



The Sugar Cane Crop in Jamaica.

CANADIAN AND WEST INDIAN TRADE

Great Possibilities for Expansion

By A. N. KIRSCHMANN

GREAT and growing Canada, with her teeming millions of acres of uncultivated lands, calls for the industrious and willing worker to plough and furrow her fertile surface, to sow the seed and reap a bounteous harvest. In this rich and fertile soil, however, there is but one all-important and profitable seed to be sown—wheat. But upon her vast plains rich grazing is offered, and opportunities for raising and supporting cattle whose quality is second to none. These cattle give her an abundant supply of dairy products, consumed to a large extent locally, and exported to various points outside of the continent. It is in consideration of these products of Canada, which are increasing every year and sometimes form a surplus, that the question of an extension of her trade arises. Her seasons peculiar to herself do not, as in other lands, allow of the production of a variety of food stuffs and fruit. It would be absolutely useless for anyone to attempt to produce with any hope of commercial success any of the fruits which are largely consumed by her people, and which come in from the tropical countries. Among these are the many delicate and highly-flavoured fruits, such as pineapples, grape fruit, oranges, bananas, and such other products, which have come by constant use to be considered necessities, such as lemons and limes, dyewoods, manufactured sugar, and rum. In exchange for these tropical products Canada offers the surplus of her soil, and a greater portion of the products of her fisheries.

EXPANSION OF TRADE.

The question of bringing about closer relations with these islands and Canada has engaged the attention of parties who are interested in the products of the islands and those of Canada. A director of a milling company who recently paid a visit to one of them expresses himself in very favourable terms on the subject of trade relations. He thinks there are great possibilities for expansion. The existing market conditions are not the creation of any one man or group of men, but the natural outcome of consumption overtaking production. The increased values of farm and dairy products, as a natural consequence, are bound to greatly enhance the prosperity of the whole farming community of Canada. The increased purchasing power and the increased trade would naturally reflect upon the business of both the merchants and the manufacturers of the Dominion. This visitor said, "An improvement in the transportation facilities between Canada and the West Indies would do much. The United States has done all in its power to protect the trade of the south, and, as a result, commercial conditions in the British West Indies generally suffered." In former days, trade preceded transportation. To-day transportation lays the foundation for trade. A good steamship service between Canada and the West

Indies would lay the foundation for active commercial relations.

An idea of the interchange of trade between these tropical countries and Canada is here given, carefully compiled from the Government returns for seven months ending October, 1908:—

Imports from British West Indies—free of duty.

Hides and Skins	\$ 8,725
Salt	8,165
Bananas	16,812*
Lemons and limes	428
Oranges and shaddocks	11,164
Molasses	768,361
Coffee	7,174
Rum (dutable)	4,967
	<hr/> \$825,796

* U.S.A., \$1,161,183.

Exports from Canada to B.W.I., same period.

Fisheries—

Codfish	\$453,476
Mackerel (pickled)	29,265
Herrings	75,196
Smoked	11,777
Sea Fish	5,302
Salmon (pickled)	643

Forest—

Laths	726
Shingles	24,120
Cheese	13,827
Oats	26,663
Peas	16,519
Bran	7,759
Flour and Wheat	170,613
Hay	8,833
Potatoes	23,067
	<hr/> \$868,377

As indicated above, \$1,161,183 represents the amount of bananas imported into Canada from that country, most of which were grown among the islands.

Imports from the British West Indies have grown from a little less than two million dollars in 1903, to nearly six million dollars in the last fiscal year. During the same period our exports have grown from two to three million dollars in value. The total annual trade is thus about nine million dollars, of which one-third is in sugar.

TARIFF REVISION.

As to the possibility of annexing these islands to Canada, the first step towards this end would be in the establishment of better trade relations than now

exist. There are many sides to this question, however, and from interviews the writer has had with manufacturers who have exported goods to the West Indies, with steamship companies who are now conducting a service, there is a strong belief among these men, that unless a revision of tariff on some of the articles which are considerably consumed in the islands is made, whereby Canadian products could have a preference over those entering the islands from the United States, no expansion of trade can be looked for.

