

of that Board is not necessarily a member of the Imperial Cabinet,—he has *usually* been a Cabinet Minister, but the present President is not,—the functions of the numerous branches of his department consisting simply of details performed at the instance of the other departments; it has, in short, been said to “have to do with every imaginable thing in the world, but not with trade.” When the Treaty of Commerce between Great Britain and France inaugurated a freer commercial policy on the Continent of Europe, it was found that British interests frequently suffered for want of active and zealous vigilance on the part of the Government,—and a movement was begun by the Associated Chambers of Commerce in favor of the establishment of a Department of Commerce. The result of the agitation was the appointment of a Royal Commission in 1864, to inquire into the working connections of the Board of Trade with the Foreign Office. The report of the Commissioners showed that the Board of Trade had neither the power nor the organization for the performance of such functions in relation to commerce,—although one of its branches (*since abolished*, the duties being now performed in other offices)—was designated the “Commercial Department.” In fact, the Commission demonstrated that every department in Her Majesty’s Government “decides upon questions having the most important bearing upon commerce, with reference only to its own particular sphere; thus the India Office imposes duties upon manufactured cotton without considering how the Lancashire trade is affected or injured thereby; the Colonial Office concludes treaties with the United States of America, giving privileges to American produce which British goods do not possess; the Foreign Office concluded conventions for the sugar trade, which ruined many British refiners; the Treasury has proposed alterations in monetary and banking systems of the country without duly considering the effects they might have upon trade: taxes are imposed or removed without due regard to the interests affected by them.”

The Report of the Commission also shows that many of the measures above referred to would not have been taken, or very much modified, if each Minister had been obliged to consult a colleague charged with the duty of considering the ultimate effects of every measure upon the interests confided to his care.

The Association of Chambers of Commerce are renewing the efforts commenced so many years ago, and in their latest memorial to the Right Honorable Mr. Disraeli, they say:—

Your Memorialists submit that if such a department of the Government existed, the commercial public would have only one authority to whom to address their representations, assured that their matured and legitimate opinions would have a zealous advocate in the Cabinet, whose advice may be sometimes overruled by higher, more general, and even merely political reasons, but not without having been thoroughly discussed upon their merits.

It is by no means intended to convey the impression that commercial men desire to see trade interests overrule all others, for they know that there may be considerations of high State policy, or even facts not known, or sufficiently appreciated, by the general public, which may render the immediate fulfilment of their most legitimate demands inexpedient. But they feel themselves justified in expressing their strong conviction, that as hardly any great question can arise in any department of Government, which has not a more or less direct bearing upon trade, a satisfactory consideration of commercial interests can only be secured by their representation in the Cabinet by a Minister possessing the same power and influence as his colleagues who preside over the other chief departments of the State.

Such a Minister, animated with a due sense of his responsibility as the official guardian of the mighty and ever-widening interests of the industry of this great empire, would be summoned, as a matter of right to every Cabinet Council. He would there be enabled to see that no measure undertaken in the interest, primarily, of the national revenue or of finance—no diplomatic arrangement with foreign States, and no Act of colonial legislation requiring the sanction of the Government at home—received that sanction without its effect on the interests of the commerce and industry of England having been first duly considered and discussed, and its probable consequence to those interests maturely weighed. He would further, from the means of information afforded by frequent communication (on an equal footing) with other Cabinet Ministers, and by communication