

REASON FOR CONFIDENCE.

But there is, perhaps, more significant evidence still in the denunciation of the Belgian and German treaties of the desire of Great Britain to improve and develop colonial trade, particularly with Canada. When it is remembered that her trade with Germany and Belgium amounted to \$600,000,000 and her trade with Canada to only about \$100,000,000, it will be seen how large a commercial risk she was prepared to take for the sake of strengthening her relations with this country. Neither the fear of possible irritation on the part of Germany or Belgium nor the diversion of her immense trade with the German Empire was allowed to stand in the way of treaties that existed for over 30 years, when it was pointed out to her that in the interest of Canada such a course was desirable. Having done so much for one colony, why should we doubt her disposition to give a reasonable preference to colonial goods for the benefit of over 11,000,000 of her subjects in all her colonies? The question I admit, is one which must be settled in Great Britain, and not in Canada. It may involve the reconsideration of trade theories which have become ingrained in the public opinion of her leading men. But commercial theories, like social customs, however universal, are not necessarily sanctified by usage. (Cheers.) Economic conditions change with the process of the suns. British statesmen are eminently practical, and the economic conditions which have led to free trade may, in the course of years, so change or become so subordinated to larger conditions of a national character as to warrant their revision. This change is, I believe, at this moment taking place at the great centres of British industry. Mr. J. S. Willison, editor of the *Globe*, in his excellent letters on English topics, recently published in his paper, has the following remark on the present condition of English opinion on the trade question: "Cool and dispassionate thinkers believe that down among the people opinion is slowly shaping for a contest between the advocates of free trade on the one hand and the advocates of a great alliance of free English-speaking democracies on the other hand, and that few have any adequate conception of the depth of feeling against the foreigner that is burning in the bosoms of great masses of Englishmen." (Cheers.)

If the question could only be made an Imperial issue and thus separated from all commercial complications the watchword would not be free trade or protection, but the unification and consolidation of the empire, and on this view of the question it is not hard to predict what the attitude of the British Empire League should be.

THE QUESTION OF RECIPROCITY.

Next in importance to preferential trade with Great Britain is the subject of a reciprocity treaty between Canada and the United States. In dealing with this question one is embarrassed by the twofold interest which seems to be involved in it—the interest of the mother country and the interest of Canada. In the mother country the opinion very generally prevails that the unfriendly commercial relations existing between Canada and the United States are a menace to the peace of the empire. It has been the ambition of English statesmen for the last fifty years to remove this supposed irritation by treaties and concessions, many of which were none too favorable to Canada. The first attempt of this kind was the Ashburton treaty of 1846, by which it is universally admitted Canada was greatly the loser territorially on her eastern as well as on her western frontier. The Washington treaty of 1871 was less disastrous, although it involved concessions in the inland waters and canals of