

revenue, just as we impose revenue on whiskey, and not for protection—I am not sure my friend, Sir Wilfrid, would concur in that (cheers)—if we take that, I say, we are substantially—if we deduct that, I say, we are substantially a free trade Empire, and it is only the very smallest shred and margin of our inter-colonial trade which is carried on under protection. But now look what is proposed. I am sure you here have not had time to see what this proposal really means. What is the proposal? The proposal is that an import duty is to be paid—upon what? Upon corn, upon meat, upon sugar, upon wool, and other articles of enormous consumption. We here are to put a small duty upon these commodities while dealing with foreign merchants. We are to put an import duty on these while dealing with foreign countries, but we are to admit them from our Colonies. On the other hand, the Colonies are to keep on an import duty upon all foreign goods and a less duty on our own goods.

NOT THE LIBERALS ALONE OBJECT

We demur to a proposal of that kind, and let me say it is not the Liberals only who demur to it. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and I am glad to think, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, which include a great many Conservative gentlemen—these two chambers are entirely against it. Therefore, I am wrong in saying that we Liberals only object to it. What they say is that those who object to it are chilly patriots and parochial politicians. I will ask you to look at that. The total value of the imports of Mr. Chamberlain—of corn, meat, sugar and wool—is £128,500,000. Our total imports are £416,000,000. Therefore the proposal is to meddle with between one-third and one-fourth of the whole body of our imports, and you have got to add other articles of enormous consumption, and I take it I am within the mark in saying that we are to meddle with over one-third of all our imports, and only admit them on payment of a moderate duty. But one gentleman, at a gathering the other day, seemed to me to present the matter in an excellent light, which I hope you will take to heart. He was arguing for his proposal to put a moderate duty upon corn, upon meat, upon sugar, and upon wool. He said in this country we have to convince our masters—the working classes—that it is to their advantage to take a rather smaller loaf than that they now have for the sake of making that loaf more secure. (Laughter.) What explanation will one of you give to your wife and children when you place a smaller loaf on the table? They will say, "This is a smaller loaf; how is that?" What the gentlemen will say to his wife and children will be:—"You must be very chilly patriots. (Loud laughter and cheers.) You are dreadfully parochial politicians." (Laughter.) And what is this for? He has to put the small loaf upon the table instead of the big one in order to promote friendship with the colonies, and he has to explain to his wife and children that it is the colonists who caused him to have the small loaf on the table. I cannot conceive a less likely method of promoting friendly feeling. (Cheers.) Let us go to the other side of the matter. Let us go from our Lancashire cottage to the house of the artisan in Melbourne. He works in a factory which was started under protective duties. That factory is suddenly exposed by the marvellous magical arrangement to competition from this country, and that competition, of course, will lower his wages, and very likely shut up the factory in which he works. Will that warm his heart for the Old Mother Country? I cannot think that it will do anything of the kind, and so far from binding us and the colonies closer together, an artificial arrangement of this kind—and I am speaking in the presence of men of business experience, who know that what I am saying is true—artificial arrangements of this kind would not only destroy the foundations of your own trade, but would sow the seeds of ill-will and friction. I see that since this proposal was made, the Premier of Victoria referred to this idea, and he said the Government would accept no such proposals—that is, the Government of Victoria, in Australia. He said that differential duties of 30 to 35 per cent. on English goods against 40 to 45 per cent. on foreign goods would be worth considering, but absolute free trade between Great Britain and Victoria was not open to consideration.

CANADA A CASE IN POINT.

Let me put one or two of the points, because

we may as well finish this to-night. We are to put a duty on American corn to favor Canada, so as to force a market for Canadian corn to the partial exclusion of American corn. An arrangement of that kind made between us and Canada would have to be an arrangement for ten or twenty years. Suppose in that interval the United States were to change their minds about their McKinley tariff, and agreed that if we took off our preferential duty against their corn they would admit our manufactures free, we should have to say to them: "We should like it very much, but we have entered into a bargain with the colonists, and we are sorry, but we cannot accept the offer you are good enough to propose." (Laughter.) Would it make the small loaf more secure? It would make it a great deal more insecure. Your bread depends upon having plenty of customers for what you make. How will this customs union of the Empire affect your customers? First of all you are going to put a duty on raw material. That will handicap the manufacturer in foreign competition. Suppose you put a half-penny on Argentine wool, what will happen? The wool will go to Belgium, which is already your competitor, and I need not tell you in Lancashire what an advantage all competitors would have from the extra half-penny on the raw material. It might make all the difference. The second point from this aspect of things is that you would derange all your commercial treaties. You would interfere with what is called the most-favored-nation clause, and we already see the moment this scheme, this idea, is launched the German press threatening us that, if it goes forward, there will be a customs league between Germany, Austria and Italy united against us who are now on terms of the most-favored nation clause with these governments. These statesmen—statesmen of this stamp—say, and say truly, that we need new markets. So we do, but what is the good while you are pining for new markets of making ducks and drakes of your old ones? (Cheers.) All this is a patent recipe for turning a great empire into a small one. They talk of little England and little Englanders. They will make England little enough if you let them have a chance of legislation. (Cheers.)

