry in a number of bakers' shops disclosing the fact that the average supply in them was for about four or five days, in the large bakeries less than a week, in the mills for three or four weeks. Two years of stoppage of foreign corn would reduce the rations for the people to about one-fourth of what is required, and half of it would have to be secured by the command of many divergent and lengthened sea routes.

The belief in the certainty of keeping command of the sea is also another instance of the feeling of over-confidence to which I have already alluded. I do not believe Great Britain can obtain the absolute and complete command of the sea everywhere. She may be able, and I hope and believe she will be able, to command certain routes and keep them open. She may be able to be in command, at any particular point where it is necessary for her to be in command, but it is unreasonable to expect that any fleet of 500 or even 700 ships could command all the sea routes, all the time, in all parts of the world. For this reason the food supply is the great and pressing danger, and should be put right at all hazards and at whatever cost may be necessary, either in money or otherwise.

There are several ways in which matters might be improved. National guarantees is one suggestion, for which much can be said. It has already been made the Empire safer; but it would be a very costly method, and would be a greater burden in money than a duty on foreign corn, which might be imposed in place of the duty on tea, tobacco, and some other articles consumed by the people. It would add nothing to the wealth, progress, or stability of the Empire; but preferential tariffs would strengthen the colonies immensely in population and wealth, would in the end strengthen the Empire, the trade of England, and would bind all parts of the Empire in the bonds of a common interest. If the preference was greater in favor of the home farmer, it would revive agriculture, and give employment to hundreds of thousands of men who are competing with the factories, and tending to reduce wages. A sufficient duty, and it need not be large, would ensure within the British Isles the growth of 15,000,000 quarters of wheat, instead of five or six millions as at present. A small preference of two or three shillings a quarter against the foreigner would add a fertile wheat-bearing land, capable of producing the finest wheat in

the world, in quantities far more than sufficient to feed Great Britain; and a slight preference would send emigrants to fill up our fields and strengthen a portion of the Empire, instead of fostering and encouraging and building up foreign countries, which may at any time be hostile.

The sea route from Canada to England from the Straits of Belle Isle to the North of Ireland is almost a British route. It has no foreign naval stations to the north, and is guarded by our stations at Halifax and St. John's on the west, and Portsmouth, Plymouth, Milford Haven and Bear Haven on the east. It is, without any doubt, the safest and most easily defended sea route from England in any direction.

The objection to this suggestion is that it would aid Canada. If it is not more important for England, and more advantageous to her, than to Canada, it is not worth discussing; Canada is getting on all right. If her progress is not very fast, it is sure and on solid ground. We are not afraid of being starved into submission, and believe we can hold our freedom as a people, if it comes to straight fighting, as our fathers did in 1813 and 1814, against odds many times greater than they were likely to have to encounter now. But the British Empire is our Empire, as it is the Empire of every part; and we are as much interested in the safety of the heart of it as is any portion, and we have the right to urge that England should take steps to make her condition safe.

If such a war should happen as we have been discussing, the heaviest brunt of the fighting would fall upon the Canadian people. Russia would probably attack England; and the United States, Canada. It is not a pleasant prospect for us to look forward to, with England's food supply in the condition it is. Six millions of us Northern men, fighting on our own soil for our homes and freedom and all we hold dear, would, we believe, be able to hold our own in spite of the odds; but in what position would we be placed, if we heard of the men, women and children of England starving and pleading for peace, and being told by the United States that we must lay down our arms before they would send the food to save the lives of our brethren in England?

We have a right to ask the English people to provide against this disaster, either by granaries, bounties, preferential tariffs, or in any other way. This should be done, not to carry out the usual trade theories, but as an insurance against a great national danger, as a necessary expenditure, as a war measure of defence.

