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WEST INDIA TRADE.

Writing on the subject of West India trade to the *Montreal Witness*, Mr. John Fulton dwells upon the anomaly of Canadian products "filtering through a United States medium, becoming American goods." He says he has been in every West Indian island, and has sought to know why Canadian products are not all imported direct. He was answered that till very recently there was no direct steam communication, and that even when started was so irregular and inefficient that it had no appreciable effect in promoting trade with Canada. "Then, again, we have not the middle man, the enterprising commission merchant, who would travel through these islands, take orders for anything and everything, charter and ship, if desired, and ship in bulks, thus saving the merchant both expense and trouble of either going himself or sending a buyer, and who is ready to dispose of any return cargo, be it sugar, molasses, cocoa, or scrap iron." Then Mr. Fulton thinks that our geographical position militates against us, Halifax being at least two days longer from any portion of the West Indies than New York.

A NOVEL PLAN TO INCREASE EXPORTS.

The Government of France is proposing a somewhat radical method of increasing the foreign trade of that country. The four or five largest mercantile houses of Paris, and among them le Louvre, le Bon Marche, le Printemps, have taken initiatory steps for establishing branches abroad. The places in which such offices are to be established are Shanghai, Yokohama, Bombay, Alexandria, Sofia, and Colombo. By the establishment of such stores, which attend to the immediate disposal of goods, it is supposed will yield better results than by exports sent to domestic houses. Every imaginable support is to be rendered by the French Government. These branches will not sell all the numerous articles which fill the premises of the Parisian firms, but it is definitely understood that the branches of the large houses mentioned will sell only French goods in their branch establishments, this principle having to be kept in view from the beginning. It is impossible to say what developments might occur if this plan of trading were extended to Canada and the United States. The great retail establishments of France and of the United Kingdom might find it advantageous to extend their operations to certain foreign countries where the prestige of their name would prove of great service, but such operations must be destructive to domestic undertakings.

—A despatch of Monday last from Bakou, on the Peninsula of Apsheron, on the west coast of the Caspian Sea, a centre of the great oil-producing regions in European Russia, says that a petroleum spring at Romany, a suburb of Bakou, caught fire the previous night. The fire spread quickly to other springs in the vicinity until the whole valley was a sea of flame. A St. Petersburg cable of Tuesday says the losses are enormous, and the fires are still burning. Four springs and twenty-three bore holes have been destroyed, as well as several magazines and houses,

DAVID A. PENDER,

(Late of Foster & Pender)

Accountant, Auditor, Assignee,

28 Wellington St. East,

Toronto.

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