

the Chambers of Commerce on June 9, 1896, he said, speaking of a zollverein: "An essential condition of such a proposal would be that Britain shall consent to replace moderate duties upon certain articles which are of large production in the colonies. Now, if I have rightly understood it, these articles shall comprise corn, meat, wool and sugar, and perhaps other articles of enormous consumption in this country which are at present largely produced in the colonies." Further, after pointing out that such a zollverein existed in Germany and in the United States, he stated: "I say that such a proposal as a zollverein between Britain and her colonies might commend itself even to the orthodox free trader," and further on he says:

"I want to impress upon you my personal conviction that if a proposal of this kind came to us from the colonies, backed by any considerable support on their part, it would not be met with a blank refusal by the people of this country." (Applause).

The London Times, quoted by Sir Donald Smith in a speech delivered at the same congress, said: "It is getting to be understood that free trade is made for man, not man for free trade. * * * The British Empire is so large and so completely self-supporting that it could very well afford for the sake of a serious political gain to surround itself with a moderate fence." These two quotations are very suggestive.

Mr. Sidney Buxton, M.P., late Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, after referring to Mr. Chamberlain's speech, just quoted, and the possibilities of commercial union between the colonies, said: "Though on the whole I am a free trader, I for one do not say it might not be requisite to reimpose certain duties which in the past were taken off British importations." (Cheers.) A speech in a similar strain was made by Col. Howard Vincent, M.P., and by the President of the Congress, Sir Albert Rollit, M.P. One observation of the President is worthy of special notice. He said:

"I deliberately say that there may be circumstances in which an economic sacrifice may be more than justified for the greatness of the political, social and commercial ends which we have in view." (Cheers).

The Duke of Devonshire in his speech at Liverpool at the reception given to Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke hopefully of a larger trade with the colonies on such a basis as would tend to the promotion of the unity of the empire. (Cheers.) Perhaps, however, the most significant remark bearing upon the possibility of a modification of the trade policy of England was made by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, leader of the Government in the House of Commons, at Norwich, a few weeks ago, in reply to Lord Rosebery's speech on the commercial federation of the empire. Lord Rosebery took strong ground against the commercial federation of the empire, because, in his opinion, such a federation, whilst permitting free trade within the empire, involved a tax upon foreign goods, and such a tax would be a menace to the peace of the empire. Mr. Balfour said: "If the commercial federation of the empire has a justification at all, that justification is to be found in the fact that it will draw closer together the various distant and far separated members of this great community. If it does that, I say it is no affair of any foreign nation what we do in the matter. They do not consult our convenience in the formation of their tariffs. I am not aware of any reason why we should consult their convenience in the formation of our tariffs." (Loud applause). One cannot help but appreciate the true British ring of these few sentences from the speech of the leader of the House of Commons.