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THE BRITISH WEST INDIES.

In view of the preferential trade agreement between Canada and the West Indies, considerable interest attaches to a project, advanced by Sir Harry Johnston in the London Chronicle, that all these colonies should be joined in a confederation. The project is, of course, only a suggestion at this stage, but it contains several instructive features.

In his proposal for British Tropical America, as Sir Harry Johnston calls the English possessions in and near the Caribbean Sea, he includes Jamaica, British Honduras, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the dozen small islands of the Lesser Antilles, as well as Trinidad. British Guiana in South America is also near enough to be included in the list.

This division of the British Empire contains approximately 1,640,000 blacks and 125,000 whites. The predominance of the blacks leads the advocate of this new confederation to reject the proposition that they be joined to Canada. Hence he suggests that Jamaica be made an administrative centre, a place its geographical relation to the other colonies and its comparative importance alike justify; that there should be a Supreme Court, a university, a Federal Council and a variety of other similar institutions created there, and that it should be the residence of the new Governor General of British Tropical America.

The difference in the character of the various colonies included in this group leads Sir Harry Johnston to the conclusion that a large measure of local dependence or home rule should be allotted to each. Even the question of black and white suffrage is one which he believes will have to be left to the various colonies, but on the other hand he recognizes the growing insistence of the 1,640,000 negroes of these territories for some sort of political status.

The point to be observed is that this proposal, although in its infancy, is already being viewed with some symptoms of alarm in the United States. Commenting on the writer's suggestion the New York Sun says: "The project is plainly little more than a mere imaginative affair at the moment, yet it must have a real interest for the United States commercially, since a tariff wall erected about such a confederation would be of immediate concern, particularly to the Southern States, while the growth of a more or less well united confederation of English speaking blacks is the most interesting of the many indications of new European activity in the West Indies."

The future possibilities in this confederation, as the Sun sees them, would be strongly inimical to the interests of the United States. The "Chinese wall," which was a nightmare to Mr. Taft, would be strengthened and fortified in an unlooked for quarter. Preferential trade within the Empire would receive an impetus. The confederated colonies, as a unit, would at once become an important factor. "The tariff wall erected about such a confederation would be of immediate concern, particularly to the Southern States." It becomes daily more evident that Imperial Preference would have lost its terrors had the United States been successful in luring Canada into the entanglements of Reciprocity.

The sentiment in favor of an Empire Preference is increasing in the West Indies. Signs are not wanting that Jamaica and the other colonies, now withholding the preference from Canada, will continue to line the nearest future. The Daily Gleaner of Kingston, Jamaica, speaks encouragingly on this point. In its issue of the 2nd inst it comments as follows:

"Consequently, we shall soon see a preferential trade system in full operation in the colonies to the east and southeast of us; and it will be interesting to watch how the experiment works. For our part, we have little doubt that it will have a successful result eventually. Canada is a country with a great future before it. Its population is growing by leaps and bounds. Its commerce is expanding at a phenomenal rate. For these reasons its markets are becoming more and more valuable every year for the products of tropical colonies like the British West Indies and Demerara. By-and-bye—and in the not very remote future either—the Dominion will have reached such a state of development as to justify Jamaica and the Bahamas (which now depend for their very existence, commercially speaking, on the United States) in seeking to come into closer relations with it, on a preferential basis. Unfortunately, that time has not yet arrived. And this fact is appreciated just as fully by the statesmen, politicians and intelligent business men of Canada as it is by the leading colonists in this part of the Empire."

The inauguration of a greatly improved steamship service between the Maritime Provinces and the West Indies, will go far as an inducement to these colonies to become parties to the agreement. The trade between Canada and the signatories to the agreement will be stimulated and developed. The beneficial effects will comment the advantages of a mutual preference to Jamaica and the other islands not yet included in the arrangement. According to the terms of the agreement Canada is giving their products a preference for three years. At the end of that period they will cease to enjoy this privilege unless they then reciprocate. There seems a strong probability that before three years elapse Jamaica and the other colonies will come in.

A SAMPLE MARKET FOR GRAIN.

To co-operate with the Grain Commission in introducing sample markets for Western grain, the Winnipeg Grain Exchange has decided to undertake the organization of such a market on its premises. This action by the grain men of Winnipeg, as the Toronto Mail and Empire points out, was necessary, since sample markets could be of use only where there is a concentration of buying power and sufficient competition to warrant the work of collecting and exhibiting samples.

