Trade Opportunities In West Indies

(Continued From Page Three.)

whereas in British Columbia the rates since December 1st have been 32 per cent higher. The wide difference shown in the two Pacific territories is due to the fact that rates in United States Mountain-Pacific group were increased on August 25th, 1920, by only 25 per cent, whereas those in British Columbia were increased on September 15th, 1920, by 35 per cent.

During the year temporary reductions amounting to 10 per cent were made in the United States of farm, garden, range and orchard products in all territories except New England, and between points West of Mississippi and Missouri Rivers the reduction was approximately 20 per cent. These reductions will be taken into account when the new reductions are applied on July 1st.

In connection with the reductions effective July 1st in the United States we have been advised that the Canadian carriers propose to make a similar reduction in international traffic. This will also have an effect on our "Export" rates via Atlantic ports as well as our "transcontinental commodity" rates owing to the relationship which they bear to rates in the United States.

Class rates from Vancouver to Points in B. C. and Prairies—In the report of last year we advised of the action taken by the Association in applying to the Board for another requiring the railway companies to carry out the basic direction contained in its decision covering the "Western Rates Case" in connection with class rates from Vancouver to points in British Columbia and the Prairie Provinces. On October 11th, 1921, one year after our application was presented to the Board at Vancouver, a decision was rendered giving full effect to our application. This action meant a material reduction in the rates from Vancouver, but it is only fair to state that the reduction should have been put in effect on September 1st, 1914, when traffic in compliance with the "Western Rates Case" decision became effective. While it is impossible to say what saving per annum resulted from this reduction, there is no doubt but what it meant a considerable amount. Our members in the British Columbia Division through their Executive Committee expressed their appreciation of the efforts of the Association in this connection.

Commodity Rates—General—During the year a number of commodity rate adjustments have been considered by the Department and reduction obtained for our members. The following will give you some idea of commodities and territories covered:

Clay—Junction Cut to Hamilton.

Corn—Chicago to Eastern Canada.

Glass—Hamilton to Canadian points.

Iron and Steel Soil Pipe—Toronto to Maritime Provinces.

Tan Bark—Various shipping points to tanneries.

Roofing, prepared—Various shipping points to Maritime Provinces.

Commodity Rates—Transcontinental—The question of rail rates to the Pacific Coast has received the attention of the Department and negotiations are still in progress having in mind some reduction in these rates which will assist in meeting the competition from Eastern United States and the United Kingdom ports via the Panama Canal. A number of reductions have already been made in the "all rail" rates to the Pacific Coast which have assisted in meeting the competition but, owing to the fact that 25 shillings has been the prevailing rate from the United Kingdom to the Pacific ports the carriers say that whilst they cannot possibly meet this rate they are prepared to assist to the extent of their ability, enabling Canadian manufacturers to compete. Having this in mind it has been suggested to the carriers that they should make some definite statement as to just what they are prepared to do and, if they are not in a position to meet the competition, then some efforts will have to be made for the establishment of a steamship service between Canadian Atlantic and Canadian Pacific ports via the Panama Canal so that goods may be transported in competition with the conditions mentioned.

Three separate surveys have already been made in an endeavor to determine the tonnage which would be available for west-bound movement if a steamship service was established, but these surveys have not indicated that the necessary tonnage is available. The matter was recently discussed before a meeting of the Export Club of Montreal and District with the same result.

A general reduction was made on December 1st in transcontinental rates similar to that required in other rates so that today these rates are 25% per cent higher than those September 30, 1920, whereas on September 15, 1920, they were 33 1-3 per cent higher. The reduction in these rates was directed by the Board of Railway Commissioners in its Order although the basis generally speaking from Eastern Canada to the Pacific coast is the existing rates from contiguous United States territory. The Canadian carriers will make a further reduction in these rates to meet that which will take effect in rates from Eastern United States to the American Pacific coast on July 1st. On that day the rates in the United States will be 20 per cent higher than they were on August 30th, 1920, whereas today they are 33 1-3 per cent higher.

Railway Legislation.

Several important amendments to the Railway Act have had the consideration of your Committee during the past year, namely, Joint International Railway Commission, Interest on Overcharges and Reparation. However, in view of the unsettled railway situation they have not been pressed to an issue. The Department has these matters well in hand and when the proper time arrives will see that they are placed before proper authorities with the view of having amendments put into effect.