## EXHIBITION ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Exhibition association, was held on Tuesday afternoon, President Pitfield in the chair. There were present R. R. Patchell, R. B. Emerson, C. A. Everett, S. S. Hall, R. A. Payne, Harris Allan, Geo. B. Hegon, W. M. Jarvis, T. H. Hall, Jas. Macaulay, Col. Cunard, Jas. Reynolds, E. L. Rising, F. A. Dyke, Wm. Shaw, M. P. P., W. H. Thorne, H. A. Doherty, Wm. Raymond.

The minutes of the last annual meeting were read and approved, after which President Pitfield read the annual report of the directors to the shareholders, which has already been printed in the Sun. President Pitfield thanked the stockholders and directors for their times electing him as president. He had worked hard and energetically while in office for that period, and as his business required all his time, he hoped that another selection would be made.

Mr. M. Jarvis, in moving the adoption of the report, regretted to hear Mr. Pitfield's declaration. He said it was apparent that the two great difficulties in the way of annual exhibitions was the large expenditure for buildings and the fact that the association year after year distributed cash prizes all over the province without receiving any aid from the provincial treasury. He saw no cause to be discouraged. The buildings were now in good order and with economy the association could go ahead with exhibitions.

Mr. B. Emerson seconded the resolution in a spirited and hopeful speech. He urged President Pitfield to consent to a re-nomination in the interest of the association.

Replying to Mr. Jarvis, the president said that the Halifax exhibition had cost \$2,350 for expenses of management, and \$1,783 by the St. John association.

C. A. Everett said the Exhibition association of Toronto was paying interest on a loan of \$100,000, while St. John had no debt.

The report was adopted. On motion of R. B. Emerson, seconded by Harris Allan, the thanks of the association were tendered to the common council for its grant to the exhibition.

On motion of Alex. Macaulay, seconded by Harris Allan, the president appointed a committee to secure the necessary legislation with regard to changes in the constitution of the association—Wm. M. Jarvis, C. A. Everett, James Reynolds and W. C. Pitfield.

On motion of C. A. Everett, seconded by R. B. Emerson, the meeting proceeded to the election of 21 directors. Messrs. Patchell, Hall, Dyke, Reynolds, Emerson and Allan were appointed auditors. The ballot resulted as follows:

Jas. Reynolds, J. H. McAvity, R. B. Emerson, W. H. Thorne, Wm. Shaw, W. M. Jarvis, C. A. Everett, Geo. Robertson, A. O. Skinner, H. W. Dyke, S. S. Hall, C. H. Flood, A. Macaulay, J. C. Robertson, E. L. Rising, J. M. Johnson, D. W. McCormick, W. C. Pitfield, T. S. Simms, M. A. Finn, C. B. Robertson.

Dix—How long has your cook been with you? Hicks—This is the second year of her reign.

Latest news in THE WEEKLY SUN.

## LIBERALS' BATTLE.

## McDade-McKeown Wing of Party Makes a Clean Sweep.

## Edwards-Lantlum Wing Afraid to Put Up Candidates for Election.

## The List of Officers Chosen, Together With the Names of the Various Committees.

There was no battle in the liberal association Jan. 10. It was a rout. The Blairites, joined to the McDade-Barry-Nugent wing of those who last year rallied to the support of the McLean-O'Brien crowd, swept the decks like a cyclone.

The McLean-O'Brien-Lantlum-Doddy-Dunning-Edwards faction could only muster nineteen votes last night in a total of nearly two hundred and fifty.

Messrs. McDade and McKeown, representing the two wings that united in the interests of Blair and a distribution of patronage more to their liking, had laid their plans well. There was no stuffing of ballots, but those who had paid their dues were allowed to vote, and each man's name was called before he voted.

There was a regular printed ballot for the officers and, another for the additional members of the executive. The old guard whose forty methods triumphed last year were not in it. They knew yesterday that their day was done, and a number of the leaders staid away from the meeting altogether.

