

International Trade of Canada

Trade Opportunities in the Caribbean

The Royal Bank of Canada has issued a booklet on "Canadian Trade Opportunities in the Caribbean" which will be of great value to Canadian exporters.

The first market dealt with is the British West Indies. Trade with this market has been greatly helped by an agreement arranged in 1913 giving most Canadian goods a tariff preference of 20 per cent. There is no question but that the time is ripe for greatly increased business with these islands. A notable increase has been shown for some years, particularly in flour.

Trinidad, the largest island, produces many things that Canada needs, notably asphalt, sugar, and coconuts. A few years ago Trinidad imported most of its flour from the United States, but since 1913 customs reports show an ever-increasing transference of this business to Canada. The sugar industry in Trinidad has lapsed for some years, but there is evidence of an increase owing to the demand of Canada and the British Isles.

Barbados is one of the most densely populated agricultural districts in the world and the greatest industry is sugar. For some years Canada has taken the bulk of the sugar and molasses so that there is already an intimate economic relationship. The sale of Canadian goods has increased from \$850,591 in 1914-15 to \$1,682,890 in 1917-18.

The Island of Grenada, with its neighbours St. Vincent and St. Lucia and other islands, form one colony. The chief products are cocoa, mace, nutmegs, and cloves. There has also been an increase in the number of lime orchards and in the growing of a very good quality of cotton—the Marie Galante. The exports of Grenada exceed the imports and this favorable balance of trade gives a greater purchasing power per capita than that of most other West Indian Islands. Canadian manufacturers have made no serious attempt to increase the trade. Flour is the chief commodity imported and salt fish, chiefly the lower grades of cod. Canned salmon is in increasing demand and when supplies can be had at a more reasonable price this trade will assume much greater proportion. Canadian cheese is preferred to American, but Danish butter is said to be superior to the Canadian in keeping qualities. There is a market for cordage, oats, paint, cement, shingles, brooms, brushes and matches.

Antigua is the seat of government of the colony of the Leeward Islands. It has enjoyed a period of great prosperity owing to the high prices of its chief products, sugar and cotton. In 1914 the value of its exports was \$680,720, and in 1916 \$1,796,949. This greater purchasing power was reflected in an increase of imports, made up of wheat, flour, cornmeal, fish, biscuits, boots and shoes, cotton goods, hardware, pine timber, soap and salt pork. Seventeen per cent of these imports were supplied by Canada which has more than doubled its sales in Antigua since 1914.

The Islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, with Anguilla, form the presidency, of which Basseterre on St. Kitts is the port and seat of government. Sugar is the principal export with Sea Island cotton second in importance. In 1917, 41 per cent of an export trade of \$2,000,444 and 19 per cent of an import trade of \$1,423,650 was conducted with Canada. There has been an increase in business of over 300 per cent since the reciprocity agreement in 1913. Flour and fish are the principal commodities sold to the islands, but there is considerable demand for canned fish, salted and pickled beef, hard biscuits, drugs, hardware, carts and wagons.

The Island of Dominica exports in various forms the products of limes. The total output in 1917 was valued at one million dollars and only 4 per cent was shipped directly to Canada, which in the same year imported through the United States as intermediary \$219,932 gallons of lime and other fruit juices. Notwithstanding the tariff preference in her favor, Canada now enjoys only 15 per cent of the trade with this island.

Montserrat one of the smallest of the Leeward chain, was for many years famous for its limes. Owing to the destruction of many trees by blight in recent years the output of lime juice has been greatly reduced. This, however, has been counterbalanced by the increase in the production of sea island cotton. The exports are almost entirely to Great Britain and the import trade during 1918 was about equally divided between the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. Not only is Montserrat a party to the preferential tariff agreement, but the only steamers calling are the Royal Mail boats to and from Halifax so that Canada has an exceptional opportunity.

