

PRINCIPAL GRANT

During the next few years the imperial idea made rapid progress. In 1896 the Liberals came into power, and in the following year the most important of the tariff proposals of the minister of finance¹ was a preference to goods manufactured in Britain of twenty-five per cent., subsequently increased to thirty-three per cent. Of each successive increase Grant was a strong advocate, and his disgust at the opposition of the Conservative party threw him more and more into sympathy with the Liberals. In 1898 a preference was given to West Indian sugar. For this measure of relief to the oldest and the most unfortunate of Britain's colonies, Grant was largely responsible.

To Colonel G. T. Denison, January 3rd, 1898, (private and confidential).—"A happy New Year to you! I have just returned from Ottawa. Had an hour with Fielding discussing the West India question, which he understands thoroughly. I think that something will be done, though perhaps not all we might wish at first.

"Had an hour also with Laurier. First, the preference hereafter is to be confined to Britain. That is settled, but this is, of course, strictly confidential.

"Secondly, he seemed at first to think that we had gone far enough with our twenty-five per cent. reduction, till we could see its workings, but when I argued for going on steadily along that line, he

¹ The Hon. W. S. Fielding.