

THE COLONIES AND THE EMPIRE.

The loyal and imperialistic spirit manifested at the Board of Trade meeting on Tuesday is most gratifying to all well-wishers of Canada, and of the Empire. The key-note of the meeting was expressed in the preamble of the resolution which was carried, declaring in favour of united action throughout the Empire to promote its strength, progress and permanent solidity. The resolution embodied two propositions, with this great object in view: First, that the Colonies should contribute towards the naval and military defence of the Empire; and, second, that, to provide revenue for imperial responsibilities, a moderate special ad-valorem duty on importations from foreign countries should be levied uniformly by all parts of the British Empire. At the first glance it seems to us that the second proposition may be dismissed on the score of impracticability. But we are open to conviction, and possibly those who favour the idea may be able to demonstrate that the thing is possible. What class of goods is imported into the old country and into all the Colonies in anything like equal proportion? In most cases, that which is an article of import into one part of the Empire is an article of export from another. A special duty on all imports might more nearly approximate, while still being far removed from equality.

With the principle of the first proposition, that the Colonies should contribute towards the defence of the Empire, every fair-minded man must agree. The practical question is, what form of contribution will best conduce to "the strength, progress and permanent solidity of the Empire."

At times of intense and exceptional imperialistic feeling like the present, there is a natural tendency to go to extremes in demonstrating that feeling. While we quite sympathize with those ardent imperialists who wish to take advantage of the abnormal wave of public opinion to advance their cause, we would yet recommend the wisdom of "making haste slowly." It would be regrettable to do in times of exceptional national excitement something that would have to be undone in more sober moments. The great strength of the tie which binds Great Britain to her colonies is its infinite lightness and elasticity. The most hostile critic cannot point to a single particular in which British connection is oppressive or disadvantageous to the colonies. The autonomy of the colonies is practically as absolute as though they were not enjoying the protection of Great Britain. There is to-day no taxation without representation such as lost Great Britain her American colonies. Let us take care to do nothing in the exuberance of the present moment that may threaten to impair at some other time the permanent solidity of the Empire. By all means let the Colonies contribute to imperial defence, but how? John Bull needs money about as little as anybody; and he needs money about as little as he needs any other good thing. The best form of contribution for the colonies towards imperial defence is that in which they are now contributing: the free offerings,

of free peoples under one glorious flag and one well-beloved Sovereign. In the construction of the Canadian Pacific and Intercolonial Railways, Canada has made a contribution to imperial defence more valuable than millions of dollars of direct taxation, and, as Sir Charles Tupper said in England, these works are but an earnest of what Canada is prepared to do in the future. When the Dominion establishes a new cable, or a new steamship, it has an opportunity to contribute to imperial defence. The unanimity of the people of Canada on the subject of the Canadian Contingent for South Africa shews that they are not disposed to shirk their responsibilities. We should hesitate to jeopardize the substance of imperial unity for the sake of the shadow of imperial federation.

Another reason for caution is that we should hesitate to take advantage of Great Britain's appreciation of Canada's recent services to the Empire to embarrass the Empire's relations with foreign countries, and especially with the United States. If some means can be found by which Great Britain can stimulate the development of her food supply in her own colonies, so much the better for her, and for them. But the friendship of the United States has been valuable to Great Britain during the present war, and is always of great value to Canada. Why should our dreams of imperialism exclude the grander idea of a permanent federation of free nations, continually finding new interests in common, new opportunities for co-operation, and perpetuating from ocean to ocean, and from shore to shore, the glorious traditions of what, for want of a better name, we call the Anglo-Saxon idea?

In connection with the foregoing, we furnish the following statistics which have an important bearing upon the question under discussion. These figures are for the year 1899. In 1899, Canada sold to Great Britain, \$99,091,855. In 1899 Canada sold to the United States \$45,133,521. In 1899 Canada bought from Great Britain \$37,060,123. In 1899 Canada bought from United States \$93,007,166. Total trade of Canada with Great Britain, imports and exports, \$136,151,978. Total trade of Canada with the United States, imports and exports, \$138,140,687. Great Britain, in 1899, imported from the United States, wheat, flour, corn, barley and oats, \$151,560,000, and from Canada, \$20,201,000, out of a total import of these articles of \$275,400,000. The percentage from United States, 55 per cent., and from Canada 7.30 p.c. In 1899 the dead meats sent to Great Britain from United States, \$81,292,000, and from Canada, \$5,312,000. United States percentage of total imported 50 per cent., and of Canada 3.25 per cent.

It would be well to ponder upon these figures, when considering the question so recently discussed at the Board of Trade in the metropolis of the leading British colony.

MR. J. B. LAIDLAW, Manager, Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society, at Toronto, passed through Montreal yesterday, en route to Halifax, N.S., to appoint a successor to the late Captain Clarkson who represented the company at Halifax.