

for its solution by Parliament. Mr. Solomon, who has for many years taken an active part in Jamaica politics, has recently visited Ottawa, after conferring in London with the High Commissioner, his avowed object being to obtain information as to the prospect of the Island of Jamaica being admitted into the Canadian Dominion. There is no concealment as to the reason for this movement. Whatever may be the cause, sugar, the staple export of the West Indian Colonies, has become seriously depreciated in value, owing to the competition of the product of the beet. Persistent efforts have been made by the sugar planters to induce Great Britain to impose duties on beet sugar to countervail the bounty allowed on exportation by foreign Governments, but these having failed it has been avowed by the West India Committee that it is a matter of life or death for them to find some market for their staple product.

It must be borne in mind that all the West India Colonies are in the same position, and that British Guiana, Trinidad and Barbados are fully as deserving of consideration as Jamaica, if indeed Canada is to be called on to make sacrifices in what will probably prove a vain attempt to relieve West India distress. Mr. Solomon's recent movement seems to require explanation. It is but a few days since he was in London, taking part in a conference with the Secretary of State, the object of which was to benefit all the British West India Colonies. Long before that conference there had been rumors that Jamaica desired to negotiate on its own account with Canada, and it must be obvious that, if it should succeed in its object, the other Colonies would have just ground of complaint that such a marked preference was manifested towards Jamaica, the Colony which is in the least prosperous condition. This, however, is a matter which will doubtless be carefully considered by the Imperial authorities, which must be a party to any action on the part of Jamaica, and will, moreover, in all probability, be called on to consider the question of discriminating duties if an attempt should be made by Canada to impose them.

As a matter of course, Mr. Solomon has been interviewed and we find reports, both in the *Ottawa Free Press* and the *Toronto Globe*, of his utterances. Both journals represent Mr. Solomon as having stated that Sir Charles Tupper was favorably disposed to Union, while both admit that the members of the Cabinet with whom Mr. Solomon had interviews were studious in avoiding any expression of

opinion whatever. We venture to hazard the opinion that Sir Charles Tupper gave no encouragement whatever to Mr. Solomon's project. We think, moreover, that Mr. Solomon has very much exaggerated what Lord Derby said at the interview, which we may further remark applied to the Colonies generally, and not to Jamaica alone. Mr. Solomon pointed out the advantages to Canada, which were that Jamaica would take Canadian fish, lumber, etc., free of duty. What absurdity! At present lumber and fish are taken to as great an extent as they would be, and the small revenue duty imposed, is paid by the Jamaica consumer. The same remark applies to the other Colonies.

Of course the advantage to Jamaica is sufficiently obvious. Sugar, which now pays about 50 per cent duty, would be free, but then, as the other British Colonies, to say nothing of the French and Spanish, would have still to pay the high duty it would follow that Jamaica would have a monopoly, at the cost of the Canadian consumers. True, it may be said, sugar would be cheaper, but it would be even cheaper still if the duties were abolished on all sugars. Free sugar, even from Jamaica, would cause a serious reduction in revenue of nearly three millions in amount, and would completely ruin our refineries, which have been established in reliance on the good faith of the Government. Mr. Solomon confessed frankly that, "in studying this sugar question, he had considered the interests of Canadian consumers of sugar, rather than refiners." We may, however, point out that he has considered the interests of Jamaica sugar planters rather than those of Barbados, British Guiana, Trinidad, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Porto Rico, Cuba and Brazil. It may be very questionable how far Canada can afford to go in the direction of free importation of sugar, but it seems clear that her interest is to put all the sugar colonies on the same footing.

Mr. Solomon was doubtless questioned closely as to the tariff, for the *Globe* reports him as saying that the high duties on cottons, woollens, etc., "would be found burdensome in Jamaica," and he intimated that "a modification of the tariff might be agreed on as a basis of Union." And so the famous N. P. is to be sacrificed in order to bring into the Federation, Jamaica and its population of 444,188 negroes, 107,946 mulattoes, 12,240 coolies, and 14,432 whites. Another opinion launched by Mr. Solomon, in reply to a question as to the mode of making up "the probable loss of revenue," was that there should be "direct

taxation." Mr. Solomon seemed to think that if Canada would not accept the proposed alliance the United States would have no difficulty. There is one extraordinary statement in the *Globe*, which we venture to assert is a gross blunder on the part either of Mr. Solomon or the reporter. He is reported to have said that "the rum sold in Canada had not only to pay the excise tax of 8s. a gal., but the Canadian customs duty as well." It is the invariable rule to export rum in bond free of excise tax, in all the West India Colonies.

While we observe with satisfaction that the *Montreal Gazette* is not favorable to the admission of Jamaica to the federation, we regret to notice that he advocates reciprocity. Canada has nothing to gain by reciprocity with the West Indies. They cannot take more of our products than they do at present, the duties on which are all strictly for revenue and paid by the consumers. It would be an act of supreme folly for our Parliament to tetter itself by engaging to receive sugar duty free, or at nominal duties, and especially if those duties were to be discriminatory against other tropical countries, all of which are at present receiving our exports on the most favorable terms. Whatever our policy may be, it should be uniform to all tropical colonies, British, French, Spanish and Brazil. We shall only remark, in conclusion, that reciprocity with the West Indies would not benefit Canada, and as to Mr. Solomon's proposal a wilder scheme was never imagined, unless, indeed, it be Imperial Federation.

CANADA LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The report of the Canada Life Assurance Company, which was presented at the annual meeting held at Hamilton on the 23rd inst., and which will be found elsewhere in our columns, is eminently satisfactory, even for a company which has had the merit of habitually exhibiting similar results. The addition to the assets at the close of the year was \$664,709 an amount exceeding the aggregate of the payments. The new assurances during the year amounted to \$4,144,029, while the total amount of outstanding risks was \$32,252,126. The assets were increased to a larger amount than in any former year. In moving the adoption of the report the President, Mr. A. G. Ramsay, made some interesting statements as to the percentage of expenses to the income of the Canada Life compared with other companies, and also as to the cost of insurance. These will be found in the report and it will be seen that under both heads the Canada Life compares favorably with its numerous rivals. We regret that the late hour when we received the report prevents us from giving a more extended notice.