

policy in the future with exclusive regard to their "own special conditions and requirements."

Those who know that complete practical local independence has been the secret of the success of the British Colonial system will recognise the disintegrative influence which will be introduced by the attempt to establish any sort of Imperial tariff arrangement.

#### A DISRUPTIVE FORCE IN THE EMPIRE.

An Imperial system of tariff preferences would be a disruptive element in the Empire, arousing feelings of jealousy among the several Colonies and antagonism on the part of the self-governing Colonies as a body against Great Britain.

It is impossible to work out the scheme of a British preferential tariff which would do even-handed justice to the different Colonies, still more one which would do justice to the various important interests within each Colony. A preference on food imports, as we saw, would do virtually nothing for South Africa, while the benefit would be distributed very unequally in the case of the other Colonies. If, on the other hand, we included the leading raw materials under the preferential treatment, we should be driven to protect our manufactures against the new stress of foreign competition brought about by the enhanced prices of their raw materials. In other words, here, as in the Colonies, preference would be linked to protection, and the protective motives would prevail over the preferential, so that the scale of preferences would be regulated, not by considerations of the equitable treatment of the several Colonies, but by the needs or the political "pull" of the home industries affected by the preferences.

Neither in theory nor in practice could the British preferences be weighted so as to give advantages to the different Colonies in proportion either to their population or their trade, or to the preferences which they accord to our imports. Even under our present equal treatment incipient antagonisms have disclosed themselves, based upon some real divergence of immediate interests. After the Boer War the efforts made to in-