In the two months following a harvest there is such a rush of grain eastward, such congestion of traffic at the terminals and along the main lines, that only a market of great breadth and vigor could cope with the situation created by the piling up of samples from thousands of cars en route. This would seem to be a strong argument for the selection of Winnipeg as the chief sample market. Winnipeg also is such the best provided with terminal facilities. The matter of transportation facilities is so essentially at the root of the sample market possibilities

that the railways must be made to co-operate by adequate handling of the terminals. Unless this phase of the question gets energetic and efficient handling, the whole scheme might easily result in utter confusion.

Of the benefit of the sample market in giving to the farmer, or the primary shipper, the full price for the exact grade of his grain there seems to be little doubt. At present there is frequently a difference of 10 or 15 cents in price between a given grade and the one immediately above or below it. For instance, wheat that falls a shade below No. 2 Northern, at say, 99 cents, would be graded as No. 3 Northern, at say, 84 cents, while its actual value might be 90 or 92 cents. By buying from sample, the mills and other purchasers would get exactly the grade of quality they paid for and no more. Of course, a system of sampling must be official, and done after the cars have left the shippers' hands.

The Mail suggests that it would seem a very considerable relief from congestion in the Winnipeg terminals were sampling to be done at divisional points en route, the samples being forwarded to the market by express. By the time the cars came in the samples would have been sufficiently long on view, and the holding back of cars at the local yards for sample exhibition purposes would be avoided. Being an order point, cars may now be held over in Winnipeg an extra twenty-four hours on a charge to cover the cost of shunting around, but this does not apply at the season of great congestion after the harvest.

A STATE MEDICAL SERVICE.

A meeting held at Liverpool, in England, recently, to organize a "State Medical Service Association," is a new departure along the lines of co-operation, and is attracting a good deal of attention in the Old Country. It was explained by the promoters that it was in no sense an answer to Mr. Lloyd George's Insurance Act, and had in fact been planned before the advent of the latter. It was intended as a benefit both to the public and to the medical profession.

The platform of the new organization was stated as follows: (a) The whole medical profession to be organized on the lines of other State services now in existence; (b) entry to the profession to be by one State examination; (c) each member of the service to be paid a definite salary, increasing gradually, according to length of service and position in the service, and to be entitled to a pension after a specified number of years or in case of permanent disablement; (d) members of the public, as far as practicable, to have free choice of doctor, but no doctor to be called upon to have charge of more than a specified number of patients; (e) one of the primary objects of the State service to be to unite preventive and curative medicine; all hospitals to be nationalized and to be used for the purpose of consultative, operative, and therapeutic work at the request of and in conjunction with the patient's own doctor; (f) the services of the State doctors to be open to every man, woman, and child—rich or poor; (g) the State medical service to be administered by a board of health under a minister of public health with Cabinet rank, assisted by expert medical advisers.

There are many and obvious difficulties in the way of a nationalization of private medical service, but it has some advantages from both points of view—that of the doctor as well as that of the patient. The reception given these pioneers by the British Government and public will be a matter of interest to doctors and patients alike. In Great Britain things social are moving more and more toward the co-operative end of the scale. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the British Association for the Promotion of a State Medical Service may prove successful in interesting Mr. Lloyd George in its schemes.

THE TOUR OF THE BRITISH MANUFACTURERS.

Attention is directed to letters, appearing elsewhere in this issue, written by the British Manufacturers, giving their impressions of the Maritime Provinces. A little wholesome criticism, a tribute to the natural resources, a good word for progressive cities and towns, and a strongly expressed conviction that there is a great commercial future in store for these Provinces are the main features in this review of conditions, as the visitors saw them. Additional satisfaction will be felt in the favorable opinions expressed from the knowledge that they are the views of men of sound and impartial judgment.

Current Comment

Bourassa's Activities.

(Victoria Colonist.)
Henri Bourassa, having found his anti-naval campaign a failure and his pro-mercantile campaign repudiated by the sensible people of Quebec, has now turned his pen to proving that Quebec bears no obligations towards France and that the entente cordiale between England and France has no attractions for French Canadians. His mania takes many strange forms, but he will have to be more powerful than he has yet proven to be if he can eradicate from the mind and heart of the inhabitant the traditional love for the land of the tricolor.

A Liberal View.

(Manitoba Free Press, Lib.)
The proposition that "Canada should contribute thirty millions in cash to the naval defence of the Empire" alarms the Weekly Sun of Toronto, a farmer's paper which holds that any such contribution "would indefinitely postpone the realization of a lower tariff, upon which the farmers of Canada have set their hearts." Not necessarily, if the naval schemes, when submitted, provide for raising the money needed for naval defence, by some special method of taxation.

