

FUTURE TRADE WITH THE EMPIRE

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THE prominence at present being given to Inter-Colonial fast lines of steamers and all-British cables, constantly suggests the question of the future trade relation of Canada toward the Empire. The consideration is indeed pressed on us by the rapid march of events. Its solution is not sought with a view either to prophecy or speculation, but to guide toward a fuller vision of the opportunity for trade as it arises.

Unfortunately the enquiry is not one of universal acceptance. There are men among us who tell us that Canada is not in the race alongside more developed countries in competition for general trade. That for the products of field, forest and flood we are all right; let us attend well to these and be content. That Germany, the United States and Great Britain will take care of the remainder.

These men will scarcely believe that they are dating Canada back fifty years. That our Dominion occupies no mean place to-day in her external trade. That, in point of fact, our combined imports and exports for the year ending 31st December, 1901, exceed four hundred million dollars, which, divided by five and a half millions, give over \$72.00 per capita, whereas the United States record only about \$35.00. This fact cannot be too widely known, and alongside of it the parallel fact of the importance of the industrial quota both in our domestic and export trade. The figures of the manufacturing census for 1901 are not yet issued (and we have waited long for them) but estimating them relatively on basis of 1891, it is a safe statement to make that one-third of our population is already directly dependent on our manufacturing industries.

There is, however, another class of objection born of the last year or two, namely, that we are doing well in Canada and should give all heed to our

home business, which will give us all we can do, and let the rest of the Empire do similarly. The mention of this view (and it is not infrequent) reminds us of the common objection made in Scotland thirty or forty years ago to Foreign Missions. Some said, "Get all the heathen at home set right first and then look abroad." The churches acted otherwise and the result is admitted now that more and better home-work has been done than if there had been no foreign work. In trade we must have the same experience. We are better for being obliged to compete with the world's traders. But apart from that, the pressure of expanding trade will not always be felt in Canada, and when the quiet time comes we will be glad of the assistance afforded by connections formed in other British possessions.

As the parent of the great principle of Preferential Trade within British possessions, Canada is bound to take a full share in that trade as it develops.

To-day this principle is Canadian, very soon it will be Inter-Colonial, and possibly sooner than many of us expect, it will be Imperial.

It is no question of party politics. Among our manufacturers men of all shades of politics agree generally on the business view of questions arising from the principle. No body of politicians advocates the total abolition of tariffs under the British flag. Discrimination in favour of British possessions is almost universally desired by Canadians, and the principle will be reciprocated gradually as the result of Inter-Colonial discussion, which will ensue whatever the issue of the present conference may be.

The fundamental consideration after all in dealing with our future relative trade position in the Empire must have regard to our resources, their extent, their variety and our facilities for de-