

Lord Halsbury proposed the toast of the Empire's trade.

Mr Barton said he deprecated the idea of unduly considering the outside nations in connection with the trade problems affecting the common interests of the Empire. In the event of an emergency similar to the South African trouble Australians were prepared to do much more than heretofore.

Mr Seddon also spoke. He said the lost British trade ought to be attracted back to British channels. New Zealand's offer of preference without asking a return represented 3 per cent. upon five millions' worth of trade. This would not be unimportant if devoted to strengthening the navy. He declared that free trade throughout the Empire was impossible owing to financial considerations.

The Prince and Princess of Wales have invited Mr Seddon to dinner on July 8th.

Mr Seddon has visited the House of Commons, and was introduced to many members.

Mr Seddon and Mr Barton attended the crowded and impressive intercessory services in St. Paul's.

Mr and Mrs Seddon and Miss Seddon will visit Wales and Ireland.

Sir E. Barton is president of the committee which includes Mr Seddon and other Premiers, the Agents-General and leading Australians in London in support of the ball at the Crystal Palace on Wednesday in aid of King Edward's hospital fund.

The Premiers are re-accepting engagements, and are overwhelmed with public and private hospitality.

NEW ZEALANDERS IN AFRICA

Sir Joseph Ward has received a communication from Colonel Porter, dated Durban, May 14, in which that officer says an injustice has been done to the Seventh Regiment New Zealand Mounted Rifles through the censors having suppressed an important cable message of his to the Premier, dated March 3. This message said:—

"I am gratified to report a most dashing capture by the Seventh New Zealanders to-day of De Wet's guns (one 15-pounder and two pom-poms) and a large amount of ammunition, waggons, rifles, etc., a most important capture. These are said to be the last of the enemy's guns. De Wet escaped. From close quarters the Seventh charged the guns gallantly and took them after hand-to-hand fighting."

Colonel Porter adds that in his Bothasberg despatch he was reported to have said, "Not one skulker reported." "This was an error in transmission. What he wrote was "Not a single reproach." He also says that he regrets that many of his cables were mutilated by the censors.

THE FEDERAL TARIFF.

Mr Seddon, referring to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's speech on the third reading of the Finance Bill, declared that his attitude in regard to preferential trade had destroyed the main interest of the Imperial Conference, supposing that he represents the views of his Government.

In the House of Commons the Finance Bill was read a third time by 206 to 181.

Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared himself a free trader. He said it was true that Canada and Australasia, with almost limitless resources, prospered under protection, which in England foreshadowed grievous social and fiscal dangers.

Replying to complaints regarding the disparity between imports and exports, he emphasised the fact that the growth of the income tax returns proved a better condition in every class of the community.

IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

Mr Chamberlain on Monday delivered a short address at the Imperial Conference. The proceedings were confidential. The Conference will sit two days in the first week and afterwards much oftener. A strong effort will be made to complete the business expeditiously. Sir E. Barton does not commence negotiations with the cable companies until the Conference has discussed ocean telegraphy. The "Sydney Telegraph" says that

from the recent speeches of English statesmen and the colonial Premiers it becomes more and more evident that the differences of opinion which exist in regard to the questions of the Empire's defence and commercial relations are as hopeless as the material difficulties in the way, which, as a matter of fact, the advocates of union have never seriously discussed.

In reference to Mr Seddon's suggestion that New Zealand would be willing to give British trade preference without asking any return, and thus supply an important money contribution to the navy, the "Telegraph" says:—"The obvious commentary is that there is nothing to prevent New Zealand from giving preference. No one has objected or is likely to do so, but where is the contribution to the navy to come from? If New Zealand gives preference to that extent it will not collect duties. The British Government will not get the remitted taxes. How, then, the navy is to be benefited is impossible to conjecture, unless New Zealand will pay a subsidy to the amount of the remitted duties."

CHINA.

The Methodist Church at Chengtu was destroyed by Chinese. Ten converts were killed. Boxerism is spreading.

Belgian missionary advices received from China state that 50,000 armed Boxers are 150 miles south-east of Paoingfu, in Northern China.

