

THE address of the President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, at the annual meeting of that body on Friday last, was chiefly remarkable for its exposition of the reasons which decided them not to send representatives to the Intercolonial Conference of Chambers of Manufactures, which, as our readers will remember, assembled in Sydney some months since, for the purpose of advocating intercolonial free-trade. A free exchange of products between the various Australian colonies had, the chairman observed, been matter for discussion for more than 30 years. Sometimes it was called "Intercolonial free trade," at other times "reciprocity," and at yet other times "assimilation of tariffs." What was always understood however, was an Australian Zollverein, under which there would be free interchange between Australian colonies, and a common tariff as against outsiders. The President, the HON. S. A. JOSEPH, M.L.C., referred to the various attempts made to bring about this freedom of exchange, from the conference held in 1857, at which the Chambers of Commerce in Melbourne, Sydney, Tasmania, and Adelaide were represented, to the similar conference held in Melbourne in 1863, a resolution of the Tasmanian Parliament in 1867, a conference in Sydney in 1869, and yet another in Melbourne in 1870. All these conferences not only failed to establish free interchange between the Australian colonies, but, as a necessary sequence of that failure, have given color to the impression that there are insuperable difficulties in the way. The failures are due, said Mr JOSEPH, to two causes. One that the Constitution Acts of the various colonies forbids the imposition of differential duties, except in the case of the whole of the Australian colonies agreeing to a system of mutual interchange on the basis of an equitable division of Customs receipts, and an uniform tariff for extra colonial imports, and secondly because it has always been found impracticable to formulate a list of articles involving free-trade on the one hand and discriminating duties on the other. Reference was also made to later attempts to introduce the system of intercolonial differential duties. All these efforts have, so far,

the system of intercolonial differential duties. All these efforts have, so far, resulted in failure, and the president declared to his auditory his belief that the idea of a Customs Union among the whole group of Australian colonies is now beset with greater difficulties than ever. We, who know that New South Wales has, from beginning to end, been the chief and really only important objector to a Customs Union, must certainly regard Mr JOSEPH's view of the case with some hesitation, and are more inclined to accept his fuller statement, made a little later on in the address with which we are dealing, as to the real motives of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce for refusing to send representatives to the Conference on Intercolonial Free Trade. The Chamber of Commerce, said Mr JOSEPH,

"Felt that the objects of the conference were absolutely inconsistent with the free trade policy which this colony declared at the last general election, and which, he believed, is the policy that can alone be permanently conducive to our national prosperity. What the conference really desired to do under the name of 'intercolonial free trade' was to obtain in New South Wales, for the producers and manufacturers of Victoria the same advantages over the manufacturers and producers of all other parts of the Empire and the world as they have within their own colony under a system of protective duties. What was, therefore, termed 'reciprocity' and 'intercolonial free trade' was, in reality, the worst form of protection, and for this reason that chamber refused to take part in its proceedings."

We should be sorry to misinterpret the chairman of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, but we cannot avoid the impression that, while he talks very fluently about Intercolonial Free Trade he really means a complex system of differential duties, a sort of family Customs treaty between these colonies, instead of an absolutely unrestricted interchange of products and commodities. When Mr JOSEPH speaks of a Customs Union he appears to mean an arrangement under which the products of each colony will be appraised upon a nicely regulated sliding scale, intended, for example, to handicap the manufacturing strength of Victoria in favor of such of her sister colonies as have hitherto made less industrial progress. It hardly needs pointing out, that this is not at all the sort of thing which intercolonial freetraders want, no matter whether they hail from

want, no matter whether they hail from Tasmania, Queensland, or South Australia. And we may add that it is an object which, while being quite as difficult of attainment as absolute intercolonial free trade, would at the same time omit all the practical benefits which must accrue from an Australian Zollverein. The president of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce would test any scheme of Australian commercial federation by its promise of immediate advantage, or the contrary, to the interests of the great body of merchants and importers which that chamber may be taken to represent. But if we are to wait for a scheme of commercial federation until one is agreed to which embodies the ideas of only one particular class in one particular colony, the question of an united Australia must be regarded as being postponed *sine die*. Intercolonial free trade, about which politicians of so many and diverse shades talk so freely, is the one primary condition to Australian union; and all the mischievous political nostrums about schemes of reciprocity and differential duties as between the colonies, must be distinctly abandoned before any real progress can be made towards it. Even the most ardent freetraders know that while a federated Australia may hereafter grapple with the whole question, for the present a protective tariff against outsiders must accompany the abolition of fiscal barriers between colony and colony. So far as this point is concerned the various colonies are already falling into line and New South Wales shows signs that she will, before long, join the majority. In such a case, and indeed in any case, the question of an external tariff need offer but few difficulties. The real difficulty arises out of petty and sordid jealousy, lest, in an Australian fiscal union, one colony or another might have, temporarily, a little the best of the bargain.

