

I think it cannot be contended that in any case these are protective duties. They are not designed to exclude the products of Canada, or indeed to exclude the products of any country, but those people find that the necessities of their revenue oblige them to tax food products very heavily. Therefore, as I said a moment ago, were we to apply too rigidly the principle of our preferential tariff to those colonies, I am inclined to think we could not properly admit them to the benefit of that tariff. Nevertheless, in view of the condition of affairs which exists there to-day, in view of our own desire to extend our trade relations with the West Indies, in view of the difficulties which are presented in the treatment of the question by Her Majesty's Government, and with a desire to assist in some small and modest way in working out these great and difficult problems, we propose that without waiting for anything further, without demanding concessions from our West India friends which their needs might not allow them to grant, without insisting upon a rigid compliance with the conditions, we propose, after the first day of August, when the treaties expire, and when we can give full play to our policy of preferential trade, to extend that policy to all the British colonies in the West Indies.

The principal imports to be expected from the West Indies will of course be sugar, but we may expect other things, and notably fruits. On the other hand, we should be able largely to increase our sales of Canadian products to those islands. The maritime provinces have long carried on a trade with those islands, chiefly in fish and lumber, though other products have been sold as well. If we increase our purchases of West India sugars, as we hope to do, there is no reason to doubt that our exports in these lines will be increased. But, Sir, we do not think this trade should be confined to the maritime provinces; there does not seem to be any reason why the products of the province of Ontario and the great west should not find a large market in the West Indies. If we look into the statistics of the islands we will find that the West Indies are large consumers of food products such as we raise in Canada, but we find that the bulk of those products are being received from the United States. My hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce says, through the United States. There is something in that point; but I think the great bulk of the food products for the West Indies are the products of the United States as well as having been shipped from the United States. There does not seem to be any good reason why the flour, cheese, bacon, ham, lard, butter, and the various articles which the farmers of Ontario and the west produce could not have as fair a chance of sale in the markets of the West Indies as similar products from the United States. There has been a difficulty in the

past, I think, through lack of attention to these markets. Sometimes a merchant, with an unsaleable stock, thinks it a very simple thing to dump it on the West Indies market, and then he complains that he has not made any money on it. You cannot do business in the West Indies or anywhere else in that way. Our producers must realize that in order to sell their goods in the West Indies they must ascertain the conditions of the market and adapt themselves to these conditions. But surely there is no reason why the farmers and merchants of Canada cannot adapt themselves to those markets just as well as the farmers and merchants of the United States. We believe if care be taken to investigate the market, if care be taken in collecting the right articles as to quality, in sending them out at the proper time and in the manner of packing them, taking care that the quality is what the West Indian market wants and the style of package is what is required, there is a fair chance of very considerable extension of Canadian trade in that quarter. For some years we have had two steamship lines running to the West Indies; one from Halifax to Jamaica, and the other from St. John and Halifax to Georgetown, Demerara, which is on the mainland of South America. But the line from Halifax and St. John down to Demerara is by a route involving so many ports of call that by the time the destination is reached the voyage is a very long one, and the importers at the distant points claim they have not the same opportunity to trade with Canada as with the United States. It is very desirable, if it can be accomplished, and though we have no proposal to make on the subject to-day we hope something of the kind will be brought about, that a quick and direct line from Canada, not calling at all these way ports, but calling at Barbadoes, Trinidad and British Guiana, may be established. If attention be given to this trade in the way suggested, we have a strong hope, from inquiries made, that a very considerable trade will be built up in that direction. Whether we are successful in doing so or not, one thing is certain, namely, that the present condition of the West Indies and the Canadian West India trade demands that some effort should be made on these lines, and we think the best we can do for the people of the West Indies is to say: We will give you the benefit of our preferential tariff, without bargain or anything else, and we do not expect you to make very great concessions to us; but if any means can be devised whereby obstacles to Canadian trade can be removed in that quarter, we have no doubt that you, our brother colonists, will meet us in the same spirit as we desire to meet you.

There is another direction in which we think we can do a little to help the people of the West Indies. The present method