The Colonist.

MONDAY, MAY 4, 1896.

IMPERIAL COMMERCIAL UNION.

Imperial commercial union is making converts in Great Britain. Lord Masham is one of the many who are convinced that absolute free trade is not suited to Great Britain in its present circumstances. He believes that commercial union would be beneficial to both the Mother Country and the Colonies. In a letter to the London Times he says:

"For instance, we import seventy millions or more of manufactured or partly manufactured goods, and these imports increase every year. Suppose we were to put a duty upon this immense mass the nation would be enriched by the gains of the producers being far in excess of any loss the consumer might suffer. My calculation is that 20 per cent. would be about the average duty, and supposing this should shut out one-half, the other half would give a revenue of six millions; probably one-half of that sum would be paid by the foreigner in order to obtain access to our markets; and I speak with the authority and experience of sixty years as an exporter. Then as to the other half, the goods would be made at home, giving unbounded employment to thousands for many years to come. But the free trader will tell you that if you shut out imports you will lessen your exports to the same extent. Suppose that to be so; but it is not always the case. The reply to that is very simply; if instead of importing you make the goods at home and then exchange them for 'something else,' both these exchanges are British, and we all know what Adam Smith has said about the advantages of home trade. If, on the other hand, you import them and send something else to the foreigner in exchange, in that case only half the trade is British."

Lord Masham concludes as follows:—"If we lose this opportunity of securing not only the richest but the safest and the most increasing markets in the world and that possibly for ever, the collapse of the Empire is certain and cannot be far distant."

The Times adds:

"The council of the United Empire Trade League have under consideration the possibility of greatly extending its operations so as to make it the pivot not only for the development of British trade throughout the Empire, but also of all associations, whatever their designation, which are working for 'a reform in the fiscal system suited to the needs of the time and of the present generation.'"

Lord Masham is not laughed at by the British public as he would have been a few years ago if he ventured to express the views contained in his letter. He, on the contrary, gets a respectful hearing and there are thousands who seriously consider what he says. Imperial commercial union is, in spite of all opposition, recommending itself to thoughtful men in Great Britain and her colonies. They see the advantages of a closer union than that which now exists and they are evidently of opinion that the best way of both tightening and strengthening the bond that holds them together is by instituting a system of trade that will be mutually advantageous.

THE FIRST GUN.

The first gun of the general election campaign may be said to have been fired in Montreal on the evening of Friday, the 24th ult. A monster Liberal demonstration was then made, and Mr. Laurier, surrounded by leading Liberals from the Eastern provinces, appeared upon the platform. The Liberal leader had then a splendid opportunity of expounding his policy. It was to be expected that he would be clear and definite in his statements; that he would let the country know, in a way that could not be misunderstood what are his views and his intentions as leader of the Liberal party on the principal questions that are now before the people. But those who expected definite declarations from Mr. Laurier must have been greatly disappointed. He discussed the old subjects in the old way. For fear that we might be accused of misrepresenting the Liberal leader we will reproduce his declarations on the two great issues before the country as they are reported in papers that would not be suspected of doing him an injustice. The Toronto Globe gives the following as his deliverance on the trade question:

"On this question," he said, "I want you to give me all your attention, so that I may develop before you the attitude which the Liberal party has taken and will maintain. What is the situation to-day? What is the situation of the whole country? Is it satisfactory? The industries and agriculture are nearly ruined throughout the whole country. Here in the country surrounding Montreal you have the finest agricultural district in Canada, and, perhaps, in the world. I have visited the whole Dominion from one end to the other, from the Pacific on one side to the Atlantic on the other, and I have seen beautiful countries. When I visited the province of Ontario I was told that that was the garden of Canada. I answered that in my opinion the counties forming the garden of Canada were the beautiful counties which surround the city of Montreal. There is no mere beautiful valley than the valley of the mighty St. Lawrence, and, watered as it is by the magnificent river, it is truly the garden of Canada. But I know one thing, that is that all those counties cannot maintain the population which is born there. The population decreases every day, and what is the cause? The only cause is that the tariff is too heavy for the farmers to bear, so they cross the line to escape it. We are told that if it is too heavy for the farmers, that it is necessary for the manufacturing industries. I maintain that the tariff may be changed even in the interests of these industries, and if you elect a Laurier government, as I am sure you will—(applause)—we will modify the tariff so as to relieve the taxpayers, and this will be done as it was done in England, gradually and without injuring the manufacturing industries. Such is the policy of the Liberal party."