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THE European war scare seems to have died out for the season. The cable still brings us contradictory and somewhat incoherent intelligence of a proposed compulsory disarmament in one direction and of gigantic additional levies of soldiers in another. But the

levies of soldiers in another. But the public mind in Australia regards such advice with comparative indifference. The position appears to be that there is no likelihood of an outbreak of hostilities for at least another two or three months, by which time natural conditions will have imposed their annual and inexorable veto upon the prosecution of a great war. And, but for the fact that all Europe is regarded as a slumbering military volcano, and that the most effusive expressions of international amity are received with well-merited distrust, the indications point to a better mutual understanding between the greater Powers, which might be hopefully accepted as the precursor of a not distant disarmament, and another prolonged interval of peace and progress. Of these pacific portents the foregathering of the Emperors of Russia and Germany is the most noteworthy. There is every reason to suppose that this friendly conference of Europe's mightiest rulers will do something, it may be much, towards preventing a hasty declaration of war, and if, as we are told, a friendly confidence can be established between the cabinets of Berlin and Petersburg without giving umbrage at Vienna and Rome, then there is dawning upon Europe the influence of an alliance in the interests of peace. Into future complications we need not at present seek to pry. Whether Russia will consent to abandon, or at least indefinitely postpone, her traditional policy of stealthy aggression in the direction of the Black Sea and Turkey, or is merely masking that policy for strategical purposes, cannot be certainly known. In European politics the possible developments and surprises of six months are simply enormous. It will be much if we can be assured that the war cloud will not burst during this year. France, too, is giving evidence of her preference for peace and order, even more surprising than that furnished by Russia and Germany. The repeated and decisive political defeats of General BOULANGER are all the more significant in that they have been suffered at the hands of those who were supposed to be his unquestioning supporters. Clearly, Boulangism is already effete in France, and the fact has much sig-

city, Boulogne is already there in France, and the fact has much significance as tending to the preservation of European peace. The war scare is over, but it were well that we should not too soon forget its lesson. When the cables were parted a few weeks ago, we learnt with anxiety, if not with surprise, that we were far from being in a position to make a hurried, yet effectual defence of our chief city. It is only during war scares that the public evinces any serious desire to know how our defences stand. It is in times of quiet that prudent governors and experienced commanders find their opportunity of securing their country against a hostile surprise.

The ceremony of unveiling the statuery purchased from the bequest made to the citizens by the late Mr J. Russell Thomson will be performed to-day at the gardens by the Premier of the colony. Mr Gillies—who was a personal friend of the deceased gentleman, so that it is peculiarly fitting that he should unveil the statuery—will arrive by the 11.30 a.m. train, and will at once proceed to the gardens. At 12 noon the executors of Mr Thomson's will—Messrs J. Noble Wilson and H. A. Nevett—will formally hand over the marble figures to the Mayor of the City, the Hon. W. C. Smith, M.L.A., who will, on behalf of the citizens, accept the gift. After a few remarks from the mayor, Mr Gillies will unveil the statuery and deliver an address to those present. Considering the great value of the bequest, and the great ornament it will prove to the gardens, it is a matter for wonder that no official programme for the occasion has been drawn up, but so far as we can learn the above is the order of procedure that will most probably be adopted. The absence of arrangements by the City Council would seem to indicate that no interest is taken by the public in an event of such importance. We are certain, however, that this mismanagement by no means represents the views of the citizens concerning the late Mr Thomson's munificent bequest. Had proper notice been given, doubtless there would have been a large and influential gathering of citizens at the ceremony, and it is to be hoped that even now ratepayers will, as far as possible, show their appreciation of Mr Thomson's love for the city. After the unveiling the Premier will be entertained at luncheon by the mayor at Craig's hotel.

The petition to be presented to the City Council to-morrow morning, requesting them to re-elect the present mayor for the ensuing 12 months was yesterday evening taken round the city for signature. The canvass for signatures was not commenced until about half-past 4, but a number of influential citizens appended their names to the petition.

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We understand that the Adelaide Cathedral choir, who are at present in Melbourne, have been induced to give a concert in Ballarat at the Mechanics' Hall on Thursday next, and will also attend at Christ Church Pro Cathedral on Friday afternoon, the 10th inst, when a special service will be held with full choral music. A charge will be made at the concert to defray the expenses of the visit.

Messrs T. Walker and E. Murphy both gave their opening addresses to the ratepayers of Ballarat East last evening, when votes of confidence in each were passed. Reports of the addresses of both candidates will be found in another column.

