

network of railways when we consider the size and the nature of the country. But these railways are well conducted, and they pay. The larger ones yield dividends of ten and even twelve per cent.

In any attempt to measure the resources of Japan, material or moral, account cannot but be taken of the loyalty of the people. Their devotion to their country is passionate in the extreme; and this explains the spirit and tenacity with which her soldiers attempt seemingly impossible tasks or persist cheerfully in military movements in the plain face of death. Such courage as this is different from the dogged, immobile resolution of Russian infantry, which, in the Crimea, as Kinglake described it, while it held them from retreating, appeared to furnish them with no impulse to forward movement. The industry and thrift of the Japanese are another valuable asset of the nation. Informed as it is by intelligence, the outcome should, in time of peace, be material prosperity. But war is a terrific waster of resources, and if the stubborn pride of Russia will not allow her to make concessions that would result in peace, sympathizers with Japan must look to see her "bleed white" before this cruel war is over.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S CAMPAIGN.

Mr. Chamberlain's campaign seems to prosper. At any rate he himself has returned to the fray with all his old-time vim and perseverance. Speaking at Welbeck the other evening before what is described as an immense gathering composed largely of agriculturists, he told them that he wanted to extend to them an advantage similar to that which the Government proposed for the manufacturers. As intimated in former speeches last year, the plan he proposes is to levy a two-shilling duty on corn, one on flour sufficient to encourage its milling in Britain, and a 5 per cent. duty on meat, dairy produce, milk, poultry, eggs, etc. This plain statement of his position must be a severe blow to the absolute "free-fooders," who may have fondled themselves with the belief that, Mr. Chamberlain temporarily in the background, this, his ultimate ambition, might be shelved permanently from the definite scheme which, no doubt, will be presented to the people by the leaders of the Imperial Government at the earliest fitting opportunity.

Without a doubt Mr. Chamberlain has logical force behind his proposition. The expressed intention of his proposed fiscal reforms being to tie the Imperial bonds tighter by a union of interest and sentiment, in what better way can he carry out this purpose than by taxing imports of wheat and other foodstuffs and allowing a discount on this tax to colonial producers. In no other branch of colonial, at any rate of Canadian, trade would the advantages to ourselves be so conspicuous or so immediate.

And looking at this matter from another standpoint, why should food be allowed to enter the United Kingdom free and other products be taxed? Not surely because the British farmer is more prosperous, or has an easier path as a business man, or enjoys any special advantages compared with other classes. On the contrary, it is his path into which many of the obstacles of others have been dumped; it is his injury which often has been the convenience of

those in other walks of life. Cheap food has been made a veritable idol; but while, no doubt, its importance in a country situated like the Mother Country is difficult to over-estimate, it is a question whether in obtaining it too much else has not been sacrificed. There are many anomalies perpetrated by a people constantly in search of this magnum opus of cheap food. Free Trade Britain is by no means a truly free trade country; and it is in articles used for food that its indisposition to import freely appears more prominently. Moreover, the dictum of even high protectionists on this continent that articles which cannot be produced in the country importing them should be allowed to come in free is reversed, and the opposite policy worked upon. For example, wheat and dairy products, which can be produced largely in Britain, and would be much more so under a system taxing the foreigner, are allowed to come in absolutely free. Tea, on the other hand, which cannot be grown in Britain at all, is heavily taxed, while all the time the fellow-Briton across the sea is growing it and suffering by just that amount of duty. "Their friends they smite, their foes they stroke."

And simultaneously with the ruin of British agriculturists and the triumphantly free importation of foreign foodstuffs—so that food shall be "cheap"—the Englishman is groaning under a weight of taxation which recent reports say since the Boer war has become simply terrible. If, then, the money has to be raised in any case, and the average man has to pay out a certain proportion of his income in taxation, the query presents itself, Why this extraordinary antipathy to paying it out on food? Especially pointed does this question become when it is realized that an appreciable part of the enhanced price—if such, indeed, were to result at all—would be paid by the foreigner. Many people in Great Britain under Chamberlain's influence are now saying, Free trade and a cheap market for what we buy are all very well, but why do absolute harm to ourselves in order to oblige disobliging foreign nations?

THE REAL VALUE OF FIRE-PROOF CONSTRUCTION.

The Chronicle, of New York, sets forth in a striking way the real value of fire-proof construction, even though it may fail to stop the ravages of a conflagration absolutely. "Many were pessimistic about fire-proof construction after the buildings of this type had failed to stop the conflagration in Baltimore; but a comparison with the big fire in Toronto affords an opportunity to measure the value of the fire-resisting qualities of these buildings. The frames of the now world-famous fire-proof buildings in Baltimore were all standing, when the editor of the Chronicle visited that city the second morning after the fire; and the opinion then expressed that all of them will stand has been fully confirmed. The loss on these buildings has been from 40 per cent. to somewhere near 80 per cent. of total. On the contrary, a recent visit by one of our staff to Toronto found the entire district over which the conflagration swept, a waste. Every wall was down or in such condition that it would necessarily be taken down; and there could be no salvage