When the taffy to the inhabitants of the country immediately surrounding Montreal is taken out of the above utterance, what is there for the business man to consider? To what conclusion must he come as to the commercial policy of the Liberals if they should happen to get a majority at the coming general election? How is he to shape his business so that he may meet the predicted changes in the tariff without injury. All that he can learn from Mr. Laurier's speech is that there are to be changes in the tariff, and these changes are to be favorable to both the farmers and the manufacturing industries, and that they will at the same time relieve the taxpayers. Was there ever such a jumble of indefinite generalities on a subject on which precision and clearness are absolutely necessary? The only impression that Mr. Laurier's speech can leave on the mind of the man of intelligence is that if Liberals are elevated to power there will be any amount of tariff tinkering—that an effort will be made by this tinkering to serve and please everybody with the certain result of serving and pleasing nobody.

Mr. Laurier's allusion to England was unfortunate. The trade policy of England, he ought to know, has been the very reverse of favorable to the farmer. The farmers of Great Britain are known to be to-day in great distress owing chiefly, in fact almost solely, to the trade policy of the country. If Mr. Laurier's policy will have the same effect on the farmers of the valley of the St. Lawrence as the trade policy of Great Britain has had on British farmers, Mr. Laurier's compatriots will, after it is in operation a few years, heartily wish he had never been born. In Great Britain the farmers, while they have to bear their full share of the burdens of the state, are exposed to the unrestricted competition of every farming country in the wide world. The consequence has been that the prices of farm produce have been so cut down as not to leave the British farmer the smallest margin of profit. Those farmers are consequently complaining pitifully of the condition to which they have been brought by the policy which Mr. Laurier says is to make the Canadian farmer rich. Mr. Laurier does not seem to know that it is not of high taxes that the British farmer complains, but of low prices.

A BLANK CARTRIDGE.

The Manitoba school question was one of the principal topics of Mr. Laurier's Montreal speech. That, according to him, the present Government did nothing right with regard to that question goes without saying. He condemned the Government for what they did in that matter and he blamed them for what they did not do but ought to have done. After having denounced the course pursued by the Government without stint it was to be expected that he would lay down a definite and a practical policy of his own. A truthful description of what he did say on the subject would be condemned by sensible people as the broadest kind of caricature. As we have no desire to incur this condemnation we will reproduce the Monreal Star's report, which is a verbatim one of this part of his speech. After having informed his hearers in a great many words that the Manitoba school dispute was still unsettled, Mr. Laurier went on to say:

"How does that happen? That happens as I have just told you, because there are two factions, one faction which is for intervention and another faction which is against intervention, and each time that the first faction makes a concession it makes it in broad daylight, but it destroys it in the dark. Now, I again repeat that that question will not be settled until the Government, whether it be the Bowell government or the Tupper government, or the Laurier government, which, I believe, it will be (loud cheers), this question will not be settled in that way.

"Now gentlemen, I do not hesitate to say to you what I have said everywhere, what I have said in the Province of Ontario. I have spoken before people of English origin and of Protestant religion, and I repeat it here, that for my part, all my sympathies are with the minority of Manitoba.

"Mr. Harcourt, Treasurer of the Government of Sir Oliver Mowat has fought for fifteen or twenty years to give entire justice to the Catholic minority. Well, I have no hesitation to say before Mr. Harcourt, to say before my Protestant colleagues of the House of Commons at Ottawa, that my sympathies are all for the Catholic minority of Manitoba. I have no hesitation in saying what I have said all my life; I am a Catholic of the school of Montalembert and of the school of Lacordaire. (Loud cheers.) I am a Catholic of the school of these two men, who, in France, in our old mother land, preached liberty of instruction, and did not fear even to open schools in the streets of Paris, and themselves become instructors.

"Those are my convictions. That, gentlemen, is my way of thinking. I desire that religious instruction be given in schools; I desire that my words be heard from one end of the country to the other, not only in the Province of Quebec, but in the Province of Ontario and in the Province of Manitoba itself. I say that; but, gentlemen, in saying that, in saying that that is my conviction, my heartfelt conviction, the conviction which would govern my conduct, at the same time I say this; I know the constitution of my country; I know the population of my country, and I know that it is not by force that justice will be obtained for a minority. To obtain justice for the minority, methods of conciliation must be adopted, and it is by such methods that the Laurier Government, if there is a Laurier Government, as I hope, will settle that question. (Loud applause.)