A Belgian priest has been murdered at Welshin, in the Shantung province.

In the House of Commons Lord Cranborne, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, announced that Russia, having declined to press certain conditions upon China in reference to the occupation of Tienstein, Sir E. Sadow, British Minister in China, had been instructed to endeavour to obtain a modification of some of them.

The English and American Mission buildings at Tienkschau and Lzechuan have been destroyed by Chinese rioters.

An edict degrading the magistrate at Lzechuan has been issued, and the Government has also ordered the extermination of the destroyers of the missions.

The disturbance arose in connection with the indemnity riots.

The Russian forces at Mukden have been withdrawn. Kirin will be evacuated in December.

The King's Illness.

The announcement of the King's serious illness and the postponement of the Coronation, published on Wednesday morning through the medium of a "Star" extra, came as the greatest shock to everyone in the community, and was especially unexpected and unwelcome just at this time, on the eve of the new King's Coronation. Not alone our colony, but the whole Empire had just completed arrangements for the great event, when the ominous news was given forth. In the Auckland community the intelligence created nothing short of consternation. The workmen engaged on the decorations of buildings in the city dropped their tools for the time being as if their occupation were gone. Then the telephones were set ringing, and from all parts of the city and suburbs enquiries came as to whether the news were true, and whether the celebrations next day would be postponed. The news of the postponement was received with grave faces everywhere, and expressions of sorrow and regret were heard on every hand. Acting upon a suggestion from the Acting-Premier, the whole of the festivities announced in honour of the event throughout the colony were postponed, excepting in cases where preparations had been made to treat old people and children.

On Wednesday Sir Joseph Ward, Acting-Premier, forwarded the following telegram to the Mayor of Auckland:—"Regret to inform you that I have received the following cables from London, timed 1.35 p.m., 24th: 'Acting-Premier, Wellington.—Coronation postponed. King undergo operation.' There is no signa-

ture to the cable, but I assume it is from the Premier. I do not think it desirable until His Excellency the Governor receives official information by cable for me to suggest what course should be followed. Should the news be confirmed, all ceremonies in connection with the Coronation will require to be postponed."

Subsequently Sir Joseph Ward, Acting-Premier, telegraphed as follows:—"Since my previous telegram I have received the following from the Hon. Mr Seddon, dated London, 24th, 1.45 p.m.: 'Colonial Premiers were to be received by His Majesty the King to-day, and dine with him this evening. All postponed; His Majesty the King is suffering from perityphlitis. Operation necessary. Coronation postponed.'"

Perityphlitis, the complaint mentioned in our cables as being that for which the King has been operated upon, is defined as inflammation of the connective tissue about the caecum, which is the blind of the large intestine beyond the entrance of the small intestine (called also the blind gut). The caecum ends in a slender portion called the vermiform appendix.

The news of the King's condition came as a thunderclap on the nation. It was understood that the King had quite recovered, though the public were suspicious because of his taking daily drives in Windsor Park in a closed carriage.

His Majesty's presence at the banquet to the Princes and the reception of the visiting suites on Monday night also appeared to confirm the reports of his recovery.

Startling rumours concerning the health of the King were abroad at midday, but the first official intimation was made by the Bishop of London (Dr. A. F. Winnington-Ingram), who at Lord Esher's request informed the clergy and choristers rehearsing at Westminster Abbey, inviting all to join in the Litany from the Coronation Service, and prayer for the King's recovery.

The "Times" states that the Nationalist members of the House of Commons received the news of the King's illness with unfeigned regret.

The King's illness evoked real sympathy in America and throughout the whole of the Continent of Europe, notably Paris.

President Roosevelt cabled to the King asking him to accept his sincere assurances of sympathy and wishes for a speedy convalescence.

The French Government notified its deep concern and a hope and desire for the King's recovery.

The "Daily Telegraph" states that on the 24th the King's temperature developed, demanding immediate investigation.

The physicians unanimously decided that an instantaneous operation was urgent, and that opinion was vindicated by the subsequent knowledge that if the operation had not then been performed the King would have succumbed in a few hours.

