

mean a condition equivalent to national helplessness in the event of future trouble, through the instant abrogation of the Treaty; or else the alternative of annexation and support of the United States against the Mother Country. And all this without regard to the welfare of our industries under such circumstances; the unity of the Empire and the diversion of trade from the Canadian Pacific Railway; the probability of absolute refusal by England to assent to an arrangement which involved discrimination; and our own position of dependence on the American Republic should it be permitted.

So far as this moral is concerned, therefore, the talk of war and the coming general elections are intimately related. While all Canada has been a patriotic unit in connection with a possible invasion of our territory, or an attack upon Great Britain, it is not yet a unit upon this fiscal question. And until the Canadian Opposition disavows the principle of reciprocity in manufactures and agricultural products, and abandons its pledge to negotiate a treaty at Washington the day after obtaining power, so long will the war talk and American hostility be a factor in the coming contest.

#### IMPERIAL POLICY.

The Salisbury Government since coming into power made at least one important departure from precedent and past policy. It seems to have been determined that the unity of the Empire shall be strengthened not only by spoken words of sympathy but by practical efforts. To this end Lord Salisbury gave the Colonial portfolio in his Cabinet to one of the leading statesmen of England instead of handing it over to some of the third rate politicians who come within the class of those who expect and will accept a place without caring what the position may be or whether they have any particular fitness for it.

And if we are to believe current rumors, Mr. Chamberlain himself wanted to be Colonial Secretary. He was wise enough to grasp the fact that a brilliant reputation might be made in drawing together the countries of the Empire, and that a vast service to humanity and peace and British power might be rendered by any one skilful enough to initiate united action and possessed of ability sufficient to carry it into beneficial operation. Mr. Stanhope had made a beginning in the Imperial Conference of 1887 and Lord Knutsford had followed him in aiding that scheme effectively and earnestly, but neither of them were statesmen in the wide, true sense of the word, and their general policy was somewhat weak and ineffective.

Mr. Chamberlain is a very different type of man. A born leader, he is energetic, aggressive and as skilful in organization as he is clever and successful in legislation. He has been in touch with the masses, he is in harmony with the classes. He represents Radicalism in his social schemes, he voices Toryism in his Imperial sympathies. A man who thus bridges over the past and the present, and who unites popular appreciation with aristocratic support seems to have been born for bridging over the old-time period of indifference to Colonial power and the present development of strong and mutual sympathy. His policy in South Africa has so far been vigorous and successful. His first effort in the direction of Imperial unity has also been a wise and fitting one. The request which he recently despatched to the Colonial governments for exact and detailed information as to the trade done with Great Britain

and foreign countries; its increases and decreases; the cause of changes so far as they can be ascertained; the best means of promoting a better trade; is a significant and valuable step in the right direction.

It means that England has at last awakened to the importance of Colonial commerce, and to the advisability and possibility of mutual aid in developing the resources of the Colonies in the interest of the British people at home as well as of those abroad. For the colonies, as a whole, purchase double, and in some cases treble the amount per head of their population to that taken by foreign countries from Great Britain, and it naturally follows that where the population of Canada or Australia can be increased by the judicious co-operation of England, the market for the Mother Country will be proportionately enlarged. And this without necessarily affecting local industries. Under a tariff arranged a little differently, and in return for help given us in some of the many substantial ways in which Britain can aid us, why should we not, for instance, take from England the four or five millions dollars' worth of iron and steel products now bought from our commercial rivals in the United States?

When able to manufacture in this direction for ourselves the matter will assume another phase, but in the meantime some other development will have taken place, and some other preference be rendered possible. On November 23rd last, at the Brighton meeting of the National Union of British Conservative Associations, a resolution in favor of closer commercial relations within the Empire was carried unanimously, and Mr. John Lowles, M.P., observed in the course of his speech:—

I know that our foreign trade forms a larger volume than does our colonial trade, but the latter is rapidly gaining, and to-day represents a third of our total export trade. Is it too much to suppose that with improved communications and with increased population the next decade will witness a great change in the relative position of our foreign and colonial trade? They stand upon different platforms and they start from different standpoints, for of our foreign customers it may be said as it was said of the Dutch, "they give too little and ask for too much."

Hence, perhaps in some degree, Mr. Chamberlain's willingness to subsidize our proposed fast steamship line and to help the Australian and Canadian cable. Hence the significance of his inquiries about Imperial trade and the causes of its ebb and flow. It is possible that wars and rumors of wars may now defer the development of this Imperial policy, and it is to be feared that the crisis at Ottawa will delay Canadian action and hamper the success of projects and hopes with which the Bowell Government, and the Conservative party especially, has been so long identified. In this connection it would be well for Mr. Laurier to speak out. We are of no party or faction. We support the National Policy, as do thousands of Liberals throughout this country, and the Conservative party so long as it carries out the fiscal principle embodied in the National Policy. Mr. Laurier unfortunately seems absolutely pledged against the maintenance of Protection, but he has never denounced, and we hope he never will, the Imperial policy which is now being commenced by Mr. Chamberlain in England long after its inception in the brain and speeches of the late Sir John Macdonald.

Still, it would do him some good, and the country a considerable service, if Mr. Laurier would declare the sympathy which we believe he feels for these schemes of British development, and would proclaim more and more clearly