

Canada and the British West Indies

(Concluded from Page 4.)

same concessions, and on this account the treaty is likely to be annulled — another evidence of the instability and unsatisfactory results of a Commercial Union, without a political tie.

Fifth.—The distance between the British West Indies and Canada is brought up as an objection to their becoming a part of our Dominion, but this would naturally be overcome by improved cable, steamship and wireless service, which would follow Confederation, and also by aerial communication between the two countries which will doubtless be established in the near future.

CANADA SHOULD IMPORT HER TROPICAL PRODUCTS FROM THE BRITISH WEST INDIES.

In 1915, Canada imported tropical products to the value of \$30,000,000, only one-fifth of which came direct from the West Indies. Most of these imports, apart from sugar, reached our markets through the United States, and the steamers delivering same, were bound to have their return cargoes made up of United States products, rather than Canadian. Conversely, Canada exports to the island of Jamaica alone only one-tenth of the flour consumed there. However, even under present unsatisfactory commercial treaties and lack of direct transportation facilities, the exports from Canada to the West Indies have more than doubled during the last three years, and the imports have increased from about \$8,000,000 to \$21,000,000. If our consumption of tropical products increased at the same ratio, they would, in ten years, amount to \$50,000,000. From these facts, we can form some idea of the enormous mutually advantageous trade that would be established between Canada and the British West Indies, under Confederation, when there would be free interchange of commerce, and increased direct steamship communication.

WEST INDIES FUTURE PRODUCTION.

The West Indies produce only a fraction of what they are capable of producing, and they are now about to cross the threshold of a great prosperity. I have in other articles on this subject quoted Mr. E. L. Pease, Vice-President of the Royal Bank of Canada, an authority on this question, who stated that the British West Indies could produce 3,000,000 tons of sugar annually, instead of from about 200,000 to 300,000 tons as at present. This applies also to practically everything that can be grown in tropical countries. The great increase in value of their exports would naturally increase their purchasing power of Canadian products.

IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.

The limited steamship service now established between Canada and the British West Indies, which is confined to the ports of Halifax and St. John, could be supplemented by fast cold storage boats, with modern equipment for carrying passengers, fruit and early vegetables, and which would run up the St. Lawrence to the great centres of Canadian population, with slower boats carrying less perishable tropical products, such as sugar, molasses, coffee, etc. When navigation is closed these St. Lawrence boats could be diverted to Halifax and St. John, and with the present maritime service, the terminal facilities at Halifax (on which the Dominion Government will spend about \$25,000,000), into which three trans-continental lines of railway will run, will offer exceptional facilities for direct transportation of cargoes of tropical products, through the rich provinces of Quebec and Ontario, to the Great West, all the year.

I believe it would be found feasible for the slower cold storage boats, on their way from the West Indies, before going up the St. Lawrence, to touch at a port in Newfoundland, and after discharging their products for that country, have loaded on them fresh fish from the Newfoundland cold storage plants, for delivery to the large, growing markets of Upper Canada and the West. On their return voyage to the West Indies, these boats, after discharging the Canadian freight for Newfoundland, could fill that space with dry fish, thus giving the Newfoundland merchants and fishermen regular, frequent and direct facilities of transportation to these islands, of the products of their marine fields which possess such boundless wealth, and supplying the people of the West Indies with this much desired article of food in greater quantities.

THE INCLUSION OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

Confederation between the British West Indies and Canada would be an additional incentive for Newfoundland to enter the Dominion. She could not afford to remain out of this consolidation of British possessions and thus lose the full advantage of direct steamship service, and free trade with this ever increasing market of 2,000,000 consumers of her staple commodity, fish. She would have the additional advantage of importing direct, free of duty, and at a low cost of transportation, sugar, molasses, and fruits. The latter, now considered a luxury, rarely reaching the fishermen, but which is a very necessary article of diet for them, would then be within the reach of all classes, and reduce their cost of living.

FUTURE RIVALRY FOR TROPICAL COUNTRIES.

We are bound to realize more and more how much the world depends upon tropical products, and that the great rivalry of the future will be for the control of the tropics. This is substantiated by the United States securing control of important islands in the West Indies, and I believe they are looking for more.

The "Canada-West India Magazine" published statistics showing that more American goods were sold to the West Indies in 1916, than to the entire continent of South America. The West Indies, including Porto Rico, bought seven times the value of goods made in the United States in 1916, as China, with its four hundred million of population. In view of these facts, is it not about time that we should awaken to the importance of developing the British West Indies with Canadian capital and energy, and endeavour to keep as much of this tropical trade as possible within the Empire?