"That, gentlemen, is my profession of faith. We are now at the opening of the campaign, and I feel no difficulty in telling you, gentlemen, what I now say before you. But mark well what I am about to tell you. I shall go into the Province of Ontario one month hence; I shall go into the City of London, into the City of Toronto, and I shall repeat word for word what I am saying here before my compatriots of Montreal."

When reading the above passage we were forcibly reminded of the criticism of Mr. Laurier's style quoted by Mr. Fairbairn in his excellent little speech. "Mr. Laurier," said a French member, "speak well and speak long, but he say nothing." The above is about as near nothing as a declaration of policy on such a subject can be. Every one admits that if a settlement can be had by conciliatory means such means are to be preferred. But what is to be done if conciliatory means fail? A statesman would have anticipated such a question as this. Conciliatory means have been tried by the present Government, both before the remedial order was sent to Winnipeg and after it had been sent and answered; but the Manitoba Government did not want to be conciliated. It is quite evident that both the Manitoba Government and a large body of electors who are behind that Government are determined to maintain the stand they have taken on the school question. Mr. Laurier is pledged to restore separate schools to Manitoba. If the Manitobans refuse to listen to his conciliatory speeches and reject his offers of compromise, what will Mr. Laurier do then? What is his last resource? The Hon. David Mills says remedial legislation, and so do many other Liberals; but Mr. Laurier refuses to consider an alternative, which is not only probable but almost certain. Mr. Laurier's "profession of faith" means, if he has not kept something back, that he will try the sunny ways of patriotism with the Manitobans, and if they fail, as they have failed hitherto, the grievance of the Manitoba minority must go unremedied.

THE WAR IN EGYPT.

A great many intelligent persons are quite at a loss to know what the war in Egypt is about. That war was decided upon suddenly. There was nothing in the newspapers about a quarrel between Egypt and the Soudan. Nothing was said about an offence being given or about preparation for war. The public were told one fine morning that the Government of Egypt was going to send an army to invade the Soudan. As to what the Soudan had done to deserve invasion, and why the expedition was to be sent at that particular time, not a word was said. There had been no trouble in the Soudan, as there is in the Transvaal. There was no African Monroe doctrine to maintain. There was no talk of an insurrection such as has broken out in Matabeleland. On the first day of March last Egypt was to all appearances as peacefully inclined as Canada is to-day. On the 13th of that month the London Times, to the surprise of almost everyone in Great Britain and elsewhere, announced that a new expedition that was to consist exclusively of Egyptian troops was to be sent up the Nile from Wady Halfa to Dongola. "The purpose of the expedition was not clearly stated, but we are given to understand that it was primarily designed to afford some relief to the sorely pressed Italian troops at Kassala and in Abyssinia." It was considered singular that warlike operations should be commenced at great expense to extricate Italy out of difficulties in which she had placed herself and with which Great Britain had nothing to do. For Egypt in this business means Great Britain. Great Britain occupies Egypt and has done so for fourteen years, and its affairs are completely under British control. The reason given for the expedition being evidently not satisfactory to the British public, it was said that Egypt was in danger of invasion by the Dervishes, who are continually hovering near the frontier ready to make a raid into the country as soon as circumstances appear to them to be favorable. It was said further that Egypt would never be safe as long as the Soudan was in possession of such a restless and warlike people as the Dervishes. The victory of the Abyssinians over the Italians was calculated greatly to encourage this nation of warriors, and if Kassala was allowed to fall into their hands, there was no knowing how soon they would invade Egypt with all their forces. It was wise, it was argued, to make a diversion in favor of Italy, and to attack the Dervishes before they had time to collect their forces for the invasion of Egypt.

It was believed by many that there was a reason for the expedition to the Soudan behind those that were given, which it was not politic to announce publicly. England's occupation of Egypt is admittedly only temporary. It was said at first by Lord Hartington that the British occupation of the country would last only six months. The French were greatly opposed to the occupation of Egypt by the British and were always wanting to know when they intended to leave the country. There was a party, too, in England which saw in the occupation of Egypt a source of danger to the nation, and which urged its evacuation at the earliest moment that it could be done with safety. But that moment never came, and is to-day to all appearance as far off as ever.

