

shape as the population and commerce of the Colonies increase. To use Mr. Forrest's words: "This development is coming as certain as I am here to-day; and I think in the future the Colonies of Great Britain—the Colony of Canada, the Cape, Australia, and other British possessions—will be capable of producing as much raw material, and consuming just as much from England of her manufactures as the whole world is taking from her to-day."

At present this consummation seems far off. I quoted certain figures which showed that the North American Colonies contribute only 2·7 per cent of the trade of Great Britain, Australasia 7·5 per cent, and South Africa 2·2 per cent. Our imports from foreign countries in 1893 amounted to £313,000,000 or 77 per cent, whilst from the British possessions the amount was £92,000,000 or 23 per cent. We find a market for two-thirds of our exports of British produce in foreign countries, and for one-third in British possessions, i. e., £146,000,000 to £72,000,000. British possessions in these figures include India. The imports from and exports to Australasia, in round figures, stand at £30,000,000 and £15,000,000 respectively.

But it seems very probable, not to say certain, that as time goes on these proportions will steadily and surely increase. A Colonial consumer is, it was said, worth more to Great Britain than six European consumers. "The Colonies," to quote Mr. Foster, "have all protected against the Mother Country, but none of them have protected as the foreign countries have protected against her. You can take them and make an average. Take the French tariff and compare it with the Canadian tariff. Take the United States tariff and compare it with the Australian tariff. Take the German tariff and compare it with the other Colonies. Look them through and through, and when you come to read out results you will find that the protection is far lower in the Colonies of Britain against British goods, taking it on an average, than it is in the foreign countries."

This resolution undoubtedly expresses a desire widely entertained in the Colonies that their trade with the United Kingdom should be favoured as against that of foreign countries.

Canada, Australasia and the Cape, with their exuberant products of food and raw material compared with their population, regard import duties with a very different experience from that of the United Kingdom, with its insufficiency of home grown food, and the necessity for the free import of raw material for her industries.

It must be clearly understood that the representatives do not propose a real customs union, that is, the removal of customs barriers. On the contrary, the Colonies could not, as Mr. Suttor remarked, admit British goods free in return for free admission of their own goods. What is proposed is that the United Kingdom should create a new customs barrier against foreign produce, and in my opinion the conditions operating in Great Britain, in part indicated by the above statistics, would not admit of the acceptance of this proposition. But, as I have said, it would appear from the discussions, taking them generally, that there was no expectation of any immediate departure from the free trade policy pursued by Great Britain. There was, however, a belief that the conditions of the case will in process of time undergo a change, and a desire, largely based upon friendly and loyal feelings towards the Mother Country, to find a means by which this change should be turned to account so as further to strengthen the ties between the