

Unionist party and plunged the country into agitation. Nearly all the foremost British statesmen—Liberals, Conservatives, Unionists and Radicals—except Mr. Chamberlain and possibly Mr. Balfour, have arrayed themselves against it. This might easily have been foreseen. Britain occupies a different position from any other country. She is essentially the great trading nation of the world. She has practically no natural products to export, except iron and coal, but she imports immense quantities of foodstuffs and raw materials, the latter of which she converts into manufactures and exports abroad. Her ships, consequently, are on every sea. She trades with all parts of the globe. She buys from them natural products, and they buy from her manufactured goods. Under free trade, as we have seen, her commerce with them has increased by leaps and bounds, until it has quadrupled, and how any intelligent person who has read Smith, or Baghot, or Gladstone, or knows how rapidly Britain has grown great and wealthy under fiscal freedom, can fail to see that a return to the restrictive system of protection would give a staggering blow to her shipping, manufactures and financial interests, passes my comprehension.

Dangers of Protection to Britain.

The day in which Great Britain adopts protection, taxes foreign productions, and sets colonial in free, she will light the fires of a tariff war. She has a perfect right to do so, and I also agree that she has little to thank most other nations for. Our first duty, too, is to look after ourselves. But assuming this very point of view, is it not certain that her exceptional position as the great trading nation, absolutely dependent on other countries for her raw materials and even her food, would render a tariff struggle more injurious to her than to any other of the combatants? That she would suffer more or less is certain. If the conflict were prolonged and carried to extremes, it might prove seriously disastrous.

According to the official returns for 1903, the total commerce (imports and domestic exports only) of the United Kingdom with foreign powers amounted to \$2,963,517,733, and with her colonies to \$1,094,281,066. Is it reasonable—is it right—is it unselfish, for Canadians to expect her to diminish and endanger these vast commercial exchanges with foreign nations in order to try the experiment of a small protective stimulus to colonial trade? Her imports of breadstuffs, meats, dairy produce, fruits, etc., amounted to no less than \$1,111,195,356 in 1903, could it be otherwise than injurious to her people to tax about three-fourths of these foodstuffs in order to give us a trifling advantage on about one-fourth, which we colonists supply? This tax would largely fall on the working classes of the Motherland, and as 40 per cent. of them are already living below the standard of food necessary for health and happiness, is it any wonder that a policy which would certainly make food dearer and scarcer should arouse the fiercest opposition? Lord Salisbury said it might provoke revolution, and it would if the tax were made high enough to be effective.

Mr. Chamberlain's next point, "the Empire in danger," is a famous