The attempt of some of their friends to tack to McLean-O'Brien men onto the executive slate of the rival party was afterwards felt to be a tactical mistake, for Mr. McDade promptly called on the new machine to resent the tactics effort, and it was done so effectively that the other fellows felt they had better have let the whole thing go by default and not reveal their weakness. Some of the older heads saw the point earlier in the meeting, and when nominated for office refused to run. They knew the advantage that was ready for them if they dared to face it.

After the usual routine a motion was passed to proceed to the nomination and election of officers.

Mr. B. Edwards was nominated for president, but he was well aware that the meeting was packed and declined. Count de Bury was nominated for first vice-president. After a few minutes deliberation with himself he declined nomination.

Edward Lantlum was nominated for treasurer, but like the others, he declined. The executive committee was nominated according to the McDade-McKeown plan. Mr. McKeown was elected president, but he was well aware that the meeting was packed and declined.

Timothy O'Brien nominated Barton Gandy and E. B. Taylor nominated M. J. Mooney.

Mr. McDade protested against the nomination of the two "outsiders," and called upon his friends to defeat them.

The result was as follows: President, Mr. McDade; 1st vice-president, C. A. Stockton; 2nd vice-president, M. J. Nugent; 3rd vice-president, J. E. Smith; recording secretary, J. V. Russell; financial secretary, Henry Finnigan; treasurer, D. J. Purdy.

The vote for members of the executive resulted as follows, the last two names in the list being defeated and are members of the Lantlum-O'Brien-Edwards wing: Geo. McAvity, 216; James Reynolds, 211; H. M. Coates, 209; James Barry, 214; W. G. Scovill, 214; J. Doherty, 219; H. A. McKeown, 217; Wm. Doherty, 214; T. A. Linton, 199; John Flood, 207; Thos. Finlay, 213; Thos. Gorman, 218; Barton Gandy, 19; M. J. Mooney, 16.

The newly elected president appointed the following standing committees: Audit—Patrick Gleeson, T. H. Hall and John Dolan.

Bill and road committees—Charles E. Scammon, C. H. Ferguson, John P. McGroarty.

Literature committee—Dr. Addy, John F. Morrison and C. J. Milligan.

The scrutineers were: J. E. Fitzgerald, J. P. Morrison and M. J. Nugent. After the election of officers the following resolution was carried unanimously, though John L. Carleton adversely criticized the last clause:

"Resolved, that in the opinion of this meeting the executive of our association should be an advisory board with the members for the city and county of St. John in all matters of patronage."

"And further resolved, that applicants for office or patronage should not be considered by our representatives unless recommended by a majority of the executive committee of this association."

A vote of thanks was tendered Mr. B. Edwards for his services as president last year, but they do say there was a vein of irony underlying this courteous formality.

Speeches were made by the jubilant victors of the night, but the defeated ones were silent. It was a very tame meeting.

The following was last year's list of officers and executive. President, M. B. Edwards; 1st vice-president, M. McDade; 2nd vice-president, Hon. A. T. Dunn; 3rd vice-president, Henry Maher; secretary, W. H. Trueman; financial secretary, Thos. Dunning; treasurer, E. Lantlum. Executive, these and Thos. McAvity, Count de Bury, J. H. Leonard, John Flood, Arthur W. Adams, R. O'Brien, D. F. Tapley, M. J. Nugent, H. H. McLean, M. P. Mooney, E. H. MacAlpine, James Doherty.

It will be noted that the only three of the above who are on this year's executive are Messrs. McDade, Nugent and Flood, and these are three who were last year prevailed on to support the McLean-O'Brien wing (it is alleged) partly on religious grounds, but who turned Turk because matters have not since been to their liking, and who led the faction that joined the Blair body-guard in last night's rout of the liberal enemy. The old time liberal leaders are no longer in evidence.

Cause of Apprehension—"Darting!" he cried, and threw himself at her feet. The naughty damsel shivered, as in apprehension. "That low Prince-ton tickle!" she muttered, striving to be calm.—Life.