As long as three-fourths of the shipping that passes through the Suez Canal is British it is said it will not be safe to leave Egypt under the control of any nation that may at any time be hostile to Great Britain. Great Britain, too, during its occupation of Egypt has improved the country and the condition of its inhabitants wonderfully. To abandon it now would be to leave the country they had made rich and prosperous open to the incursions of the warlike Dervishes and exposed to the tyranny and rapacity of native rulers. It must, it is said, be evident to all who have an interest in the good government and the prosperity of Egypt that it would be unwise for the British to leave the country while it is liable to be overrun by its enterprising and unscrupulous neighbor. The richer Egypt becomes, the greater will be the temptation to invade it, if for nothing else than for the purposes of plunder. It is, besides, well known that the conquest of Egypt is the object of the ambition of the Khalifas.

The only thing that has, it is alleged, prevented the accomplishment of this design has been the occupation of the country by the British. The Dervishes hold the Egyptians as soldiers in contempt. They believe that they could easily conquer the country if its only defenders were its native population. Egypt, some British statesmen believe, can never be safe as long as it has such formidable neighbors as the Dervishes. The conquest, then, of the Soudan is in the interest of civilized nations a necessity, and it follows that the British occupation of Egypt must continue until that end is accomplished. Here we have what many regard as the secret of the invasion of the Soudan. It is to afford Great Britain a good reason for the continuation of its occupation of Egypt.

MR. HAGGART'S CANDIDATURE.

Mr. James Haggart of Wellington has, we understand, been selected as the Conservative candidate for the representation of the Vancouver district in the House of Commons. Mr. Haggart is well spoken of by all who have the privilege of his acquaintance. He is a public-spirited man, of superior intelligence, and will no doubt serve the constituency effectively and faithfully. As Mr. Haslam does not intend again to offer himself for election the Conservatives of the district cannot do better than give Mr. Haggart their united and hearty support.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

The Cabinet which Sir Charles Tupper completed yesterday will we believe recommend itself to the country. The greater number of its members were in the former ministry. The new members are Messrs. Angers, Taillon, Macdonald and Tisdale. They are all men of ability and of high character politically and personally. Not a word can be said by the professional slanderers of the Opposition against any one of them. Mr. Angers is a man of the strictest integrity. It was he who, when he was Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, dismissed Mr. Mercier. Mr. Taillon is held in the highest respect in Quebec. He succeeded Mercier as Premier and has conducted the affairs of the province with uncommon ability and great prudence. Col. Tisdale has been member of the House of Commons since 1887 and has won for himself a high reputation for industry and integrity. He is a working member. Mr. Hugh John Macdonald is highly esteemed by the Conservative party, not only for his father's sake but for his own. He is universally liked and respected and he well deserves his popularity. The new men taken into the Cabinet by Sir Charles Tupper are, in short, unexceptionable, and they will no doubt perform their duties in such a way as to do credit to the Premier's discernment. It will be seen that Col. Prior retains his place in the Government. His opponents in Victoria will perhaps now feel constrained to admit that he is a full-fledged Cabinet Minister.

A SOCIALIST COLONY.

An interesting experiment in Socialism is being tried in Paraguay. A number of Australians who felt that they could not get all the freedom they wanted in their own country emigrated to South America. There they formed a Socialistic colony. The settlers had many difficulties to encounter. They quarrelled and separated, and the experiment was declared a failure. However, a remnant remained determined to carry out their principles. There are about two hundred of them, and they occupy an estate of some 130,000 acres. The land, it is said, is capable of supporting a population of five thousand. It consists of prairie and forest and it is exceedingly fertile. "The fruits growing wild," the description states, "include oranges, guavas, peaches and figs. Some 300 banana trees have been planted, and mate, the native tea, supplies the colonists with their ordinary drink."

It may be concluded from this that the conditions are favorable, and that there is nothing to hinder the Australian colonists making a perfect Eden of their settlement. Some of them seem to be industrious, and have set to work with a will to cultivate the land. They raise vegetables for the market of Asuncion, for which they get good prices, and are cultivating coffee, tobacco and the sugar cane.

