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IMPERIAL PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

The Imperial Trade Defense and Anti-Free Imports League, of London, England, has sent us a brochure which was issued just before the recent Parliamentary elections in Great Britain, in which is discussed what the next Parliament must do for Imperial trade. There is no more enthusiastic and intelligent advocate for Imperial preferential trade than Mr. J. W. Mahoney, the Secretary of this League. The pamphlet is addressed to Parliamentary candidates, and expresses the view of what the next Parliament must do for Imperial trade. It says:—

The practical and vital cohesiveness of the British Empire has been tested in the fiery trials of Britain's adversity, and has convinced friend and foe alike that a world power of the highest magnitude has rounded its existence into concrete expression, and formally assumed its preponderate scale of influence in the governing potencies of the globe. To secure its permanence and to stimulate its development, a concentration of the vast industrial activities of its varied climes, on the lines of preferential trading alone is needed. A marginal advantage to the Imperial producer could bring results of surpassing and direct good for the British and Colonial worker, and indirectly benefit the whole human race.

The potential commercial resources of the Empire are above computation, and the only way to their measurable development at the speed desirable and necessary, is by the bold and statesmanlike plan of uprooting the politico-economic fungus of free trade and giving to the products of the colonies and possessions a distinct advantage in British markets over the imports from foreign nations.

The free sons of a liberty loving Empire, who raised regiments and fought with conspicuous and epoch-making success, side by side with Britain's bravest and best, will not be content to wait years for the slow and timid movements of English statesmen when dealing with trade and tariffs, but will press for prompt and comprehensive measures for Imperial trade needs, though the economic dogmas, doctrines and creeds of half-a-century be torn to shreds in the process.

The word has gone forth and is repeated in every electoral section in the kingdom, that the army shall be reformed on an Imperial basis, and the navy strengthened by colonial additions. Most wise and patriotic decisions, involving large and costly schemes. But from what source will the enormous

additional revenue be derived? Will foreign nations generously aid us in our endeavors to safeguard the Empire by remitting the taxation on British Imperial goods, and thus enable our merchants and manufacturers to make larger profits and thereby stand the strain of a heavier income tax? They have enjoyed the untaxed entrance to our English markets for fifty years. Surely it is time they reciprocated our generosity. No, it is useless to expect nations to yield an advantage to others, except from the compulsion arising from self-interest. From what plan then, or financial scheme can the extra revenue be equitably obtained? It is admitted by competent financiers that the basis of taxation must be extended in the direction of duties on imports. It is seldom in the history of a people that the mode of raising revenue can be rendered advantageous to their industrial interests. This is the case however with Great Britain at the present time. She has a fault to amend, alike as regards her own interests and those of her Empire. Free markets have been shamefully conceded to competing goods of foreign origin, while British exports have been ruinously taxed in every port in the world, and when by the growth of her Empire, England is expected to give a little preference to the products of her Colonies, she is debarred from such a desirable course by the system inaugurated by the blatant economic hypnotism practised by the self-sufficient peace idealists of the defunct Manchester school.

The next Parliament will need to make history with the subject, or the available time for Imperial trade defence will pass, leaving the Empire to fall behind in the grand industrial march of the leading nations.

The increasing complexity in modern life demand from nations as from individuals, greater care and better method in shaping external relationships than formerly. The world has grown up industrially, and the principles and modes of commerce of the majority of productive nations create a rule which no single country can safely refuse to adopt. Great advantages in commercial exchange exist no longer, hence the folly of supposed superiority in fiscal matters claimed by the dwindling free traders of England. We have at last reached the period in the World's industrial concerns when all must be free traders or none.

The next Parliament will have the industrial prosperity of the British and the Imperial workers in the hollow of its hand. Parliament can do little for trade except to regulate its international relations, and in this it is supreme. If the incoming Government fails to pass measures of fiscal reconstruction, giving the wheat, lumber and fruit of Canada, the wool, wines and minerals of Australasia, the tea and rice of India, and the products of South Africa an advantage over competing goods from foreign sources, it will amount to a criminal abandonment of the best fruits of the inter-trading power of the Empire.

The cry of the "Open Door" in China is not a plea for absolute free trade with the Celestial Empire, but a simple demand for equal conditions of trade for all rivals. We are not contented with equal opportunities with the foreigner for trade in our own Empire, but require preferential terms, and the Colonies confidently expect special favor for their commodities at British ports. In the matter of Imperial trading within the wide borders of the Empire, the foreigner is not on the same footing as the British people themselves, as he contributes nothing to the Imperial maintenance of the English dominions, and cannot, therefore, logically object to Imperial preference for the products of the Empire.

What will the British people pay for the war for supremacy in South Africa? Will France, Germany or Russia share the cost? They expect to reap commercial profit from the conquest and the certainty of future peace.

British commerce within the Empire is equivalent to inland trade, and should have all the privileges of a nation trading within itself.

Trade follows the flag, but our flag needs the sustaining power of a mighty navy and the fighting battalions from a