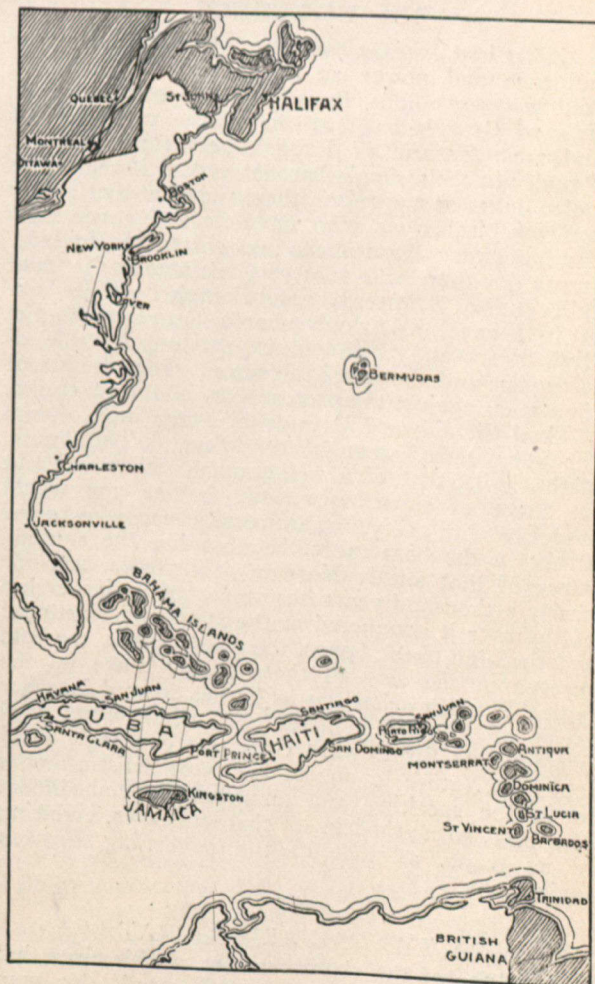
One of the largest items in the imports of the islands is that of flour, most of which goes from the United States. There now exists, for instance, a duty of eight shillings, or two dollars, per barrel on every barrel of flour imported into the Island of Jamaica, B.W.I. This, with the considerable amount that is used, forms a revenue per annum which can be calculated upon at a certain figure with but very little fluctuation each year. It is not a very sound principle of economics for them to think that by giving a preference to Canadian-made flour, of about, say, fifty cents a barrel that they would be out in their revenue entirely and that such a concession would mean a total loss to them; for if bread could be made cheaper in the islands it would mean a saving that would enable them to purchase more extensively other necessities. In the transportation of this particular item alone ships leaving Canada for these waters would always have a full cargo.

OPENING A FIELD FOR OTHER LINES.

With the present condition of some of the Canadian industries, not the least among these that of cement, which is largely used in various forms of construction work in these islands—bridges, culverts, storehouses and general governmental work, the West Indies, with better transportation facilities, would open up a market for this industry. The cost of cement as sold on the islands is somewhere in the neighbourhood of three dollars a barrel. There must be considerable profit in the sale of cement at such a price by someone. There is no reason why Canadian Portland cement could not be shipped from Canada, via Jamaica, to the Panama Canal, providing American politics would not interfere. At present there is a small trade done in several lines profitably, but which, owing to their small proportions, do not come among the regular items of export. In some of these a bigger trade could be worked up.

MANUFACTURES ON THE ISLANDS.

There is no doubt that enterprising capitalists would find room for profitable investment among the islands as a result of manufacturing. Many of the



Map of the British West Indies, with the British Islands shown dark. If made into one Province and federated with Canada, these Islands would add a million and a quarter to our population.