The colonists work under a constitution which "enacts that the community as such shall undertake all production, distribution and exchange, shall provide all machinery and capital, shall be responsible for the keep and education of children, and that the remainder of the wealth produced in common should be divided among all adult members of the community without regard to sex, age, office or mental or physical capacity."

Money does not appear to be used in this community. The members get labor cheques, "which now stand at $4.20 a week with additional clothing cheques (only available for that purpose). These cheques are available for any article kept in the store, the prices being fixed by a committee, and also for any goods that the store can obtain from Asuncion." The women stand on exactly the same footing as the men, and are mainly employed in dairy and laundry work. Each family occupies a separate cottage, and the marriage institution is rigorously maintained. There is one sentence in the description which shows that the Socialists are afflicted with the failings and the weaknesses which are the causes of unhappiness in communities which are not socialistic. It is this:

"The colony has hitherto lacked sound leadership and the absolutely essential spirit of self-sacrifice; the result has been endless recrimination and mutual distrust." We are also told that "the people have been living on capital instead of earning income; the timber and cattle have been foolishly squandered and many of the association's tools have been either destroyed or deliberately taken away." It is very evident that these Socialists will have to mend their ways or their colony, notwithstanding its superfine constitution, will come to grief. If what is said of the natural advantages is true, this Socialist colony, if its members are industrious and possess ordinary prudence, ought, if it were not founded on unsound principles, to succeed.

RETURN OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

LONDON, May 2.—Queen Victoria passed Thursday night on board the royal yacht Victoria and Albert, at Cherbourg, and started at 11 o'clock yesterday morning for England, reaching Windsor Castle at 8 o'clock last night. Her Majesty was welcomed by crowds of people at every point from which it was possible to catch a glimpse of her, or even the royal train.

The Queen has changed her mind and will not hold any drawing rooms in person this season. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (Princess Helen) second daughter of the Queen, will preside at next week's drawing-room on behalf of her mother, the Princess of Wales being in the south of France. The latter, however, will represent the Queen at the following drawing-room.

This change of plans of Her Majesty has greatly disconcerted a number of people, and the feeling of discontent has been increased by the Queen's action curtailing the festivities, etc., which had been mapped out for the marriage of the Princess Maud of Wales to Prince Charles of Denmark. Her Majesty will not come to London until the day of the wedding.

There will be no royal procession at Ascot. The royal stand will be shut, and the shades drawn down, just as after the death of the Duke of Clarence, out of respect for the memory of the late Prince Henry of Battenburg, whose attentions are much missed by Her Majesty.

Private intimation has reached the court that there is not the slightest hope of the recovery of the Czarewitch. He is said to be in the very last stages of consumption. The arrangements previously made in case of his death will cancel the coronation festivities, and there will be instead a merely religious service and some indispensable formal functions. Another private intimation which reaches the court from St. Petersburg is that there are hopes the Czarina will present the Czar with a son and heir.

The Prince of Wales arrived in town from Newmarket yesterday and will remain here a week.

Liberals and McCarthyites Condemned.

TARA, May 2.—At a mass-meeting of Conservatives of North Bruce held here, a resolution was adopted expressing confidence in the government and condemning the course of the Liberal and Dalton McCarthy parties. The present member, Alex. McNeil, was endorsed as a candidate for re-election.

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PEACE IN NICARAGUA.

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, May 2.—The president of the rebels, General Bacia, sent a communication of the foreign merchants of Leon to President Zelaya and to American Minister Baker, who arranged for the terms of peace. President Zelaya demanded an unconditional surrender. This was finally agreed to and the government troops, with flying colors, entered Leon to-day and took possession of the city. The insurgents surrendered all their ammunition. The rebel generals, their president and various ministers left the country to save their lives. Minister Gomez has officially notified U. S. Minister Baker that the war has ended and that peace has been established. The port of Corinto will be opened to commerce in a few days. It is expected that the American man-of-war Alert will sail north soon.

Fred G. White, having resigned the management of the British Columbia District Telegraph and Messenger service in this city, is leaving for Rossland where he will engage in business on his own account.

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Vice Chancellor Sir W. PAGE WOOD stated publicly in court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was undoubtedly the inventor of Chlorodyne, that the whole story of the defendant Freeman was literally untrue, and he regretted to say that it had been sworn to.—Times, July 13, 1864.

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