Special Services and Arrangements Incidental to Transportation.

Milling in Transit of Grain—A few years ago the railway companies in Western Canada proposed an increase in the milling in transit charge from 1 cent to 2 cents per 100 pounds. At the request of interested members the Transportation Department made representation to the Board of Railway Commissioners resulting in the postponement of these tariffs. Later hearings were held throughout the country on the question together with an application of the Dominion Millers' Association and Montreal Board of Trade for fulfilling in transit arrangement on Ontario and Quebec grown grain. The Board of Railway Commissioners recently made an order stating that the milling in transit charge at any point in Canada should not exceed 1 cent per 100 pounds and that milling in transit arrangements should be accorded to all grain grown in Canada. The order also stated that a reasonable charge could be made by the carrier for out of line haul. While we are unable to state what amount has been saved to our members by the decision which we assisted materially in securing, it no doubt has meant a considerable sum.

Telephone.

Application for Increase—Early in the year the Bell Telephone Company applied to the Board of Railway Commissioners and secured an increase in their tolls. A short while thereafter they again made application to the Board for a further increase on the grounds that the former decision, which had not granted the full amount of their former application had not resulted in giving them the amount of money which the Board stated would be sufficient. A decision was rendered declining the second application on the ground that it was not justified.

Express.

General—Your Committee considered the question of applying for a reduction in express rates and along these lines the Department approached the express companies pointing out that as freight rates had declined, some attention should be paid to reduction in express rates. The express companies intimated that they were not in a position at the time to make the reduction. Subsequently the question was complicated by a decision of the Privy Council referring back to the Board of Railway Commissioners that portion of its decision allowing an increase of 20 per cent. in commodity rates. This question was considered by the Board of Railway Commissioners at a hearing in Ottawa on April 20th, but no decision has as yet been rendered. Until the decision is rendered your Committee feel that it would be difficult to secure a general reduction in excess rates as the express companies are unable to make any definite statement pending some knowledge as to what the Board will require them to do in connection with these commodity rates.

There was also an increase in international rates effective on January 1st from Canada to the United States and on April 20th from United States to Canada. This increase, however, was merely putting into effect certain increases on the Canadian portion of the through charge that has been allowed to Canadian express companies by the Board of Railway Commissioners in former decisions. The Interstate Commerce Commission postponed the north-bound tariffs from January 1st to April 20th holding a hearing on the subject January 23rd. At the hearing it was explained to the Commission exactly what the increase meant and their finding was that the tariff should be allowed to take effect.

W. S. CAMPBELL, Chairman,
S. B. BROWN, Asst. Manager, Trans. Dep't.
J. E. WALSH, General Manager.

WEST INDIES.

The members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association who have just completed a tour through the British West Indies and British Guiana have appointed the undersigned as a committee to make a report to you covering that tour in a general way, and embodying, as well as, a little more detailed information, which might be of service to our Commercial Intelligence Department.

The party was composed of the following:—

Mr. W. S. Fisher, President, Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Emerson and Fisher, St. John, N. B.

Sir Alexander and Lady Bertram, John Bertram & Sons Co., Ltd., Montreal, Que.

Col. & Mrs. R. W. Leonard, Mr. Douglas Mutch, Coniagas Reduction Co., Ltd., St. Catherines, Ont.

Mr. G. Gilbert McAvity, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Davidson, T. McAvity & Sons, St. John, N. B.

Mr. & Mrs. Geo. J. Lippert, Geo. J. Lippert Table Co., Ltd., Kitchener, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Turner, J. J. Turner, Ltd., Peterboro, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Pocock, London Concrete Machinery Co., Ltd., London, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Payne, Mr. Payne is Secretary of the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Department of Trade and Commerce of Canada.

Mr. & Mrs. A. H. Whitman, Robin Jones & Whitman, Halifax, N. S.

Col. Arthur Hatch, Canada Steel Goods Co., Ltd., Hamilton, Ont.

Mrs. James Anderson, Representing the Border Cities Chamber of Commerce, Windsor, Ont.

Mr. W. H. Shapley, Gould, Shapley & Muir Co., Ltd., Brantford, Ont.

Mr. H. V. Greene, Hiram Walker & Sons, Ltd., Walkerville, Ont.

