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THE NEW CHIEF JUSTICE.

THE appointment of Mr. Justice Davidson to succeed Sir Melbourne Tait as Chief Justice of the Superior Court of the Province of Quebec, will give the greatest gratification to the members of the legal profession and the general public. He is a sound lawyer, an able judge (not always the same thing) and at once dignified and urbane. He has a good military record to his credit and has always taken an active interest in athletic sports. A more popular appointment could not be made.

NAVAL DEFENCE OF THE EMPIRE.

AT the dinner of the Empire Congress of Chambers of Commerce, Admiral Sir E. Seymour took the same ground as THE CHRONICLE has taken on the navy question. For practical service the Empire needs one Imperial Navy, under one command and ready to serve wherever it can do the Empire the most good. The best way, Sir E. Seymour holds (and we heartily agree with him), for the over-seas Dominions to aid in the naval defence of the Empire is by money contributions to the Imperial Navy. In time of peace, by all means let everything possible be done to identify with the respective Dominions the ships and men provided by them, but in time of war, their place is in the North Sea or the Mediterranean or wherever the battle fleet of the enemy is to be found.

CEMENT DUTIES.

THE Minister of Finance announces that the Dominion Government has decided to remit from June 12 to October 31 half the duties levied upon Portland cement and hydraulic or water lime, and upon the bags containing these articles. The reduction is equivalent to about twenty-six cents per barrel of 350 pounds under the general, twenty-three cents under the intermediate, and seventeen cents under the preferential tariffs respectively. The Government has the right to make these reductions under a general clause in the law which authorizes it to remit duties in whole or in part when deemed necessary in the public interest. Hon. Mr. White says that he has received urgent messages from municipal authorities, boards of trade and con-

tractors in western Canada stating that heavy financial loss and public inconvenience are threatened by the suspension of building and paving operations for want of cement. It has been said that the industrial importance of any country can be gauged by its consumption of sulphuric acid. It is equally true that the development of a country through building and engineering operations may be estimated by its consumption of Portland cement. The Government has evidently acted in this matter upon the principle that the tariff is made for the people as a whole and not for a class. Protective duties in general have been for the benefit of Canada; but if a customs duty is doing more harm than good and restricting more than it promotes industrial activity the true National Policy is to modify it.

IMPERIAL PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

BY a vote of 122 to 9 the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire has adopted the proposal of the Toronto Board of Trade in favor of Imperial Preferential Trade. Fifty-eight Chambers of Commerce abstained from voting. Premier Asquith, in addressing the opening meeting of the Conference, said that their objects, whatever differences of opinion there might be, were common objects, the furtherance of the material interests and drawing closer the bonds of sympathy which united the various communities that were subject to the King. For several years past nearly one-quarter of the imports of the United Kingdom had been received from the overseas Dominions and possessions, and over one-third of the exports of the United Kingdom had been sent to them. This total import and export trade for 1911 represented four hundred million pounds sterling. To this, of course, must be added, when one was trying to estimate the magnitude of the interests represented in that assembly, the very large trade which passed between the Dominions themselves, amounting to at least seventy millions more.

He fully recognized the importance and significance of the gathering and declared that the deliberations and the conclusions they arrived at must have the greatest weight with those who are called upon to guide the various parts of the Empire.

The Imperial Preference idea is apparently growing in England.