Inspector Parkinson mentioned at the Town Police Court yesterday that he would in future press for the cancellation of the licenses of all publicans who committed three transgressions of the provisions of the Licensing Act. The remark was drawn forth during the hearing of a case in which a publican was charged with a breach of the Act. It was mentioned that the defendant had offended for the fourth time, but the truth of this allegation is denied by Mr Gargan who was the defendant.

At the Town Police Court yesterday, before Messrs Thomson, P.M., Phillips and Gale, J's.P., Joseph Brennen was fined 5s, with 2s 6d costs, in default two days' imprisonment, for neglecting to send his child to school the required number of days. Several small debt cases were also dealt with, and the court closed.

A charge of Sunday trading was brought against John Gargan, the licensee of the Greyhound hotel, Main road, at the Town Police Court yesterday. Defendant admitted having sold some gin on that day. Mr Inspector Parkinson did not press the charge, owing to defendant having admitted his guilt, and the bench only imposed a fine of £4, with 7s 6d costs; in default, 14 days in gaol.

Regarding the late Constable Maguire, relative of Mr John Maguire, of Scarsdale, Mr G. W. Hall, M.P., has received the following letter with reference to the deceased, who lost his life through over exertion at a fire near Violet Town some months since:—  
"Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 16th July, 1888,—Sir,—With further reference to the letter of the 19th April last from the shire secretary of Benalla, which was forwarded by you, recommending for favorable consideration the case of the late Constable Maguire, I am directed to inform you that the Governor-in-Council has granted a pension (£106 12s 1d) to the widow, under the provisions of section 26 of the Police Regulation Statute.—I have, &c., T. R. WILSON."

At the Columbia skating rink last evening the second heat of two miles for the handicap race was run, and resulted as follows:—Wright, 1; C. Little 2; Stevens, 3. The final heat in connection with this race will take place on Friday evening next. To-night a very interesting polo match will be played between the Geelong and Columbia rinks. As both teams are very strong an exciting

between the Geelong and Columbia rinks. As both teams are very strong an exciting game is expected.

At the Sonythesdale Police Court on Tuesday last, before Messrs H. R. M'Vitty and J. Lynch, jun., J's.P., there were three cases of trespass, two of which were settled out of court, and in the other, the summons not having been served, the case was adjourned until next Tuesday.

As showing the season for game, a party of three sportsmen (writes a correspondent) went out shooting on Wednesday, and succeeded in bagging ten brace of teal, four brace of snipe, six hares, and six rabbits.

A Sydney telegram says:—"A man named John M'Laughlin has committed suicide by jumping from the cliffs at Bondi into the sea. He was seen by a woman shortly before the act, and whom he had asked to mind his coat, as he was off to heaven. He then walked in the direction of the cliffs, from whence he was seen by a young man to leap into the sea. The police subsequently saw the body floating in the water; but before they could reach it, it sank, and has not yet been recovered."

A carpenter named John Williams was standing on Tuesday last on the scaffold of a new house at Mooroopna, where he was employed, when his foot slipped and he fell to the ground. The scaffold was only about 7 feet high, but the unfortunate man fell on his head and his neck was broken. Death was instantaneous.

The office of the *Braidwood Despatch* has been burnt down, and the contents have been totally destroyed. The damage (says an *Argus* telegram) is estimated at over £1000, and the property was insured.

A Swiss named Frederick Drescher has been found dead in the Elmore Park by some boys with a vein in his arm cut. He had apparently perpetrated the deed with a razor, which was found beside him.

A case of alleged child murder has occurred at Black Range Creek, near Wangaratta. A young woman named Catherine Wright has been arrested. The accused had been in service. Information was given to the police, and, on being interviewed, she confessed to having given birth to a child on the 20th ult., and having buried it behind a log close by. The body was examined, and it was found (says the *Argus* correspondent) that the child had been born alive, and had died from fracture of the skull.

A few days since Bombardier Gosling, of the Permanent Artillery (says the *Geelong Advertiser*) was arrested in the barracks at Queenscliff by Constable Nolan, of Sorrento, on a charge of having stolen a watch and chain, the property of a comrade in arms. The alleged theft was committed at the military defence works at Point Nepean. The prisoner was brought before the Sorrento Police Court last Monday, and committed for trial at the criminal sessions to be held in Melbourne.

A Brisbane telegram published in the *Argus* says:—"There is no change in the position of affairs in connection with the bricklayers' strike, except that another em-

ployer has agreed to pay the 12s a day demanded by the men.—An aboriginal named George has been found guilty of a criminal assault and sentenced to death.—News from Roma states that W. W. Willis, a teller of the Queensland National Bank at Mackay, has been arrested for embezzling the funds of the bank. The defalcations are supposed to amount to £200. The prisoner was married a few days ago."