Mr. J. B. Johnson, Canada Cement Co., Ltd., Montreal, Que.

Col. H. L. Edmonds, John Morrow Screw & Nut Co., Ltd., Ingersoll, Ont.

Mr. & Mrs. A. H. Stratton, Peterboro Review Co., Ltd., Peterboro, Ont.

Mr. W. J. Aitchison, D. Aitchison & Co., Ltd., Hamilton, Ont.

Mr. S. L. Gunn, The McClary Mfg. Company, London, Ont.

Mr. & Mrs. I. D. Bradshaw, Mr. W. J. Bradshaw, Bradshaw's Limited, Toronto, Ont.

Mr. Graham F. Towers, Superintendent Foreign Trade Dept., The Royal Bank of Canada, Montreal, Que.

Mr. C. K. Howard, General Tourist Agent, Canadian National Railways and Canadian Government Merchant Marine, Ltd.

We regret that Sir Alexander and Lady Bertram, Col. and Mrs. R. W. Leonard, Col. Arthur Hatch and Mr. Douglas Mutch found it impossible to proceed farther than Jamaica, since this undoubtly made the party less representative than we could have wished, having in view the official welcome which we received at all the points we visited.

We went south with the object of making ourselves more familiar with business and general conditions in the British West Indies, British Guiana and Bermuda, places with which Canada is becoming constantly more closely associated, and with which we are doing a steadily increasing trade.

The party sailed from Halifax on the Canadian Fisher on February 16th. The first stop was at Nassau in the Bahamas, the second at Kingston, Ja., and from there we proceeded to Panama, Venezuela, Trinidad, British Guiana, Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados, St. Lucia, Dominica, Montserrat, Antigua, St. Kitts, and finally Bermuda. A stay of eleven days was made at Port of Spain, Trinidad, and one of three days at Georgetown, British Guiana, and Bridgetown, Barbados. The transportation arrangements throughout were of the best, and we desire to put on record our appreciation of the services of Mr. C. K. Howard, General Tourist Agent of the Canadian National Railways, who did so much in this connection. We have seen to it that letters of thanks were sent to the Captain of the Canadian Fisher, which took the party from Halifax to Jamaica, and to the Captain of the White Star Liner Megantic on which boat we travelled from Jamaica to Trinidad. The kindness of Captain Hill and the officers and crew of the R.M.S.P. Chateur requires special mention. From the time we got on board the Chateur at Trinidad on March 17th to the time we disembarked at St. John on April 18th, Captain Hill worked unceasingly to make our trip a success.

The cordiality of the reception we met with at all the places we visited cannot be over-emphasized. Not only had the local chambers of commerce or agricultural societies arranged business meetings, where the members of our party could get in touch with the leading men of the community, but they had also made complete arrangements for our entertainment. We were received at the residence of the Governor or Administrator at practically every port, and, in general, the houses of our hosts were thrown open to us. Lunches or dinners were arranged for, and, not content with looking after us in this way, the local people had almost invariably arranged for us to do some sightseeing in cars which they lent for the purpose. We come back under a debt of gratitude to the citizens of the British West Indies, British Guiana and Bermuda for all their kindness to us as individuals and as members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and we hope that the Executive of the Association, whenever the occasion arises, will make a special point of assisting B. W. I. individuals or firms, who come to our Commercial Intelligence Department or other departments for information or advice.

Business Conditions From The Canadian Standpoint

During the last two months, it has been brought to our attention that while certain Canadian products were sold in quantity in the South, other products were extremely weak. It may be of interest to name the articles which were mentioned in this connection:—

Canadian products well known in the British West Indies:

Flour
Fish
Potatoes
Butter and Cheese
Hay
Oats
Cement
Paints
Brushes and Brooms
Tires
Paper
Cordage
Box Shooks and Lumber
Canvas shoes with rubber bottoms
Nails
Patent Medicines
Matches
Sulphate of Ammonia
Bags, Trunks and Valises
Lanterns
Cotton Bathing Suits
Split Peas
Bran
Pollard
Carbide
Carb. of Ammonia.

Canadian products partly known and to which sales could be increased:

Packing House Products
Canned Goods
Jams
Biscuits
Fertilizers (basic slag and tankage)
Soap
Drugs
Granulated Sugar
Condensed Milk
Clay Products
Enameled Wares
Road Building Machinery
Cornmeal
General Hardware Items

Canadian products little known in the British West Indies.