The King was informed of the necessity of the operation and unhesitatingly declared that he had no dread of the ordeal, but he grieved at the public disappointment. He added: "Operation or no operation, I must be at the Abbey."

When he recovered consciousness after the operation he inquired for the Prince of Wales and spoke to him calmly, saying he felt relieved as a result of the operation.

Sir Frederick Treves performed the operation. Later bulletins greatly reassured the public.

Early on the 26th Sir J. G. Ward, Acting-Premier, at Wellington, received the following cablegram from Mr Seddon:

"Tatest. His Majesty had a refreshing sleep, and a better night, and is improved in respect of constitution, his condition is favourable. Wound healing satisfactorily."

There were thousands of callers at the Palace, and two thousand names were entered in the visitors' book the first day. The Queen was unremitting in nursing the King, and bore the strain admirably.

The Duke of Cambridge, in addressing the Duke of Cambridge's Own Regiment, said he was hopeful and

almost confident with regard to the King.

The Kaiser, President Loubet, the Emperor of Austria, and all Heads of State expressed their concern, and frequently enquired regarding His Majesty's condition.

Many special intercessory services were held in Great Britain.

Prayers for the recovery of the King were offered in all the churches and synagogues in the United Kingdom.

When the bulletin announcing the successful operation on the King was posted at the Mansion House the crowd sang the National Anthem; also after the issue of the evening bulletin.

The London City Council on the 25th adopted an address to the King, Queen and family, expressing sympathy and wishes for the King's recovery. They then recited the Lord's Prayer and adjourned. Innumerable public bodies carried similar resolutions.

Loyal tributes were received from every colony and the British communities in the foreign capitals.

The whole of India was deeply moved, and every creed joined in prayer.

The Kaiser was profoundly affected by the King's illness.

The Stock Exchange and all markets and shipping houses are closed till Monday.

All the provincial fetes, except those of a charitable nature, have been postponed. The surplage of the Parliamentary luncheon intended to be given at Westminster Hall dinner (including 1000lb of salmon, 1200 fowls, 200 brisquets, and 50 carcasses of lamb), went to the hospitals.

The chaplains of the American Senate and House of Representatives, in invoking blessings on the United Kingdom, recalled Britain's sympathy with President McKinley and the American nation.

The Italian Senate sent a message of sympathy to the King and expressing joy at the latest and better news.

Germany officially expressed her earnest sympathy.

The German and French newspapers vied with one another in the warmth of their expressions. The latter remarked that the colonies are inseparable and indistinguishable from the Motherland in their joy and sorrow.

A bulletin at ten o'clock on the 27th stated: "The King had a fair night and some settled sleep. His appetite is improving and the wound is much more comfortable. On the whole his condition is attended with less anxiety."

Crowds congregated at Buckingham Palace night and day.

The King was greatly touched, and expressed gratification at the loyalty and love his prostration had evoked among his subjects.

A beautiful and impressive service was held in St. Paul's, and was attended by the most representative congregation ever seen in the Cathedral. Among those present were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and many Bishops, Royalities, Ministers and ex-Ministers, the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, Sir Wilfrid and Lady Laurier, Sir Gordon Sprigg, Sir A. Hime, Sir John Forrest, Mr Douglas Robinson and President Roosevelt's sister. A silent and sympathetic multitude assembled in the adjacent thoroughfares.

The King, having accepted the honorary position of Admiral in the German navy, the Kaiser on the 26th signalled an order to the German fleet at Kiel to hoist the British flag at the masthead and salute it with twenty-one guns. This was done.

The following is the King's message, which the Kaiser signalled to the fleet at Kiel:—

"Deeply touched at your kind thoughts. Proud to be an Admiral of your fleet."

Bulletins regarding the King's health were read in the New York theatres. The entire audience at Wallack's rose and sang "God Save the King."

The "Daily Telegraph" correspondent states that Botha, De La Rey, and other Boer leaders have conferred to formulate a message of sorrow.

The King's illness caused a great shock throughout South Africa, and