

LOW PRICE OF BRITISH CONSOLS.

Revival of Credit in Countries Formerly More or Less in Discredit Has Been Chief Cause.

The continued decline in British Consols has been explained in many ways. That the main cause of the decline has been, firstly, the revival in the credit of the countries that in 1896 were in more or less discredit, such, for example, as the Central and South American countries, Japan and China, Cuba and the Philippines, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece, is the opinion of the London Statist. That revival has immensely increased the field of investment, and, therefore, has attracted many who otherwise would have bought consols. The depreciation is attributable to Mr. Goschen's vain ambition to signalize himself not only by effecting a conversion, but by adding on to the conversion an automatic reduction of interest fifteen years later. It has been due very largely to the ignorant presumption of Mr. Chamberlain in rushing the country into an unnecessary war, and to the criminal neglect of himself and his colleagues to prepare for a conflict, the seriousness of which he and they utterly misconceived. It has been traceable to the borrowing for naval and military works and the suspension of the sinking fund. It has resulted from the financial incompetence of those who carried out the plan for the buying out of the Irish landlords. It has been owing to the admission to the list of trustee stocks of a multitude of new securities. It is a consequence of the waste of capital in the Spanish-American war, the South African war, and the Russo-Japanese war; of the excessive expenditure upon naval and military armaments, and the apprehensions excited by those preparations; and of the incessant fears of war which have never been absent for many months together since President Cleveland's Venezuelan message.

Country Growing Richer.

"But while it happily is true that the country is immensely richer than it ever has been before; that its savings annually are on a vast scale; and that if ever it is necessary it will be possible to borrow colossal sums for a very long time, yet we would impress upon our readers that credit is a tender plant, and that to do anything that would injure it is a criminal offence which ought not to be excused by either ignorance or folly. Since the time of the Reformation we have never been able to maintain in peace time a really great army. We have trusted to our navy to protect us from a sudden attack and give us time to prepare; and to the wealth which our trade and our manufactures assures to us to gradually get together such a force as would enable us to muddle through. So far this policy has availed.

Never Ready for War.

"We have never been ready when war broke out, but on most occasions we escaped without serious loss. We escaped, however, because our credit was so good. That credit, as we have just been showing, is as good as ever. But it should be treated as an unpardonable offence to do anything that would make the world think our credit has suffered. As in the past, so in the future, if a great war comes upon us we shall have to trust to the navy to keep these islands safe from invasion, and to insure us to the time to get together, painfully and wastefully, a great land force. To organize such a force, to find and train competent officers, to discover a Marlborough or a Wellington, will take a very long time. Therefore, if we are to win in the long run we shall have to borrow on an enormous scale. But there is this one countervailing advantage in a policy which, from every other point of view, stands self-condemned. It is this: that the nations which are likely to be our enemies in the future are nations in arms.

No Danger of War Now.

"It is in the highest degree unlikely that a single power will pick a quarrel with us. If the war comes, it will be a war of coalition against coalition. Therefore, the belligerents, except ourselves, will have to call out millions of men. In other words, as soon as hostilities begin they will have to withdraw from the field, the factory, the counting-house, the shop and the law courts so many men that at any risk the war must be brought to a speedy termination. On our side it will be different. We shall have an immense navy, it is true. But if it is as efficient as we all believe it to be, we shall be safe in these islands, and we shall have time to wear out the enemy. There is no limit to the number of men we can raise. And there must be no limit to the money we can borrow. Just as we wore out France and Austria and Russia in the Seven Years' War, and the Great Napoleon himself with subject Europe at his feet, by means of the inexhaustible sums we were able to raise, so we shall wear out future foes if we subordinate party and faction to country and hold sacred the credit upon which we shall have to rely when the day of danger comes."

SMALL CHANGE.

Lord Desborough, who is now in Canada, thinks that tenant farms could be carried on as successfully in the Dominion as in England. That is so, but all the while the farmer can own instead of rent his land, the better for the farmer.

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The Canadian National Exhibition grows more useful with age. For thirty-three years it has been not only a Toronto, but a national institution, and its broad scope, educational spirit and business-getting qualities have made it a show of world-wide fame. The up-to-date Canadian, British and American house cannot afford to be non-exhibitors. Folks go to the National Fair of Canada for business as well as for pleasure. From all viewpoints almost, it is one of the finest exhibitions in the world.

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Mr. J. Obed Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration in London, is trying to induce the entire British House of Commons to take a trip to Canada in the near future. There is every wish for his success. That is education of the best kind for Imperial legislators. The only danger in such jaunts is that a cursory glance over a Dominion of 3,744,695 square miles, land and water, is apt to lead to wrong impressions. However, the idea is good and the British House should have studied their Canada at close range long ago.

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Repeated guesses as to the location of Grand Trunk Pacific divisional points in British Columbia will cease as the result of an official announcement. The first divisional point out of Prince Rupert will be up the line about 120 miles, and the second one will be located east of Hazelton, near Aldermere, in the Bulkeley valley, and some distance west of Houston. The third divisional point is to be established west of Fraser Lake. The company's plans for the town site in the vicinity of Fort George have not been made public. If a site distant from the present town of Fort George is chosen, it is to be feared that much disappointment will be experienced by real estate buyers in that neighborhood. There will be at least one, and possibly two divisional points on the line between Fort George and Edson, Alta. The company owns a town site at the west end of Fraser Lake, a large inland sea, and another at a point on the south shore between the east and west ends of the lake.

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The Honorable A. C. Rutherford, of Alberta, says that when a man becomes a public man, his affairs become the affairs of the public, and that he should be engaged in no transaction, public or private, that he is not willing to have examined, analysed and explained. That is an extraordinary view for any business man to take. There is, first, the minor difficulty of defining a public man. There is then the greater obstacle of getting men to take a part in public life, knowing that any Tom, Dick or Harry may at will place the spectroscope upon those things which concern only the private individual. The Rutherford doctrine seems to have been born of the momentary situation, for Mr. Rutherford would dearly love to quiz Mr. Frank Oliver's bank pass books. The average man, on being asked to expose his bank account to the public gaze, would give the reply which the Edmonton bank junior gave to an enterprising person who asked for a copy of Mr. Oliver's account. The answer was too warm to adorn these columns more than once.