CANADA'S OPPORTUNITY.

Having regard to the future growth of Canada, I would again urge the importance of our Dominion carefully weighing not only the mutual commercial advantages which I have endeavoured to outline, but also the strategical importance which the Caribbean Sea will acquire in the near future. Canada should not lose the opportunity, if it were offered her, of rounding off her Dominion into a Greater Canada, by acquiring this tropical territory larger in area than the Dominion of New Zealand, with double its population, providing it would be to their mutual advantage. Our Dominion, while paying the largest price in this war of any child of the Mother Country, has not as a result of her great sacrifices, which were willingly made for the Empire and humanity, added to her territory. This, of course, is due to there not being any German possessions in North America. Whereas, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand have acquired from the enemy tropical territory larger than the German Empire.

As the debts of these British West Indies are comparatively nominal, and their productive wealth enormous, there should be, from a financial point of view, no hesitation on the part of Canada, in assuming these obligations.

INDEPENDENT DOMINION OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES.

It has been suggested that Confederation With Canada should be preceded by a separate Dominion of the British West Indies, or by commercial union between these islands. Many official and unofficial attempts have been made during the past hundred years or more, to establish a Commercial, or Political Union, or both, between these islands, also a commercial union with Canada, but not one has yet fully succeeded. These failures do not make the outlook very promising for the realization of either scheme in the near future. They show that such solutions of the problem are neither feasible nor desirable. These islands have never been able to unite on questions of lesser importance than either commerce or politics, due perhaps to local jealousies, or to the fact that having too much in common, there can be no interchange of commerce or ideas. This proposed local union, if it could be achieved, would not add to the prosperity of these islands, nor place them in a better position to bargain with Canada or the Mother Country, as a well known writer has stated, because their power would be small and their retaliatory strength negligible. I believe the interests of the British West Indies would be best served by their becoming a partner of a country having a different climate and different products, and with boundless wealth in agricultural, mineral, forests and other resources. Such a country they will find in Canada, with a territory larger than the United States, and as one of our leading statesmen has said, the twentieth century is Canada's century.

Instead of such a roundabout, indirect way of accomplishing Confederation with Canada, I would

venture to suggest that at the earliest convenient date, each of the British West Indies should have direct representation on a Commission to proceed to Ottawa, and there discuss the matter with the Canadian authorities, so that before the war is over they will be able to submit to their people, and put into effect any understanding they may have reached which would be to their mutual advantage. Newfoundland, too, should be represented on this Commission.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT FOR CONFEDERATION.

Many consider this not an opportune time for attempting the consolidation of British possessions in North America, preferring to wait until after the war. I think it is well to provide now for what peace will bring. Besides, if we are to successfully handle our financial burden and care for the one million or more men who will be seeking new employment after this war, we must provide for more producers, and secure markets to take care of the increased production.

GEOGRAPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

What is of paramount importance in this Confederation is the strategical position of these British West Indies, lying as they do in the pathway of our trade route to South America, with which country Canada will in the future have an enormous business, and with Jamaica at the entrance to the Panama Canal, upon which the future development of British Columbia will to a considerable extent depend. It is of the utmost importance, for the safety and future economic development of the Empire, that these British possessions in the Caribbean Sea should be strengthened and consolidated.

We should not delay until after the war to take advantage of the opportunity which may be offered by the British West Indies in making these more adequate provisions for the responsibilities we have assumed in this great world struggle for humanity. Now is the opportune time, while, as the editor of the Jamaica 'Gleaner' said, "There is the spirit of oneness, and the feeling of solidarity or Imperial sentiment, a oneness of outlook which the war has brought about." This spirit within our Empire may not be so intense after peace is declared.

Now, when our enemies and rivals are making plans for exploiting the economic situation at the end of the war, we should prepare to consolidate the political and commercial interests of our Empire.

DETAILS OF AMERICAN LOANS.

New York, September 26.

Loans to our Allies have been as follows:—

Belgium has been given a credit of \$2,770,000, making Belgium to date \$158,020,000, and all Allies to date \$7,206,476,666, as follows:

Great Britain, \$3,745,000,000; France, \$2,065,000,000; Italy, \$860,000,000; Russia, \$325,000,000; Belgium, \$157,000,000; Greece, \$15,790,000; Cuba, \$15,000,000; Serbia, \$12,000,000; Rumania, \$6,666,666; Siberia, \$5,000,000.

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