

industry, under a revenue tariff, would put in a claim for incidental protection. Mr. Bertram, in effect, asks incidental protection for stove founders, engine builders, and others, when he says that they have a right to expect advantages over the foreign manufacturer of more than 17½ per cent. The difficulty then comes with the manufacturers of pig iron, a difficulty which the Ontario Government has helped to solve by a bonus on pig iron. But the difficulty still subsists, as Mr. Bertram points out. In the collision of interests, each party interested tells his own story. The above incident shows that, under the incidental protection of a revenue tariff, it would be easier to ask questions than to answer them.

On the tariff question there is one public man, with a special right to speak, who has so far since the dissolution thought proper to exercise the correlative right to keep silent. The reader will have already divined that the reference is to Sir Richard Cartwright. He is committed, like the rest of his party, to a revenue tariff, by the platform of June, 1898. He is credited now, whether warrantably or not, with retaining some hopes in connection with reciprocity with the United States. We now know for certain that Mr. Laurier has accepted the proposal of preferential trade within the Empire. How far these views can be made to harmonize is a question of some interest at the present time. The Ottawa platform dropped the idea of reciprocity with the United States, at the expense of Great Britain, and now Mr. Laurier has accepted preferential trade within the Empire. When Mr. Laurier speaks for his party, it must be presumed that he expresses their views generally; when people ask whether there be any notable exceptions in the party, the mind recurs to Sir Richard Cartwright, and his unwonted silence does not help to clear up the doubt. A word from him would dispel any mystery that exists, if any there be.

So far as the idea of a stable tariff, which counts for something in the present election, rests upon revenue necessities, it has a foundation of possible endurance. But this does not mean that the tariff must, in all its items, be considered immutable, much less does it mean that any industrial class has a vested interest in the tariff, to which it can appeal anywhere, except to the court of public opinion. A tariff is the creature of the legislature to which it owes its birth. Its primary purpose is to raise a revenue, and when its secondary purpose is to shelter young manufactures, the hope has always hitherto been indulged that the time would come when the shelter suitable for infancy would not be needed in vigorous age. The wisest advocates of Protection are those who, claiming for it the privilege of infancy, admit that it costs something while it lasts, and who promise future reimbursement in the advantages which a country reaps from solidly established manufactures. There are large numbers of people who would be willing to make this sacrifice for this object, who would have objected to Protection at the outset, if they had been told the infant never would grow to maturity so as to be able to subsist by its own force. And the more generally the view of final maturity is accepted, the less likelihood is there of a strong reaction which would lead to a sudden or violent revolution in tariff policy.

BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE CONGRESS.

What has taken place at the third meeting of the British Chambers of Commerce looks like a first real step towards the realization of a commercial union of the British Empire. Mr. Chamberlain regards this as the pivotal

question on which most of the other problems of Greater Britain depend. He fully recognizes that it involves the putting of duties by the Imperial Parliament on the wheat, meat, wool, sugar and some other products of foreign nations. There are symptoms that the free traders will not permit the change to be made without a fight, though many free traders will favor it, without renouncing their general faith in the principle. The idea of a commercial union carries with it the political consideration of strengthening the bonds that bind the British Empire together. The resolution finally adopted, moved by Sir Albert Rollit, president of the London Chamber of Commerce, and seconded by Mr. Osler, president of the Toronto Board of Trade, affirmed "that the subject of the establishment of closer commercial relations between the United Kingdom and the colonies demands careful consideration, and the Congress, therefore, respectfully represents to her Majesty's Government that if the suggestion should be made on behalf of the colonies or some of them, it would be expedient to promote such consideration and formulate some practical plan by summoning an Imperial Conference, which would be fully representative of the interests involved, or by such other means as her Majesty's Government may be advised to adopt." These may not be the exact words, but they contain the substance, as cabled to New York. The next step will now be for the colonies in favor of establishing closer relations between the different parts of the Empire to make a move with a view to summoning an Imperial Conference, representing all interests concerned, to consider the question in its practical bearings. There is no doubt that this will be done, and that such conference will be held. The success of the scheme would be, beyond doubt, beneficial to the colonies.

EASTERN TOWNSHIPS PROGRESS.

The report of the Eastern Townships Bank for 1895-96 is in effect a review of the course of business generally, and of that in the Eastern Townships of Quebec particularly. And there is much in it to make its perusal worth while. First in the broad review the lowering of the rate of interest during the last few years is noticed. The effect of this cheapening of money is that while the merchant who borrows may profit by it, it tells against the holder of invested means and leads him to speculation. Money being to a banker what merchandise is to the merchant, the former finds his possibilities of profit limited by the decline in interest rates, just as the latter finds it impossible to get the profits he used to do some years ago. But in these altered conditions the directors of this bank see no cause for alarm. "The world grows, and will grow healthily if men will be prudent." There is patriotism as well as good sense in the remark made about the present restrictive policy of the United States towards alien visitors or residents: "Canada should not complain, but should seek by enterprise and the employment of capital to furnish employment within her own boundaries for every class of her people."

As to mere local affairs a very suggestive sketch is given of the efforts of the Sherbrooke council and the Sherbrooke Board of Trade to promote industries in that city; of the development of rubber and other manufactures in Granby; the prosperity of St. Hyacinthe; the importance of Magog as the seat of cotton mills and print works; the activity of Coaticook. An intelligent paragraph on dairying marks some of the secrets of success in that industry, and more than usual attention is paid to mining. One cannot be indifferent upon hearing that eighty per cent. of the practicable asbestos of the world is furnished by the Eastern Townships. Nor should any Canadian be un-