

REPORT

BY MR. JOHN T. WYLDE,

Commercial Agent of the Government of Canada to the West Indies, 1886-87.

OTTAWA, 20th April, 1887.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

1. Having carried out the instructions conveyed to me in the letter of the Honorable Minister of Finance, under date the 26th November, A.D. 1886, and having visited the Islands of Cuba, Porto Rico and Jamaica as the Commercial Agent of the Government of Canada, I have now the honor to report, for the information of the Government, on the subject of inquiry I was directed to institute, more particularly with regard to the feasibility of establishing lines of steamers between Canada and the West Indies.

2. Before embarking at New York for Cuba, I took the opportunity of examining into the trade of that port with the West Indies. By a judicious placing of lines of steamers from the United States to all parts of the West Indies, employing about 40,000 tons of steamship tonnage from the port of New York alone, (see Appendix A) the Americans have succeeded in building up a vast trade, while Canada is without a single steamer engaged in direct communication with the West Indies. For the year ended 30th June, 1885, the trade between United States and Cuba amounted:

In Exports to.....	\$ 8,468,523
In Imports to.....	42,192,186
Equal to.....	<u>\$50,660,709</u>
And that between United States and Porto Rico, in Exports to.....	\$1,551,945
Imports.....	6,104,263
	<u>7,656,208</u>
The trade between United States and British West Indies amounted, in the same year to, Exports.....	\$6,291,347
Imports.....	9,884,054
	<u>16,175,401</u>
Total.....	<u>\$74,492,318</u>

3. The principal articles of export from the United States consist of breadstuffs, coal, glass, provisions, oils, fish, vegetables, lumber, shooks, cattle, carriages and manufactures of iron and steel, cotton, paper, leather and hemp. Some of the articles enumerated, viz., fish, lumber, vegetables and manufactures of iron are largely Canadian products.

4. Proceeding to the Island of Cuba in the steamer "City of Alexandria," a passage of four and a half days brought us to Havana, the Capital city.

5. The harbor of Havana is exceptionally safe and commodious, while the city itself presents numerous points of interest and magnificence. With a population of about 250,000 inhabitants, the evidences of wealth and grandeur are everywhere apparent; some, alas, of the ambitious and unfinished undertakings of a past time of prosperity and luxury.