Textiles
Cotton Prints
Clothing
Boots and shoes
Furniture
Corrugated Sheets
Machinery
Hardware for buildings
Oleomargarine and many other lines.

We were impressed by the way in which our flour millers had practically gained control of the British West Indian market. They have followed the system of appointing good agents at every point, and, in addition, have their own representatives make periodical trips through the territory. We believe that the sending of capable representatives through the South is the only way to open up new business. This method should be followed by any firm which believes that the possibilities for the sale of its product warrant the expenditure involved. Once the goods are introduced the business in many cases may be carried on by the appointment of local agents. We are attaching a summary of the trade of Canada with the British West India Colonies during the last 21 years.

The imports into British West India Colonies, 1913, 1914 and latest available statistics are:

	United Kingdom	United States	Canada	All Countries
1913	$21,753,000	$20,025,000	$4,848,000	$56,290,000
1914	19,528,000	19,680,000	5,605,000	53,060,000
Latest Available Statistics	15,707,000	41,467,000	12,400,000	88,602,000

The Tariff

Goods are not exhaustively classified in the West Indian tariffs. The item covering unenumerated goods in any tariff is therefore of much importance. Furthermore, the rate on unenumerated goods is usually the prevailing rate applicable to most imported goods that are subject to ad valorem duties. On this account the approximate levels of the different tariffs are not difficult to indicate and an idea can be given of the absolute value of the preferences which have so far been described only as percentage reductions from the rates leviable on foreign goods. The following tables shows the actual differential on the bulk of articles subject to ad valorem duties in the different colonies for which new tariffs have been received:

	Preferential Tariff	General Tariff
The Bahamas	9⅝ per cent	19⅛ per cent
Barbados	10 " "	20 " "
British Guiana	11 " "	22 " "
British Honduras	10 " "	20 " "
Trinidad	10 " "	20 " "
Grenada	10 " "	15 " "
St. Lucia Windward Islands	10 " "	15 " "
St. Vincent	10 " "	15 " "
Antigua	10 " "	15 " "
Montserrat	10 " "	15 " "
St. Kitts-Nevis Leeward Islands	10 " "	15 " "
Dominica	10 " "	15 " "
Virgin Islands	8 " "	12 " "
Jamaica	15 " "	20 " "

Important articles, including many kinds of foodstuffs, animals, lumber, and other commodities, are subject to specific duties, and such goods are not covered by the rates quoted in the above table.

It is perhaps not generally appreciated that these British Colonies, even Jamaica with its million inhabitants, possess practically nothing in the way of manufacturing industries except those which operate on the products of the soil which they export.

Business Conditions

Practically all the products of the West Indies were affected by the general decline in prices which commenced in 1920. Sugar was exceptionally hard hit. Cocoa was low in price and difficult to dispose of. The banana industry which is one of the main industries in Jamaica and operates almost entirely with the United States probably came through more successfully than any other. These generally bad conditions in the market for West Indian commodities naturally brought in their train a good many difficulties for commercial firms. We were not led to believe, however, that failures were any more serious than in Canada. Cocoa prices have now recovered substantially from their low point of April, 1921, and sugar is firmer. These two industries are now probably able to pay expenses, and may even be making a certain profit. The coconut and banana industries are probably on a reasonably good basis. Sea Island cotton commanded a fair price. Lime juice is still somewhat affected, stocks of the poorer grades still being heavy in London. In general, however, it may be said that the West Indies feel they have turned the corner.

How Business is Done and the Risk Involved

We found that business is conducted in the British West Indies very much along the same lines as in Canada, so far as extension of credit goes. One trip to the South would convince anyone that the risk of doing business there is no greater than in our own country. Most of the larger importing firms are in a good financial position. Our banks are prepared to advise us at all times whether a firm is or is not deserving of credit. The trouble in the past has been that some exporters have shipped to small houses in the South who should not have obtained goods except for cash in advance or under an established letter of credit. We emphasize again, therefore, the necessity of obtaining credit reports from the Royal Bank of Canada, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Canadian Bank of Commerce or the Bank of Montreal, before acting on an order from a new customer. This information they are as a rule able to supply immediately from records on file in their head offices in Canada.