The Turn of the Tide.

(Vancouver News-Advertiser.)
The last British general election left the Government with a majority of 156, counting with the Government both sections of Home Rulers and all the Labor members. This majority has been reduced through by-elections to about 100. England, the predominant partner, to use Lord Rosebery's phrase, gave a majority of 15 against Home Rule. This majority has been increased to 25 and is still growing.

Lucky Toronto!

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)
There is no public demand in this city for an investigation of the police force by Mayor Geary, nor by the Chief of Police, and still less by Judge Winchester.

One of the Necessaries.

(Pittsburg Dispatch.)
Now a Western travelling man tells the New York Herald that tips are going up. There seems to be no limit to the increase in the cost of the necessities of life.

The Stick-fast Trust.

(Vancouver Province.)
To prevent overlapping, the American envelope manufacturers are reported to have agreed to stick together and form a merger.

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(Hardware and Metal.)
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STRIKERS REFUSE TO COLONIZE

Labor Troubles in Mexico Not Easily Settled—Big Drainage Project May Prove Futile.

Mexico City, Aug. 16.—Labor troubles and an attempt to settle them by means of establishing colonies on government lands have brought to light a difficulty which the government had not as yet realized. The strike of textile workers in Orizaba demonstrated that the unions were ready to stand together and that they would fight attempts to blacklist any of their number. An attempt to settle the question by colonizing the strikers and bringing in others was met by the refusal of the strikers to be colonized.

The reason they gave were that they were for the most part poor and forced by the very low rate of wages to live almost from hand to mouth and had no money to purchase seed or to live until their crops could be harvested. It was further objected that the lands offered them for colonization were rough and in many cases covered with underbrush or timber which would have to be removed before the crops could be planted. In many cases the land offered was so far from communication that crops could not be marketed.

The mortgage and loan association, granted a charter by the government with the intention that it should tide over just such cases as this, refused to furnish the money necessary to finance the scheme without the authorization of congress or the personal guarantee of the cabinet which would protect them in case the congress convening in September should refuse to authorize the expenditure of the money. The sum necessary for the undertaking was estimated at \$80,000 for 1,000 men with their families, or \$80 per family. The cabinet refused to guarantee the loan and the textile strike and the colonization question are still unsettled.

The use of the bed of Lake Texcoco now being drained to provide arable lands for the Indians living on its banks, is meeting with criticism from scientists and physicians. Medical statisticians have attempted to demonstrate that whenever the level of the lake has gone down an epidemic of typhus fever has resulted, and have gone so far as to compare the relative level of the lake with the death rate from that disease. Agriculturists have made chemical analysis of the land on the shores of the lake and in its bottom and have stated that no known vegetation will grow there. The analyses show alkalies of various kinds and insoluble sulphides.

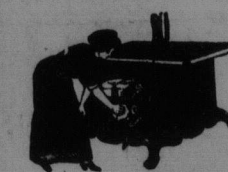
The latter argument aroused the most interest on the part of the government commission in charge of the drainage of the lake and experiments are now being instituted to prove or disprove the theory. Trees and plants, both foreign and native to Mexican soil, are being planted on the shores of the lake and their growth carefully observed to determine which, if any, are suitable to the alkali soil. Experiments are also being made in washing the soil with water to ascertain whether such a procedure would be beneficial on a large scale. The commercial possibilities of the recovery of any soluble salts are also being looked into.

One of the purposes of draining the lake was to do away with the continual sand storms which now assail the capital, which would make the draining of the lake a disadvantage in case the land should not lend itself to cultivation. Indians living along the lake would furthermore be deprived of the scanty livelihood they now derive from the sale of various forms of aqueous products from the lake.

The first general elections for senators and deputies to the National Assembly, which have been in any way an expression of the will of the people, coming as they did under the new law calling for direct vote of the people, have not been as satisfactory as might have been wished.

One of the battle cries of the Madero revolution was "Effective Suffrage." This many claim has not been realized. The Department of the Interior having all this in view and taking advantage of the recency of the elections, has appointed a commission to make a careful study of the faults in the law and to make such recommendations for amendments to it as may be thought advisable. These recommendations will probably be embodied in President Madero's message at the opening of the new Congress in September.

Questions as to the exact location of the boundary line between Mexico and the United States around the mouth of the Colorado river, as well as the distribution of the water of the river for irrigation purposes, have arisen again and it is expected that a commission will soon go north to investigate the matter under the direction of Rafael Hernandez, minister of agriculture and industry.



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