

CANADA, THE WEST INDIES, AND BRITISH GUIANA.

Paper read before the Board of Trade of the City of Toronto, by the

HON. JOHN MACDONALD.

*"The present and possible Commercial Relations between the Dominion
of Canada, the West Indies and British Guiana."*

JANUARY, 18, 1889.

W. D. MATTHEWS, PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN,

I observe from some press notices that the report I am about to read is styled a lecture upon my recent trip to the West India Islands and British Guiana. I am sorry that that impression should have been created, for the few remarks which I purpose making will not be worthy any such pretentious title; they will refer only to the openings which these islands present for an extended trade with our own country, a dry subject at best, affording but little opportunity for the play of fancy, and to other than business men as destitute of interest as of poetry.

I have no doubt that there are in this gathering those whose business or inclination have brought them to these lovely islands of the sea. For them nothing that I can say of their appearance, their products or their people, will be new; but there are others, and I am safe in saying, by far the greater number, who have not the slightest conception that within five or six days' journeying from our own city, there are islands so strangely beautiful, so wonderfully productive—islands where perpetual summer reigns, and where—while with us winter has asserted its power, has robbed the forest of its foliage, and the fields of their verdure, that amid them—the palm trees bend their graceful forms—oranges, limes, bananas, and sapodillas, and indeed every kind of tropical fruit surround the passer-by, while tropical flowers skirt every road-side, and border many of the great cane fields, whose delicate green with the feathery arrow of the cane rises and bends to every breeze, as do the waves of the sea; whose lofty mountain peaks rise to the height of 5000 or 6000 feet, and whose low lands present such pictures of loveliness, arising from their great fertility and marvellous vegetation, as are not to be surpassed on the face of the earth. It is under such circumstances that one realizes to some extent at least, the vastness and the power of the British Empire, as they