Competition From New York

We found that in most lines New York was an active competitor. The commission houses of that city apparently are in a position to quote relatively favorable prices on many lines. They are particularly resorted to by firms in the smaller islands who are attracted by the convenience of including in one order the variety of small purchases they are making. While we have found that business is conducted much along the same lines as in Canada, so far as extension of credit goes, there is a very large scale must enable them to quote prices which we at times, find difficult to compete against.

Documentation and Packing

We were surprised by the reference which was made at nearly every point to the late arrival of documents covering shipments from Canada. It might not be out of place for our Commercial Intelligence Department to give this matter special emphasis. Undoubtedly considerable annoyance and delay has been caused to importers in the British West Indies either because of bills of lading arriving late or, worse still, of certificates of origin being delayed. Where the latter do not arrive on time, goods must be put in bond (which involves expense), or the full duty must be paid. Some English firms send the certificate as soon as they receive the order, their invoices being stamped "incomplete" in order to get over the fact that the price on it might not be the rate which would prevail by the time shipment was made. Documents should always be included in the ship's mail of the vessel carrying the goods unless some other way of forwarding them to point of destination gives absolute assurance that they will be there as soon as or before the goods concerned. In connection with the prior arrival of documents, we found that cases arose of merchants having to pay sight drafts before the arrival of the goods. They dislike this very much.

It is most important that invoices should show packing costs separately. For safety the packing cost should not even be included in the same total with the charge for the goods, since collectors of customs apparently stick closely to the letter of the law, and are liable to assess duty on the total value shown. In any event duties are invariably assessed on packages—in one place it is twenty-five cents per package—in some others it is two per cent. on their value.

The fact that vessels do not dock except at Jamaica, Bermuda, St. Lucia and British Guiana, makes it necessary for Goods to be transferred to shore by lighters. They undergo considerable handling and require to be strongly packed. Firms receiving orders should pay careful attention to instructions they receive. Even where some peculiar request is made, it may arise from a desire to sell the container after use, since the low paid natives of the West Indies utilize any material they can lay their hands on.

While weights and measurements should be stencilled on each case, it is inadvisable to indicate contents where these are subject to pilferage. Even a makers' name should not be included, where the name suggests the contents.

Banking Facilities

We were impressed by the volume of business done by our Canadian banks in the South, and by their evident high standing in the community. Even in a foreign country such as Cuba, the Royal Bank of Canada was the main banking institution. There were only two points we visited during our entire trip where we did not find a branch of that bank. The Bank of Nova Scotia is strong in Jamaica, where it has been established since 1837. We found the Canadian Bank of Commerce opening at various places, and through the islands came in touch with the Colonial Bank, an English institution in which the Bank of Montreal has recently acquired an interest. These banks are able and willing to furnish Canadian firms with credit reports on the houses of the South, and they are sincerely anxious to assist Canadian trade by providing names or obtaining information of almost any description. The head offices of the banks usually are the centre for conducting this service. We believe their willingness to provide information or to assist trade by performing such services, as for example, the completion and despatch of documents from shipping ports should be brought more to the attention of manufacturers. At every point which we visited, the Canadian bank managers took a leading part in the arrangements for our entertainment. Their constant kindness and the business information they were able to give our members increased the pleasure and value of our trip.

Trade Commissioner Service

We naturally came in touch with the Canadian Trade Commissioners or commercial agents in the West Indies. We are led to give our hearty endorsement to the opinion expressed and recommendation regarding the value of the Canadian Trade Commissioners' service made by the delegation from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, which went to Ottawa on February 23, 1922.

Transportation

In regard to transportation arrangements with the British West Indies, Canada is in a relatively favorable position. The Clyde Line, the Trinidad Line and Furness-Withy are the main services from New York, but the only service at present running from England is an intermittent one conducted by the Harrison Line. Poor transportation greatly hampers English exporters. The Canadian Government Merchant Marine, the Canadian Pacific Steamships, the Royal Mail Steam Packet and Pickford and Black, maintain services between Canada and various points in the British West Indies, British Honduras, British Guiana and Bermuda.

While the improvements and extensions made in these services during the past few years are much appreciated and have been important factors in developing trade, the business people throughout the territory are looking forward with deep interest to the improved services contemplated by the Canadian Government, which, when put into effect, will give a greatly increased impetus to the business relations between the two countries.

