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IMPERIAL TRADE.

In view of the fact that imperial preference is out of the question for the present, the next thing to be considered is the promotion of inter-imperial trade by every other available means. The proposed fast steamship service, elsewhere referred to, will contribute a great deal towards this end, but more than this must be done, if we are to get the best results. Mr. Lloyd George speaking of colonial cooperation in improving and systematizing commercial agencies in all parts of the Empire, and in the collection of information which will be useful to merchants and manufacturers. There is no doubt that business built up in this way will be more satisfactory to all concerned than any that can be developed by tariffs, because it will be natural and the other will to a greater or less extent be forced. While we regret in common with all other Colonies that the people of England have not seen their way clear to joining with the Colonies in a trade alliance against the world, we are far from being willing to write the word "failure" across the record of the Imperial Conference. The Conference has been far from a failure. The feeling that it has been a failure from the fact that many people expected too much. The Colonist is one of those papers which deprecated the idea that anything revolutionary was to be expected. It is a staunch believer in the policy of hastening slowly to the work of the present, and much as it would like to see a league formed whereby all parts of His Majesty's dominions would have free access to each other's markets and the rest of the world, it would be placed under a handicap, were it to accept of such a thing. The British people must be masters of their own affairs. They are not to be seen fit to entrust the Liberal Party with the control of these, and that party refuses to depart from the principle of non-interference. It is not to be seen fit to prevent the development of inter-imperial trade along the lines suggested above for the Colonies. The disappointment arising from the temporary eclipse of the preference. Just a word to those people who fear for the future of the Empire. There were just such fears entertained and expressed at the time of the repeal of the trade and navigation laws something over half a century ago, when the ports of the United Kingdom were thrown open to the ships of all nations on equal terms with those enjoyed by Colonial shipping, which by that way at that time was chiefly owned in what are now the Eastern Maritime Provinces of Canada. Discontent was expressed there, and there were some who said that a blow had been struck at the integrity of the Empire, which would be felt. Then as now it was said that the British North American provinces would seek in the United States the sympathy denied them in the Mother Country. As a matter of fact it was to surpass the feeling of disappointment in these provinces that the reciprocity treaty of 1854 was negotiated with the United States. It is hardly necessary to add that the expected did not take place. Reciprocity did not draw British America towards the United States; the new laws did not drive the provinces away from Britain; but today we have a stronger bond between the Dominion and the Mother Country than ever before existed. All of which proves that the Empire is founded upon something more enduring than trade.

FAST OCEAN SERVICE

A delayed London despatch, which we print this morning, gives some additional information bearing upon the proposed Imperial steamship service. It states among other things that the project is independent of any railway company, and that the new lines are expected to co-operate with all companies. This qualifies to some extent the comment made in these columns yesterday, wherein we discussed the enterprise as one in which the Canadian Pacific would be more closely concerned than any other company. We do not know that this will in any way lessen the prospective advantages of the service to Victoria, but are inclined to think that an independent line will be more beneficial to us than one under the control of any existing company. It is not to be supposed that the Canadian Pacific will abandon the field, but it may matter what may be done in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Imperial Conference. The project service will call for a great expenditure, probably not less than \$50,000,000. The Blackhead scheme was estimated to cost half this amount, and when to this is added the expense attendant upon lines to the Orient and the southern colonies, it is not unreasonable to expect that this amount will have to be doubled. We can hardly foresee what this enterprise will mean to the Empire at large. Naturally we look in the first place upon its effect upon our own province; but when we reflect that it will bring Victoria within seven days of the United Kingdom, it is easy to see that the results must be revolutionary. If this enterprise should prove to be the only result of the Conference, the holding of that meeting of premiers will be amply justified. It is very interesting to read that Lord Strathcona is largely responsible for this enterprise. It fell to the lot of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to place the subject before his fellow premiers, and he doubtless did so with vigor and an intelligent comprehension of the subject; but to the public the large fact that such an experienced business man as Lord Strathcona may be regarded as the father of the project will add to its prestige. It is wonderful how that aged peer is able to attack great enterprises with all the vigor of youth and yet with a fitness of judgment which commands success.