WATCHMEN IN MILLS AND FACTORIES.

On the occasion of a meeting of the officers and special agents of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company, of Hartford, Connecticut, an address upon the above subject was delivered by Mr. C. F. Simonson, general inspector for the company. By reason of the importance of the subject and the valuable suggestions made by an experienced man, we give the address in full:—

Mr. President, General Agent and Gentlemen:

I have been led to give considerable thought and study of late to improvement in the watch service for large buildings, mills and factories in which we are so largely interested, owing to the many instances which have come to my notice of the unsatisfactory class of service now in vogue, and the number of fires resulting therefrom, and I deem the matter of sufficient importance to bring it before you to-night, in hopes that by united effort we may institute a reform, which will not only prove of great benefit to the interests we serve, but to those poor fellows who have to work while the rest of the world sleeps—the nightwatchmen.

From my earliest field experience and inspection of special hazards, I have noticed the distrust which manufacturers and other employers have for night watchmen, many preferring to leave their buildings wholly unprotected rather than employ a man to watch at night; and others are only induced to employ such a person by the almost unanimous demand made upon them by the insurance companies, and allowances made therefor of from 25 to 50 cents in all rating schedules.

In the limited time allotted me, I would like to offer what I consider a solution of this problem and a plan of employing two watchmen at the expense of one. This, if adopted, would, I earnestly believe, remedy to a large extent the defects found in the present system and considerably raise the standard of efficiency of the average night watchman.

First let us enquire; why is it that watchmen are so universally mistrusted? They leave their homes at 5 or 5.30 p.m. and reach the

factory at 6 o'clock; after looking over the plant and seeing that everything is safe and in order, they commence their rounds at 7 o'clock, and make half-hourly or hourly trips until midnight, when they eat their lunch. They then continue their rounds until 6 o'clock in the morning, when they start the fires under the boilers and get everything ready for the day's work and are relieved by the engineer at 7 o'clock.

When we consider that this work of fourteen hours is done at night, when the city is at rest and the quiet is only relieved by the sound of his own heavy, dragging footsteps on the floors, through dreary and gloomy rooms, poorly ventilated and dimly lighted by his solitary lantern, every night in the year, through cold, chilly rooms in winter, and hot, stuffy nights in summer, when it is natural for us all to desire rest and sleep, is it any wonder that the watchman is found inefficient, careless and even criminal in his disregard for the interests of those by whom he is employed?

He goes home to breakfast and tries to sleep. The bustle and noise of the city is upon him; the noise of wagons in the street; of children playing; dogs barking and household duties performed by other members of the family; all disturbs his rest and he rises in the afternoon ill prepared for his monotonous night labor. He goes to work with a heavy heart, with no courage or strength to support him; he tries to catch a few minutes sleep between rounds and is only startled from it by the sound of heavy blows on the door, made by a policeman or runner from the Central District Watch Office, where it has been discovered that he has missed his call; or he mechanically does the work wholly unconscious of what he is doing, he walks in his sleep and fails to discover the fire in its incipency, and is frequently found in the ruins next morning.

At the Phelps, Dodge & Palmer shoe factory fire in this city a few years ago the watch clock showed that the watchman had passed through the floor a few minutes before the fire was discovered by some one in the street, who gave the alarm, and the watchman had no knowledge of it until the arrival of the engines.

This fire cost the insurance companies over \$200,000, and could undoubtedly have been prevented if the watchman had been alive to his duty, as it must have been smouldering and burning when he passed through the room.

The old red planing mill on the river burned some years ago, and the remains of the watchman, his dog, lantern and watch clock, were found together in the centre of the mill, showing that he evidently went asleep and something overturned the lantern, setting the shavings on fire and burning the mill.

At a recent fire in the machine shop of McCormick's harvester works, Chicago, the watch clock showed the watchman had been through the shop five minutes before the fire was discovered by others and had failed to notice it.

Mr. F. Herold, of the Herold & Sons' furniture factory in this city, admits that his watchman sleeps at night, but says he will make no change, because they all do it and he has tried several. His watchman has a habit of waking at the proper time to push the button, but has frequently been found asleep.

Some watchmen sleep between rounds, employing alarm clocks and dogs to wake them at the proper time. One ingenious fellow constructed a bench on which he would seat himself astride, so that if he went to sleep he would fall over and be wakened to make his rounds.

Supt. Shepard of the fire patrol says that they frequently find watchmen asleep at the stock yards during the fifteen minutes relay time at midnight, particularly on hot summer nights.

At a large packing house in the stock yards it was discovered that the watchman left the heavy fire doors open between the chill room divisions, and upon being followed he was discovered asleep, lantern in hand, leaning against the door casing nearest his box, which he had failed to pull.

At the United States Warehouse, a short time ago, the watchman slept and missed his call. Awaking and finding that he had overslept, he went to the basement, spilled the oil on the floor, set it on fire and turned in the alarm. He showed a burned coat to prove his statement that he had been occupied in extinguishing the fire, which did not save him, however, after an investigation, and he was discharged.

They will tamper with watch clocks and with