At many points in the South they expressed the hope that Canadians would travel more and more in the British West Indies. British Guiana and the various islands are ideal places for a winter tour, and it is our opinion that the more Canadians there are who go to these places, the more familiar will the British West Indies become with Canada and the readier they will be to buy Canadian goods. We noted that although items of news from the United States were prominent in the papers, there was a great lack of Canadian news. We think this should be corrected and believe it would be worth while to place the Chamber of Commerce of each point in the mailing list for "Industrial Canada," also the clubs and banks.

Business From The West Indian Standpoint

The main products of the British West Indies are—sugar, molasses, rum, cocoa, cocoanuts, copra, bananas, coffee, limes, sea island cotton, rice and other similar products, as well as oil and pitch, which are produced in Trinidad. We found rather a general feeling throughout the South that Canada was not buying enough from them. British Guiana was an exception to this, since we have always purchased a very large quantity of sugar from that Colony. In the other places we pointed out that our purchases were increasing steadily, and would continue to do so as our population increased. They are keen for us to buy direct instead of buying some British West Indian products in New York. There seems to be no doubt that our direct purchases in the British West Indies could be increased to our mutual advantage, and that although in some cases grading or blending facilities draw us to New York, in others our importers are probably overlooking opportunities. We pointed out that the personal representation which is thought so necessary for the sale of Canadian goods in the South was just as necessary if more British West Indian products are to be sold in Canada.

We found that the recently constituted preferential tariff arrangements with Canada are greatly appreciated through the British West Indies, British Guiana, British Honduras and the Bahamas. In some of these countries however, they do not yet realize the great opportunities in the Canadian market which have been opened to them by the Canadian Customs tariff preferences. These preferences average about 50%.

The following are examples of the articles imported into Canada at preferential rates from the British West Indies, British Guiana, British Honduras and the Bahamas:—

Articles	Preferential Tariff	General Tariff
Grapefruit	50c per cwt.	$1 per cwt.
Cocoa beans	Free	$1.50 per cwt.
Onions	Free	30%
Arrowroot	¼c per lb.	1¼c per lb.
Limes	Free	15%

There appears to be a lack of information in regard to the preference now granted by Canada on sugar. The fact is, that they have a commanding preference, as the following items from the Canadian Customs Tariff indicate:—

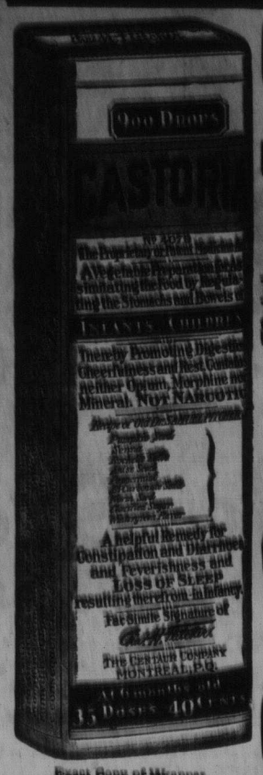
	British Preferential Tariff	General Tariff
All sugar above number sixteen Dutch standard in colour, and all refined sugars of whatever kinds, grades or standards, not covered by tariff Item No. 185, when not exceeding eighty-eight degrees of polarization, per one hundred lbs.	$1.95	$2.00
Sugar above number sixteen Dutch standard in color when imported by a recognized sugar refiner, for refining purposes only, under regulations by the Minister of Customs and Inland Revenue; and sugar, n. o. p. not above number sixteen Dutch Standard in color, sugar drainings or pumpings drained in transit, melado of concentrated melado, tank bottoms, sugar concrete, and molasses testing over fifty-six degrees and not exceeding seventy-six degrees; when not exceeding seventy-six degrees of polarization per one hundred lbs.	.70	1.16

The rates for sugar of greater strength are proportionate, and maintain the same ratio of preference throughout.

The United Kingdom gives West Indies Sugar a preference of only one sixth; the United States gives Cuban Sugar a preference of only one fifth; Canada gives West Indian sugar a preference ranging from one-third to slightly greater than one-third.

With such a preference, West Indian sugar should command the Canadian market, provided, of course, selling plans are wisely made and vigorously carried out.

(Continued On Page Nine.)



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