Jamaica is the most important of the British West Indies and has a great variety of products. On the higher elevations coffee, pimento, and ginger are grown, while sugar, cocoa, tobacco, coconuts, bananas, oranges and grapefruit thrive on the lowlands. If steamship facilities with cold storage equipment could be provided, a larger proportion of the fruits exported might be provided, a larger proportion of the fruits exported might be marketed in Canada. The foreign trade of the Islands for 1918 broke all records. Among the things that will be required by Jamaica are wheat, flour, corn, crackers, fresh meats, canned meats, beef extracts, fish (dried or salted), butter, cheese and condensed milk. The inauguration of direct steamship facilities with Jamaica by the Canadian Government Merchant Marine should greatly stimulate trade between the two countries and the opportunity for sales in Jamaica would be increased if she reciprocated the tariff preference granted her by the Dominion in 1913.

The Bahamas produce many fruits and vegetables peculiar to the tropics, including grapefruit, pineapples, early tomatoes and strawberries. The abundance of sponges and conchs yielded by the surrounding seas make up the bulk of the exports. The imports, mainly clothing and foodstuffs, should provide an opportunity for Canadian exports as only 2 per cent were supplied by Canada in 1918. There is every opportunity with good steamship communication for Canadian merchants to do a large business made up of small orders and increase the sales by Canadian merchants of flour, oats, hay, butter, cheese, canned meats, and fish, potatoes, salted lake and codfish, spurs, lumber, shingles, and matches.

The French West Indies, made up of Martinique, and Guadeloupe, present an opportunity to the Canadian exporter as they have been absolutely neglected in the past.

With Cuba there does not seem to be very much opportunity because under a reciprocity treaty of 1902, the United States exporter on a number of specified articles gets a reduction varying from 25 to 40 per cent and the United States gives Cuba a reduction of 20 per cent off all the ordinary duties with the exception of tobacco.

The Island of Haiti has in the past done no business with Canada, but there seems to be no reason why we should not compete successfully in Haitian markets in flour, salted fish, beer, dairy products, lumber and other commodities.

The Dominican Republic has a soil that is nat-

urally rich and productive, but internal strife and poor government for years retarded all progress. Agricultural production is increasing and during the past seven years the foreign trade of the Republic was more than doubled. In some years nearly the whole of the sugar crop has been consigned to Halifax, St. John, and Montreal refineries. The 1918-19 crop was practically all contracted for by the Canada Food Board. Very little of the growing import trade has been shared by Canada, but with regular steamship communication she could hope to compete favorably.

Among the Central American trade opportunities none are more important than British Guiana. This colony is potentially one of Britain's richest tropical possessions. The principal products are Demarra sugar, rum and molasses all named from the principal province. Of late years rice culture has become one of the great industries of the country, and from being a heavy importer of this commodity, British Guiana now exports large quantities. A substance known as balata, — a product intermediate between gutta percha and rubber—is exported in large quantities. The rubber industry has outgrown the experimental stage, but still needs the introduction of more capital and labor to put it on a firm and successful basis. Business with Canada has increased remarkably since the Reciprocity Agreement went into effect and the Dominion now occupies second place in the aggregate trade.

Vancouver Shipbuilding.

J. Coughlan & Sons have contracts for two new 8,100 ton steel ships. Keels for these boats will be laid the latter part of May.

Owing to the shortage of coal, the two new boats will be arranged for the use of oil as well as coal. This is the only change from the specifications which are the same as for the four steamers now being finished by this same firm.

J. Coughlan & Sons had a most successful launching when the first Canadian Mercantile Marine ss. Canadian Importer slid down the ways. The "Canadian Importer" has a dead weight capacity of 8,100 tons, is 400 feet long, 52 feet beam and 31 feet depth.

The B.C. Marine, Limited, had a successful launching on December 20th, when the wooden boat "Capilano" slipped into the water. The "Capilano" is 145 ft. long, 27 ft. beam, 10 ft. mould depth. The owners are the Union Steamship Company of British Columbia and the "Capilano" will be used as a daylight excursion boat. Mr. Innes Hopkins, manager of the B.C. Marine, Ltd., states that this is not the last boat to be launched from their yards, as they expect new orders shortly.

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