

The Toronto World.

10, 51 YONGE STREET, TORONTO.
Daily World, in advance, \$3 per year.
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NO BLESSINGS IN FREE TRADE.

The Duke of Devonshire presents a very odd argument in reply to Hon. Joseph Chamberlain's plan for an Imperial preferential trade policy. He warns the workman to beware of a policy which will cause an increase in the price of bread. This warning the Duke of Devonshire advances with a positiveness that seems to admit of no questioning. A duty on wheat he reasons will inevitably lead to an increase in the price of bread.

This positiveness is not supported by Britain's recent experience with a tax on corn. The tax on corn did not increase by a fraction of a farthing the price of the loaf. Some free traders explain this to the most skeptical of the fact that the tax did not increase the price of bread to bring about the increase in the price of the loaf, which in time would have followed. This, however, is theory which cannot stand scrutiny beside the bold fact that the price of bread did not rise in obedience to the tax on wheat.

If the issue between Mr. Chamberlain and his enemies were a purely theoretical one there would be little difficulty in pronouncing upon it. The prospect presented by Mr. Chamberlain is far more alluring than the theoretical proposition advanced by the advocates of free trade. Mr. Chamberlain's figures, which show that the workman has more to gain from a policy of preferential trade than from a policy of free trade, have not yet been shown to be false. He makes clear enough to the most skeptical of the fact that there should be a slight increase in the price of bread that extra expenditure will be more than met by savings from the removal of the tax on tea and other necessities of life.

There is the other important fact that the wages of the British workman would be increased under a policy of protection. If he were obliged to spend more to live he would likewise earn more. This is the history of high tariff nations. Mr. Chamberlain's enemies have not much to show for the long test of the virtues of free trade. The hard fact remains that after years of trial of the policy of free trade the British workman has a margin of only a few cents a week over the bare cost of living. The loss of those few cents, the free trader argues, would ruin the British workman to the verge of starvation. This does not say much for the policy of free trade. It is not surprising that the British workman reflecting on his narrow margin of living should give ready ear to the clear cut proposition advanced by Hon. Joseph Chamberlain.

ROSEBURY A STRONG LEADER.

Lord Rosebury may not be laughing any harder now than he did when plowing his lonely furrow and doing his solitary spade work, but he is certainly bulking more largely in the public eye. If there has been any doubt as to who is the real protagonist of the Joseph Chamberlain it should be dispelled after the great demonstration he elicited in South London on Wednesday. There is no other man on the Liberal side at the present moment who holds so much of the public eye as he, and his position is a popular favorite. And this sympathetic ovation may have more greater significance than any mere temporary effect it has in connection with the present fiscal controversy. For all this enthusiasm on the part of so many thousands of the people, it is not so much inspired by the issue between protection and free trade. It is largely a personal tribute proffered by the rank and file of the Liberal party to the man who, they instinctively feel, holds the immediate future of the party in his hand. That this is so is practically shown by the attitude of the pro-tection section. Ever since Lord Rosebury's patriotic attitude over the South African war and his determined opposition to the identification of the Liberal party with the views of the Little Englanders they have scorned and striven to extrude him and his supporters from the ranks. But his hold on the country has proved too strong, or they too weak, and they are now industriously engaged in covering their defeat with a cloud of verbal dust and ashes.

The reinstatement of Lord Rosebury as leader of the Liberal party in the United Kingdom would be fraught with issues of much moment to the empire. For notwithstanding his decided stand against Mr. Chamberlain's proposals he is an out and out Imperialist, and his Free Food Leaguers. But the real weakness of the position taken up by Mr. Chamberlain's numerous and varied opponents lies in the fact that they are critics only. They are all great at inventing phrases and discovering odious resemblances. They are expert in turning the edge of an embarrass-

ing argument or covering a homethrust with a more or less labored ridicule. All of them cannot do this with the light touch and airy grace of Lord Rosebury. But even he cannot wholly conceal the lack of substantiality in the position he offers for the ill under which Britain is groaning. No doubt improved, practical, technical and commercial education is a good and highly desirable thing. So is the reduction of the national expenditure if it can be done without impairing the efficiency of the great services of the country. It would be very gratifying to all social reformers if the drink bill of the nation were reduced, the growth of cotton within the empire encouraged and British bismarck's general knowledge increased. These, however, are, like President Roosevelt's retaliation policy, just palliatives, not remedies. They are all in the way of good "training for race competition," but the great and primary essential is that the race competition shall be in the first place policy. This primary desideratum Mr. Chamberlain pledges himself to secure by promoting the intertrade of the empire and providing an equal basis for negotiating with foreign rivals and competitors. And one remedy is better than an infinity of palliatives.

MR. BURNHAM'S PROTEST.

The government papers are congratulating themselves on the fact that Mr. J. Burnham, a Conservative. At a recent dinner Mr. Burnham proposed the toast of the "Political Institutions of Canada," and named as responder to the toast Hon. J. R. Stratton, who, he said, had done much for the Town of Peterboro and his constituency. He further said that the constituents of Mr. Stratton felt that the course of abuse to which he had been subjected had about reached the limit, and he felt, as he was sure all Mr. Stratton's constituents felt, that it was time the Conservative party brought forward some policy that would be more creditable to it than that of abuse and affidavit producing, which had recently characterized it.

