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BRITAIN AND HER COLONIES.

It will be remembered that in connection with the Colonial and Indian Exhibitions, held in the city of London in 1886, was held the first Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire. This Congress was organized by the London Chamber of Commerce, and representatives were present from all parts, various subjects of Imperial interest being discussed. The opinion was generally entertained at that meeting that such congresses should be held frequently, in the hope that the broad consideration thus given to various important questions might considerably aid in their solutions, and lead to a more speedy adoption of reforms calculated to consolidate and extend the commercial relations which already exist between the mother country and her various colonies and possessions.

In this view of the matter the London Chamber of Commerce have decided to call a second Congress to assemble in London in June next, and proper committees have been appointed to carry out all the details. This organizing committee have issued invitations to the Boards of Trade and similar organizations throughout the Empire to appoint delegates to represent them at the forthcoming Congress, and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association is included in the list.

It is thought that the programme of the Congress should

comprise the following economic and non political subjects. (1) Commercial relations of the mother country with her colonies and possessions, with special regard to the renewal of European treaties, and the recent commercial legislation of the United States. (2). Boards for conciliation for labor disputes. (3). Codification of the commercial law of the Empire (4) Imperial registration of trade marks, and the adoption throughout the Empire of the Merchandise Marks Act. (5) Bills of Lading reform. (6). Factory legislation throughout the Empire (7) Commercial education. (8) Emigration and colonization. (9). The necessity of an Imperial system of decimal currency, weights and measures. (10). An Imperial system of penny postage. (11). Direct telegraphic communication throughout the Empire.

With regard of the first item of the subjects suggested for consideration by the Congress it will be remembered that when deputations from the London Chamber of Commerce waited on Lord Salisbury, last June, to learn his views upon the subject, he stated in effect that it was impossible for any practical progress to be made towards either commercial union or Imperial federation until some definite scheme was brought up for discussion. In view of this position it is to be hoped that all the organizations sending delegates to the Congress will formulate their views in distinct shape on this question in resolutions or otherwise, sending the same to the organizing committee of the London Chamber of Commerce, and that the delegates will be prepared to support the proposal at the sitting of the Congress.

The Imperial federation feature of the programme possesses a great deal of interest to Canada, and it is to be hoped that the discussion of it will result in the formulation of some scheme which will commend itself most favorably to the British Government, and result in the adoption by it of a fiscal policy which will give Canadian and all other colonial products some preference in the British market as against foreign nations. Other features of the programme which are of much interest to Canada are those referring to an Imperial system of decimal currency, weights and measures, penny postage and direct telegraphic communication throughout the Empire.

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association will, no doubt, be represented at the Congress.

RETALIATORY DUTIES.

A FEW weeks ago, diplomatic notices were sent by Secretary of State Blaine to the representatives in Washington of Austria Hungary, Columbia, Hayti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Spain, (for the Phillipine Islands) and Venezuela, under the provisions of Section 3 of the McKinley tariff Act, authorizing the President after January 1, 1892, to suspend by proclamation, the free admission of sugars, molasses, coffee tea and hides, against such countries producing these articles as, after that date, maintained tariff duties on American products which, in the opinion of the president, are unequal and unreasonable. Secretary Blaine's notes were sent out in accordance with the opinion of the attorney-general that it was the duty of the president to collect the usual duties upon these articles coming from the countries named, if the terms of Section 3 were not complied