

so low as they have lately been. The chief hemp used for harvesting purposes is sisal, of which a considerable quantity is imported. If the price of manila, which really governs most of the other fibres, were to advance, then there should be no reason why a direct business could not be done with eastern Canada, for the consumption of cordage there is large.

QUEBEC.

Lying slightly to the north of Ontario, this province is, in respect of climate, somewhat colder than Ontario. Its area is about the same, and the character of the country in many respects similar to those of its southern neighbour. Whatever our future trade relations with Canada may be, the position of Quebec and Ontario in regard thereto will be pretty nearly the same, inasmuch as their industrial features are alike. Quebec, however, is not so advanced in manufacturing power as Ontario is, the capital invested and the value of the products not being much more than half the amounts exhibited by the Ontario returns. Timber and cattle represent large items of export, the latter having numbered a hundred thousand in 1893. Montreal, the chief city of the Dominion, is in this province. As the centre of the Canadian railway system, and the most advantageous port on the St. Lawrence, it occupies the position of the commercial metropolis of Canada. The population is over two hundred thousand, and the business aspect of the place takes a wide range. Montreal and Toronto command the greater part of the import and export trade of Canada, the City of Quebec having lost to these ports a considerable portion of the trade it once possessed. To one or the other of these centres would have to be shipped all the bulky goods going from this colony, such as wool, flax, &c., as the railway freight from Vancouver on these would be prohibitory.

GENERAL REMARKS.

From what has been said on the prospects of trade with Canada, it will be gathered that very much depends on the manner in which the question of differential duties is treated. Indeed, the same remark applies to the whole subject of British and intercolonial trade. In the opinion of many eminent English and colonial statesmen, the time is fast approaching when commercial union between all the British possessions would not only be advantageous, but be absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the Empire's supremacy. The immediate construction of a comprehensive scheme for insuring a common defence, a self-dependent commercial and industrial existence, and a complete Imperial unity in every sense, is the dream of the Federationists. The idea does more credit to their patriotic zeal than to their judgment. The barriers that lie across the path to federation are numerous and difficult of removal. They will have to be approached cautiously, and taken in detail, so that the risk of mistake be minimised. The British Constitution was not made in a day, in a year, or in a lifetime, and to ignore this consideration in the case of federation is to invite failure. Let any one consider the variety of opinions, interests, natural conditions and circumstances generally that affect the question, and then ask himself how these can be reconciled except by the teachings of a slow experience. The steps to be taken, it is now well recognised, must be of a tentative character, and such as will promise to leave behind them an easily-perceived benefit. The distance to be travelled before complete federation be reached seems far when we remember how many instances there are where conflicting opinions and party opposition have wrecked important questions of only local concern.

It is the recognition of these difficulties which has convinced many thinkers on the question that the first steps towards its solution should be in the direction of trade reciprocity. The obtaining of some immediate and tangible trade advantages, however small, by these means would excite public interest in the matter and set in motion speculative inquiry on the subject generally. What is really wanted is an object-lesson that would in itself demonstrate in a practical manner the nature of the advantages to be derived by the means of preferential commerce. Up to the present there has been no such illustration; the Federation League's work has been regarded as mere theorising, and, being without a definite programme, it has made no great impression on the public mind.

At the Ottawa Conference this aspect of the matter received attentive consideration. It seemed to be generally agreed that the time was opportune for some move to be made in the direction of favoured Customs duties between the several British colonies as against outside countries. It is seen that the world generally is going in the direction of Protection. In view of this, and the consequent gradual shutting-out of her manufactures in foreign markets, would not Great Britain, it was asked, be wise in preparing the way for a future advantage to herself and a present one to her dependencies by differentiating her tariff in their favour? The Hon. Mr. Foster, Canada's Finance Minister, in introducing the question of "Trade within the Empire," gave great prominence to this view of the subject, and in eloquent and impressive terms enlarged upon the important issues involved in commercial arrangements. An extract from his speech will afford some idea of its general tone. Referring to preferential tariffs, he said: "Who doubts for a single moment that if Great Britain and her colonies could be formed into a commercial union, whereby the trade between the different ports of the Empire would have a more favoured position than outside or foreign trade, who doubts but that immense benefits would immediately accrue to the Empire as a whole? What would it mean? It would mean, in the first place, that the energy, the genius, the strength, the power, the research of the commercial communities of Great Britain would be directed more and more to her colonial possessions, and that whatever there was of advantage in the direction of these powers towards the development of the colonies would immediately have its result in the growth and progress of these colonies."

Here is the key-note to the commercial tune which Mr. Foster would play to the outside world, and this is one that most people would agree with it were it immediately practicable. But it is to be feared that the time is not yet when Great Britain can afford to make such discrimination