

ANGLO-COLONIAL NOTES.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

LONDON, February 5.
THE COLONIES AND THE WAR OFFICE.

The colonial aspects of the new War Office reforms have only been very briefly touched upon in the criticisms of the Home press upon the scheme. The British Empire League, however, has placed on record its satisfaction at the recent admission of Sir Frederick Borden, the Canadian Minister of Defence, as a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Mr. Asquith struck the right note at a meeting of the League on Monday, when dealing with the proposed inclusion of colonial representatives on the new Committee of Defence. He thought all would agree that the committee could not but be strengthened, for the proper work it had to do, by the admission from time to time of trustworthy and authentic exponents of colonial opinion. From both the Imperial and the local point of view, it appeared to him of the highest importance that the precedent which had been set in the case of Canada should be followed as regards Australia and New Zealand, and probably other colonies from time to time; and, of course, one must not forget, although in his way that was a separate problem which required separate handling, the paramount importance of constantly keeping in view the requirements and needs of India. The Canadian precedent was a first step in a policy the development of which might be fruitful of the best results to the Empire as a whole, and to its different parts.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, the New Zealand Agent-General, spoke at the same meeting and endorsed Mr. Asquith's views regarding the admission of colonial representatives to the Defence Committee. Referring to the Canadian Defence Minister, Mr. Reeves said the importance of the step lay in the possibility of its being an earnest, "something a great deal better. What they wanted was that the various counsels together should be systematised, and machinery provided, so that it would be a matter of practice and of right, for statesmen in different parts of the Empire to offer advice on all matters which they regarded as of Imperial moment.

With the treatment accorded to Mr. Seldon over the Chinese loan question evidently in his mind, Mr. Reeves added:—"It is not desirable that a statesman responsible for one part of the Empire should, when he expresses an opinion on what seems a matter of Imperial consequence, be liable to be told by half the newspapers in this country that he is guilty of an act of impertinence. It is not desirable that there shall be no regular or proper channel through which the statesman can, as a matter of course, give his advice."

FAILURE OF WELLINGTON MUNICIPAL LOAN.

The good people of the city of Wellington must not take too much to heart the failure of their municipal loan, issued through the Union Bank of Australia, this week. The time chosen for appealing to the London money market was, to say the least of it, inopportune. In more prosperous times a small loan of £330,000 offering interest at 4 per cent. on debentures issued at 90 would have gone off "like hot-cakes," but to-day, with the prospects of the big trouble in the Far East coming to a war head at any moment, and the general feeling that England may somehow be drawn into the fight, money is extremely difficult to come at for large big or little. Some of the Australian States would have liked to make an appeal this month, but on the advice of their financial guides here have held their hands, and the first instalment of the big South African loan has been postponed sine die. Under the circumstances I am not surprised to hear that the underwriters of the city of Wellington loan will have to take up nearly 50 per cent. of the issue themselves, and that the quotation of the scrip fell yesterday to three-quarter discount. In the face of this fact some people still argue that underwriting a colonial loan is quite an unnecessary expense! It is, I think, a pity the loan could not be placed in New Zealand. The amount was small, and the terms offered favourable, and the fact that £20,000 was not available within the colony will surely provide

caustic critics of the Wilson stamp with a text wherewith to build scathing attacks on the financial condition of New Zealand.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL ON PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

The Duke of Argyll is a staunch supporter of the colonial trade preference idea as a factor in maintaining Imperial unity, and in a letter to the "Times" this week he warmly defends the attitude of the colonies. Lord Spencer, in the House of Lords, had spoken as though nothing had been done. "Let us not," says the Duke in reply, "seek to minimise the colonies' efforts, but readily acknowledge the hearty brotherhood, which in peace as in war desires to work with us. They have made exertions for us during the war, which are new in the history of the world. Let their priceless goodwill be cultivated not only in what we hope may be the rarely recurring times of warfare, but during the long intervals of peace. Let us be seen by them to be ever ready to give preference to their wishes, where time may prove we do not hurt our people. In fiscal matters a very small amount of preference will go far. Mr. Booth's 5 per cent. on foreign manufactures is quite enough to show our goodwill and the preference desired. Nor would withdrawal of such preference be resented if it were proved to harm Home interests."

NEW ZEALAND WOOD FOR PIANOS.

A great piano-maker like Broadwood's uses a large quantity of most costly ornamental woods, yet when visiting that firm's new factory at Old Ford this week I saw none there more beautiful than kauri-knot or several other colonial woods. Some of the men, I found, had seen specimens of all the colonial woods in the museum at Kew Gardens, but none had ever been tried in the factory so far as they knew, and no one had ever heard of kauri or of kauri-gum, although as likely as not kauri-gum is one of the ingredients in the very finest varnish used for piano-cases. The Swiss pine *Abies excelsa* is common enough in colonial nursery gardens, and it may interest many an amateur gardener to know that it is out of that tree that the vital sounding-board or belly of the very finest pianos is made. Musicians, again, may be interested to know that Broadwood's London "show-rooms" are still in the quite old street in Great Pulteney Street, Soho, where Tschudi came, and where in after years the Scots journeyman carpenter, John Broadwood, was taken into partnership when he married his master's daughter. It was to the same old house, still standing, that Mozart, as a little prodigy, was brought by his father to give an exhibition of his wonderful powers upon the larspichord made by Tschudi for Frederick the Great. Haydn also wrote some of his works there, and it was from the old work-shop at the back that the grand piano was sent to Beethoven, and received such grandiloquent praise.

THE AMERICAN YACHT RACE.

From American exchanges, on which one has learned not to rely too implicitly, I gather that a gentleman named Edward Wallace, "a native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, who has made millions out of mines in New South Wales" (lucky man!), has determined to step in and save our one and only Sir Thomas Lipton from bankruptcy by taking upon himself the task of "biting the cup," which is at present emblematic of America's yachting supremacy. Mr. Wallace, who, we are told, has announced his intention to challenge for the cup, was, it seems on a visit to Halifax some eight or nine months ago, and obtained some designs for a pleasure yacht. Then he became bitten with the America Cup craze, and decided to have a racer built, to compete for the coveted trophy on Canada's behalf. His craft, he said, will be 120 feet long, 25 feet on the water line, a beam of 25 feet, and 10 feet draught, and will cost "not less than 500,000 dollars." All of which may be perfectly true, though I cannot myself call to mind any New South Wales millionaire of the name of Edward Wallace, who has made millions out of local propositions.

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