

Subject.....Premier Bruce's visit.....

Date...Dec...12, 1923..... Publication.....Montreal Star.....

EXPECT BENEFIT FROM BRUCE VISIT

Trade Treaty With Australia Likely to Be Again Mooted

OTTAWA, Dec. 12. — (Canadian Press).—When Premier Bruce of Australia comes to Ottawa in January, it is expected that negotiations over the abortive trade treaty between Canada and Australia will be resumed.

About a year ago, Hon. J. A. Robb, then Minister of Trade and Commerce, paid a special visit to Australia with a view to negotiating a trade treaty. At the time, as at present, Australia and Newfoundland were the only two large British possessions remaining outside the British preferential rates of the Canadian customs tariff. Canada offered her British preferential tariff to Australia in return for the preference Australia gives to Great Britain. Some difficulties arose owing to the fact that when Mr. Robb reached Australia, a general election was in progress. Furthermore, it was stated, British traders raised a certain amount of opposition. In any event, no treaty was concluded.

"We offered" Hon. W. S. Fielding, Minister of Finance, explained in the House last session, "to exchange our preferential tariff for their preferential tariff without qualifications. They claimed that they were not good enough for them. They would give us as good terms as they granted to any other country, but they would not give us the same treatment as they granted to Great Britain." As an attraction, Mr. Fielding in his last budget proposed to give raisins and dried currants free entry to Canada under the British preferential tariff and to raise the duty under the intermediate and general tariffs from 2-3 cents per pound to three cents per pound.

The new duty was approved by Parliament with the provision that it should become effective only after publication of an order-in-council, it being understood that the order-in-council would be passed when the treaty was concluded.

"The Canadian Government" Premier Bruce subsequently told the Australian House of Representatives "will not grant a preference to Australian dried fruit unless the whole of the requests it has submitted are agreed to. At the present moment, the Commonwealth Government does not see its way to accede to all the requests the Canadian Government is putting forward and unless we can find some basis of compromise I am afraid it will be impossible to deal with the dried fruit question separately."

Thus far, the treaty has not been concluded. Possibly, however, the forthcoming visit of Mr. Bruce will result in the "basis of compromise," to which he referred.

It is worthy of note that during the recent visit of Dominion Premiers to London, South African representatives broached the possibility of South Africa taking advantage of the proposed new Canadian duties on dried fruits.