

their produce free under a special reciprocal arrangement, or by virtue of an Act constituting them into Provinces with a federal union. The actual duties affect the exporters, and not the question whether those duties are the result of federal constitution or reciprocal arrangement. In failing to assert the right to control Colonial tariffs, Great Britain does not take advantage of her power to consolidate an immense trade, from which she and her Dependencies might equally benefit. But it must be observed that, if the right were asserted, it would logically follow that the Colonies should enjoy some share, either by representation or consultation, in deciding the policy by which they would be affected.

Lord Kimberley writes:—"Her Majesty's Government are alone responsible for the due observance of treaty arrangements between foreign countries and the whole Empire; and it would scarcely be possible for the Colonial Governments to foresee the extent to which the trade of other parts of the Empire might be affected by special tariff arrangements between particular Colonies." The remark as to the trade of other parts of the Empire might be applied with as much cogency to the actual tariffs fixed by the Colonies as to the special arrangements entered into between them. Lord Kimberley, recognizing the difficulty which Great Britain would have in dealing with the matter, points to the want of local knowledge which Her Majesty's Government would labour under. The same want of information would equally affect the ability to decide the Colonial tariffs, unless, in either case, there was available the assistance of Colonial representatives. In short, Great Britain must logically do one of two things—either leave the Colonies unfettered discretion; or—if she is to regulate tariffs or reciprocal tariff arrangements, or to make treaties affecting the Colonies—give to the Colonies representation in matters affecting the Empire. In other words, she must apply in some shape to the Empire that federation which, as between the Colonies themselves, Her Majesty's Ministers constantly recommend. To urge the right of Great Britain to regulate these matters under present circumstances, is to urge that the interests of the Colonies should be dealt with in the absence of the requisite knowledge of their wants and requirements.

In one passage in his Despatch, Lord Kimberley infers that reciprocity in reality means protection; and, again, he writes—"Her Majesty's Government are bound to say that the measure proposed by the Colonial Government seems to them inconsistent with those principles of free trade which they believe to be alone permanently conducive to commercial prosperity; nor, as far as they are aware, has any attempt been made to show that any great practical benefit is expected to be derived from reciprocal tariff arrangements between the Australasian Colonies." There could not be more striking evidence of the disadvantage under which the Colonies in their present circumstances would labour, if the treatment of their fiscal interests were left to Her Majesty's Government, than is supplied by these observations of the Secretary of State. "The measure proposed" may be used to do no more than that which, as already observed, his Lordship in the case of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, seems to consider unobjectionable. It may be used to make similar arrangements to those which were introduced in the Treaty with France, devised by the late Mr. Cobden, the apostle of free trade. It is true that it has been said that that treaty was not a free-trade treaty, but it undeniably was made in the interests of free trade. Again, "the measure proposed" may be used to bring about that Customs union to which Lord Kimberley is not averse; and, as already shown, it may be used to stop those retaliatory tariffs which impede free trade and stimulate protection. In fine, it may be used to encourage the exchange of the productions of the temperate and tropical portions of the Australasian Colonies, without even remotely affecting the interests of British exporters.

If, in commenting upon Lord Kimberley's Despatch, the Colonial Treasurer has appeared to travel beyond the immediate questions referred to in it, he has scrupulously abstained from doing so to an extent greater than he has considered necessary for the purpose of representing to Lord Kimberley that, although the New Zealand Government still adhere to the desire they have expressed, they do so for reasons which are not calculated to create unfriendly feelings between the Imperial country and the Colonies. Such Lord Kimberley deems to be the tendency of the present question, although his Lordship very considerably does the Government the justice to believe that it is their desire to preserve the friendly feeling now existing on each side: and it is with the view to prove that such is the desire, that the Colonial Treasurer, whilst expressing the adherence of the Government to their former opinions, has endeavoured to show that those opinions have not the unfriendly tendency suggested; but that, on the contrary, their full and free discussion may lead to a determination to make yet more intimate, and more subservient to mutual welfare, the ties which bind together the Imperial country and the Colonies.

JULIUS VOGEL.

Wellington, 8th December, 1871.

No. 59.

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Right Hon. the Earl of KIMBERLEY to Governor Sir G. F. BOWEN, G.C.M.G.

(No. 33.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 20th April, 1872.

I have to acknowledge your Despatch No. 18, of 5th February, furnishing a report of your visit to the Province of Marlborough.

Governor Sir G. F. Bowen, G.C.M.G.

I have, &c.,

KIMBERLEY.