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PROGRESS OF IMPERIAL PROTECTION.

One cannot help sympathizing with Mr. Chamberlain in his wonderful, almost lone-hand, fight against the policy which in Great Britain has been a fetish for sixty years. That some of the idols which he has already succeeded in throwing down from their high places have shown such an immediate tendency to crumble away does not detract from the courage of this political iconoclast, for until he began the attack their omnipotence was practically unquestioned. Now that the inner weakness of much of the doctrine opposed to Mr. Chamberlain seems to have become manifest, it would ill become us to be the prophet after the event; we would merely explain that where to our mind the difficulties of his plan will be met will be in the making of preferential arrangements with the colonies.

Considerable encouragement has already, it is true, been sent to Mr. Chamberlain from the colonial interests involved. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association, at the time of its annual meeting, sent a message congratulating him on the stand he was taking; but this, we cannot avoid believing, was more in the nature of a general sympathy with his aims rather than any accept-

ance of the plans proposed. To a good many people it did not seem clear that the manufacturers of this country had, after thinking out the cost, concluded that they would be willing to sacrifice some of their own interests for the good of Great Britain and Imperial unity. Yet, if they are not prepared to do this, how can they consistently further Mr. Chamberlain's aim? A contradiction in terms is involved. If the British producer is to get his goods into Canada, and meets with a duty here low enough to allow it, the Canadian producer must lose his market to just that extent; while, if the Canadian duty is high enough to keep such goods out, which certainly seems to be our manufacturers' desire, it is all the same to the Britisher whether that duty be just high enough for that purpose, or twice or thrice that proportion.

We are glad to see that such an important body as the Toronto Board of Trade has seen fit to cable a resolution of support to Mr. Chamberlain, for it shows a strengthening desire on the part of Canada to meet his proposals half way; and after all it will only be when the details come to be worked out that the difficulties we have referred to will most make themselves felt. Nevertheless, it is not easy to avoid the suspicion that, so far as things have gone at present, Canada has merely shown a natural willingness to take the good things offered her, leaving the consideration of payment for the same to the dim and distant future. It is quite possible for such a broad-minded body of business men as the Board of Trade to believe that even a material sacrifice to British manufacturers for the purpose of meeting the requirements of a preferential tariff would in the end be more than offset by the enlarged markets brought about by the influx into the West of agriculturists taking advantage of the extra inducements offered to their point of view. So far, however, it must be conceded that individual industries have shown but little sign of this willingness for vicarious sacrifice. Another doubt assails us as to the question of preserving the Canadian market for British secondary industries, about which the Toronto Board of Trade meeting had a good deal to say.

The secondary industry of to-day may, for all one knows to the contrary, become of primary importance to-morrow. Will Canadians of the future consider themselves bound to abstain from entering upon a given enterprise merely because manufacturers of the present generation find themselves unable to carry on such at a profit, or are willing to give their British brethren the full advantage of the latter's superior adaptability for such an enterprise? If we understand the term aright, a secondary industry is often one which has been brought about by growing competition in some other, or primary, form of manufacture, which has created a desire to take advantage of every possible opening for profit; and sometimes it becomes almost impossible to carry on the larger or original enterprise without the aid of secondary industries to utilize the bye products. What sort of cul-de-sac, then, are Canadian producers likely to find themselves in, tied down to production in certain lines which, however satisfying for the present, hold no bond for prosperity in the future? We raise these objections, not because we refuse belief in the eventual practicability of Mr. Chamberlain's plans, but because it is generally better to recognize difficulties before rather than afterwards.