SIR WILLIAM'S SPEECH

The speech of Sir William Mulock at the Canadian Club luncheon was very interesting and practical. He has never visited the Coast before, but he exhibited a knowledge of the

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THE UNIVERSITY. Collier's thinks that it is absurd to criticize the Act for the endowment of the University of British Columbia, because it does not provide for the education of the people. He says that the Act is a good one, and that universities are not built in a day. He says that the Act is a good one, and that universities are not built in a day.

BETTER SERVICE NEEDED. We are advised by a correspondent that there is a movement on foot among the farmers on the Gulf Islands to secure better connection with Victoria. Reference has already been made to some detail to the imperfect character of the existing service. The public generally will agree with the respondent, whose letters we print this morning, that no blame attaches to the officials who have charged with the duty of endeavoring to accommodate the public with wretchedly inadequate means at their disposal. They do their best; but the people can hardly afford to wait until it suits the convenience of the owners of the railway to give them better service. We fear that the Victoria & Sidney railway will have to be left out of consideration in all plans for the development of the Saanich Peninsula, and hence for forwarding such connection with the Islands of the Coast as will induce people to settle upon them in such numbers as their attractiveness would otherwise warrant.

What is needed is not the electrification of the V. & S. railway, but the construction of an electric belt around the whole peninsula. If the Great Northern Railway Company, in whom it is understood the ownership of the railway is vested, ever propose to put on an up-to-date car ferry to the Mainland, the V. & S. will serve a useful purpose in some respects, but in the very nature of the case it cannot be used satisfactorily by the residents of the Peninsula. It is not in the right place. It is doubtless in the best place for a through railway, but it is not so far as the interests of the intervening community are concerned.

We suggest an electric railway, following a course somewhat as follows: Out the Cedar Hill Road to Cordova Bay; along the Bay until the elevation of the point of the land could be rounded so as to bring the line to the east of Saanich Road; out that road to Sidney; then on to North Saanich and across to Saanich Arm, following the west road down to Tod Inlet; then in by way of the West Saanich road to point of view of the Royal Oak, thence to a point on the Burnside road, and along the latter to the city. This would make in all a line probably a little more than forty miles in length, and it is certain that there would be a population along it which would make it profitable. It would do a large business in carrying passengers and be used by farmers to bring their produce into town. It would lead to the building of seaside hotels on Saanich Arm and other points; it would lead to the subdivision of the whole district into small holdings. It would give Victoria a thickly populated suburban area, which would mean very much to its business.

This is by no means a Utopian scheme. It is exactly in line with what is being done elsewhere. An electric road is projected, and we think it assured, from New Westminster to Chilliwack. One being constructed between Seattle and Everett and another between Seattle and Bellingham, is being prolonged to Vancouver. Between all the points mentioned there are other means of communication, and in two of them several. The electric roads, which follow the high-ways, along which people live can stop before every one's door if they wish, and are what are being used to develop areas, not half so promising from a business point of view as the Saanich Peninsula.

But an electric railway, located somewhat as suggested, is not the only thing needed. A better steamboat service to the islands is wanted. This would mean very much for the islands, and very much in the way of increased value to property and convenience to settlers upon the islands. We do not say that the Dominion government might not assist the suggested electric railway, but we do say most emphatically that its assistance could very properly be asked for the maintenance of a better steamboat service than is now provided. Again we say that we are not finding fault with the persons, who are giving the present service. We assume that they are doing as well as they can. But they are not doing as well as the people of

How Is Your Dining Room

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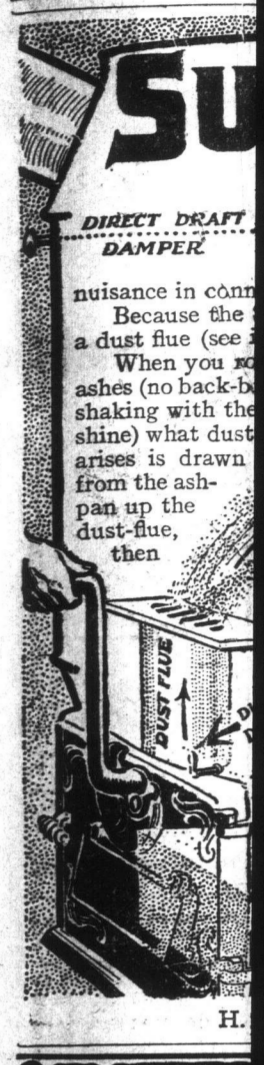
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