

sailors; and if it be true that he received a safe-conduct from the Chilian Government for the refugees whom he had harbored, and failed to report the fact to his Government, his most ardent defenders will have to admit that, through this concealment, he failed in his duty. The Chilian Minister at Washington was equally remiss in not communicating the apology forwarded to him. In fact, both deserve to be recalled for misconduct. The Chilian Minister at Washington puts the onus of the demand made by Chili for the recall of Mr. Egan on a suggestion of Mr. Blaine. The latter admits that he did ask, with a haste and a temper not quite diplomatic, why the recall of Mr. Egan was not demanded. The Chilian Minister took the hint, as he conceived it to be, and his Government acted upon it. Then this demand, which originated with Mr. Blaine, became a mortal offence in Chili, and the crisis came. Mr. Blaine says when he spoke of the recall of Egan he did not mean to suggest that the demand should be made, but only to say "why in the world don't you do it." The fact remains that Mr. Blaine did mention recall, and that when the word was repeated by Chili, President Harrison had a fit of high patriotism. Let it be remembered that Mr. Harrison and Mr. Blaine are possible rivals for the Presidency next term. The demand that the flag should be saluted came as an afterthought, and was a bit of political pyrotechnics displayed in the interest of President making.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE WITHIN THE EMPIRE.

Col. Howard Vincent, M.P. for the Central Division of Sheffield, after his return from his trip round the world, has rendered to his constituents an account of the result of his mission. As far as Canada is concerned, he reports his tour from Halifax to the Pacific as a triumphal procession. It is true that, in the public meetings which he held here, he met with no serious opposition; but this fact does not justify the confident assertion that the majority of Canadians are in favor of the scheme of which he is the advocate. Canadian opinion was not stirred to its depths by his tour. As a tentative effort, his little campaign may be admitted to have been a success in the sphere to which it was confined. That sphere was not a wide one: it embraced some important towns and cities, but it scarcely touched the masses which lie outside of the line of his march. The worthy Colonel is too hasty in claiming that the public opinion of Canada is beyond doubt in his favor; though it may be admitted that as far as he went, he was successful. It is probable, too, that he exercised some influence over the Government to induce them to ask for the denunciation of the treaties that stand in the way of preferential trade within the British Empire.

The visit of Col. Vincent to the outlying British possessions had a distinct object in view. A year ago, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in advertent to the proposal for preferential trade within the Empire, expressed the opinion that, under conceivable circumstances, special trade arrange-

ments might be made between Great Britain and her colonies; the right to form this kind of Zollverein was the same as that Germany and Bavaria possess, or the several States of the American Republic among themselves. But he was at a loss to know what chance there was of such a union: in his own words, "How near are we to such a consummation? What chance or hope have the colonies held out to us that they are prepared to move in this direction?" It was to find an answer to these questions that Col. Vincent set out on his pilgrimage; and he professes to have been able to carry back with him a reply in favor of such a move.

Though, for the reasons given, we think he claims for the result of his tour more significance than belongs to it, yet as an initial movement, it was fairly successful; the step in advance was made without check or drawback. But to represent it as a decisive demonstration of public opinion, in favor of the line of policy advocated, is to go far beyond the mark. Col. Vincent does not himself harbor the hope of speedy success; he admits that years of effort will be necessary to bring the fruition of his hopes. What Canada desires, first and foremost, is a reasonable measure of reciprocity with the United States; but there is no assurance that this can be obtained on conditions which she is prepared to accept. The probability is, if anything, rather that this is unattainable. Should the doubt be realized, the movement which Col. Vincent is making would receive a considerable accession of force. Regarded as an alternative measure, it is not without merit. If we cannot get reciprocity with the United States on fair terms, and on a purely commercial basis, an immense number of Canadians would be willing to consider what was the next best thing to do, and this scheme of preferential trade within the Empire would then command a favorable hearing. But at present it can be regarded only as the second chance in an alternative. It is possible, perhaps not improbable, that in the event of the failure of the approaching reciprocity negotiations, the Canadian Government would be willing to favor some such plan as that proposed by Col. Vincent; and if this should happen, a great step would have been taken towards its acceptance. But in any case, the issue would have to be remitted to the decision of the electorate.

But what is the outlook on the other side? Is the British Parliament likely to favor preferential trade? Lord Salisbury, at present, is opposed to it. At the same time, he has no love for the treaties which stand in the way of its consummation; on the contrary, he describes them as "most unfortunate pledges." The British electorate must one day decide between Lord Salisbury and these "Fair Traders." At present, the decision would be in favor of the Premier. It is true that, in a Conservative representative gathering, a resolution was carried in favor of discrimination; but Lord Salisbury did not make any effort to prevent the vote going against his declared view. Col. Vincent's own electors, after hearing his report of his mission, endorsed him by expressing the hope that he would

continue to be their representative in the House of Commons; though, except by implication, they did not endorse discrimination. But they at least showed that they were content with his services in this direction; and they must be regarded as having informally accepted his plan of commercial reform. If the working men of his constituency take this view of discrimination, there is no reason to suppose that others of the same class, in other constituencies, would not equally do so, and if this became apparent, the movement would be making visible and even decided progress.

THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

The information we gather by enquiry from both Montreal and Toronto dealers in dry goods at wholesale, respecting January trade in this line, is fairly satisfactory. The sales in Toronto for the month, as compared with those of January last year, have been fairly good, and in fact some say slightly better. The travelling salesmen have sent in a fair aggregate of orders. Our Montreal correspondent says: "Our merchants report country orders for spring coming in well, and seem satisfied with January sales in the country. Remittances from east and west are very fairly satisfactory, but retail trade in the city is dull."

It is plain, we think, that retail buyers are nowadays getting more and more into the way of buying little and frequently. Their orders are consequently taking on more and more of a sorting character, which is tending to secure something more near a continuous trade all the year round, instead of a heavy season succeeded by a slack season, as in the past.

The class of merchandise which is being ordered by retailers does not indicate that their customers are feeling downcast or impecunious. The dainty and expensive is ordered with as much apparent freedom as the plain or cheap material. It is to be hoped that dealers in dry goods will avoid binding themselves to sell to Patrons of Industry at an advance of 12½ per cent. on the cost. The Patrons have no right to demand such a thing, and self-respecting merchants will not submit to it. Twenty years ago or less, importers used to sell dry goods at an advance of so much on the sterling cost. But abuses crept into even this unnatural custom. Some importers used to get false sterling invoices, and thereby beat the retailer. Possibly it may turn out that the Patron may in his turn be fooled, while thinking that he cheapens his purchases by a coercive measure.

PROOFS OF A FIRE LOSS.

We understand that the fire loss which took place over a month ago in this city, and to which reference was made in these columns last week, viz., that of T. G. Foster & Co., Toronto, has been adjusted to the entire satisfaction of the assured, as well as of the various companies concerned in the loss. The peculiar feature in this case was that the assured, acting under legal advice, declined to permit the repre-