Mr. Burnham is entitled to credit for speaking his mind, but he raises some interesting questions. If he is to advance, he must see that far more of it has been heaped upon Gamely than upon Stratton, who, so far as we know, has not been described as Achan, Barabbas, Titus Oates or Pigott. If he objects to affidavits, he can hardly approve of the publication of the Cross affidavits by The Globe, a day or two before the by-elections. Affidavits may be true or untrue, and cannot be approved or condemned until their facts are investigated. If Crossin, after making his affidavit, had been thrust into jail, not for perjury, but as an enemy of the state, Mr. Burnham's sense of fairness would have revolted from the proceeding.

Again, no Conservative journal has said anything more severe about the government than has appeared in the Reform journals. If Mr. Burnham objects to Mr. Stratton being separated from his colleagues and singled out for punishment, many persons will agree with him. The articles published in various Liberal journals would justify, not the punishment of any particular Minister, but an entire change of Ministry. This is the real constitutional remedy, which in recent years has taken the place of the old method of impeachment. Mere scolding and abuse, leading to no result, are as useless as vague dissertations on corruption, in which no remedy is clearly indicated. Until we change our system, the only remedy is to turn out one government after another, until we obtain one that has the confidence of the people.

MUSIC AT MEALS.

The people of Chicago, it is said, are agitated by the question whether music ought to be played at meals. At the risk of repeating a platitude, it seems to us that everything depends on the kind of music. Nobody admires the man who gives an imitation of a flute obligato, while taking his soup. The people of the United States are generally accused of eating too fast, and if so their digestion would be improved by an andante movement, which would induce them to follow Gladstone's rule of 32 chews for every bite. Gladstone lived to be some 90 years of age, and in his last years he was accustomed to take 32 mile walks. We must attribute this partly to his andante and piano style of absorbing nourishment. Notwithstanding numerous remarks in favor of a strenuous life, we decline to give our endorsement to the strenuous meal.

In the second of the Waverley novels, Guy Mannering, Scott introduces us to Counsellor Playdell, who avows his preference for the supper, the favorite meal of the ancients, the meal that is eaten when all the cares, worries and the struggles of the day are swept away. We can scarcely doubt that a meal was eaten to the accompaniment of music that is poured out, not pounded out, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said. But we hesitate to judge of the influence of a cake walk on any fellow human being at his meals.

SHOULD BE NO COMPROMISE.

It is exceedingly kind of the Bell Telephone Co. to allow the work of erecting telephone poles to be carried on according to the instructions of the city engineer. The company will name the streets upon which the poles are to be erected and to the city engineer will be accorded the high privilege of locating the poles. If the tentative agreement provides merely for the location of the poles by the city engineer after the company has exercised its alleged right to select the streets it is entitled to no consideration. If the city does not possess the power to say where and under what circumstances the poles shall be erected it need not worry about the matter of jurisdiction which the Bell Telephone Co. is ready to concede it. The whole question lies in the city's power or lack of power to govern the erection of the Bell Telephone Co. poles. To say that the City Engineer may fix the precise location of the poles in the matter of inches or perhaps of feet is to concede him an insignificant power. For the present the city must accept this theory under a decision given by

the Court of Appeal, which reverses Mr. Justice Street's decision. The Privy Council has yet to be heard from. Pending that decision the city should not consider any compromise with the Bell Telephone Company. The company has decided that the courts shall determine the point, and it is with the courts that the city must now rest its case. We have heard a great deal about the fulfillment of litigation with franchise-holding corporations. It is frequently asserted that the city usually loses in these appeals to the court. As a matter of fact the city loses more from lack of vigor and persistence in urging its claims before the courts than in carrying litigation to the final issue. The city has stopped to negotiate when it should have fought. It has compromised when it should have carried its case to a judicial finality.

There can be no two questions about the propriety of carrying the suit with the Bell Telephone Co. to the Privy Council. If the decision of the Court of Appeal is reversed, the city will be left with the streets to the Bell Telephone Co. The trifling jurisdiction which the Bell Telephone Co. is willing to grant to the city is not a factor in the situation. If the city has no more power than the company concedes it, the jurisdiction is a mere formality. The question is whether the municipality or the Bell Telephone Co. owns the streets. Nothing short of a decision from the Privy Council should persuade the city to abandon the control which it claims over its streets, and any proposition in the way of compromise should not be entertained.

The Globe has grasped its trusty spade to dig post holes for the finger posts of prosperity.

Mr. Chamberlain is called Jeremiah by Lord Rosebury, and he may think himself lucky if he escapes the names of Achan and Barabbas.

Canada may pay but little attention to annexation talk from Senator Hale of Massachusetts, a man whose size is throwing tea overboard.

Between The Globe's iron hand and The Brockville Recorder's hot heart, the Ontario government is having a very hard time.

Uncle Sam's chief cause for thankfulness yesterday that Lord Alverston was a member of the Alaska arbitration commission.

The story of the "benevolent assimilation" of the Philippine Islands is still being told in a series of casualty lists.

Lord Rosebury describes Hon. Joseph Chamberlain as a modern Jeremiah, but as an entirely different choice, this was the only biblical parallel his Lordship could suggest without infringing on The Globe's copyright.

Emperor Bill has lost his voice, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier does not appear to be able to exercise his local organs to the extent of mentioning the date of the general elections.

CANADIAN SALT INDUSTRY.

Editor World: We notice a paragraph in the press to the effect that wholesalers make the charge that the Canadian salt industry is in the hands of a monopoly, which is restricting the output and increasing prices. So far as this is from being correct, we state without fear of successful contradiction, that there are at present at least eight different firms or companies doing business, each for themselves, actively competing the one against the other. As regards prices, when it is known that for the past two months we have been selling 280 pounds of salt in a barrel for 80 cents, and during that time had we chosen to neglect the salt trade we could