

Was there ever in the history of bread-stuffs such a manifest hurry to be "off to market," even when wheat was up to \$1.50 and \$2.00 per bushel? Never. No sooner did Brother Jonathan understand that other countries than his own had plenty of wheat to sell, then he "hurried up," and let his cargoes slide, on orders when he could get them, and on consignment when he couldn't; and not to be outdone in the keenness of the competitive struggle he is actually underselling English and foreign wheat, in the shape of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, and Missouri flour, his only regret being that he did not do it before. The price of wheat is beginning to be regarded in its true light, apart from that confusion of ideas existing in the minds of many until very recently, and which failed to comprehend that wheat was selling at its proper value because it had previously commanded much higher rates. Ruined speculators now understand the terrible cost of attempting to violate the natural law of supply and demand, but it is very dubitable if the lesson thus taught them will prove a salutary one. Speculation in wheat is not dead, but is merely latent, and will flash into life again upon the first occasion calculated to stir its impulse. The visible supply of wheat in Canada and the United States has been augmented by nearly 2,000,000 bushels, being now up to 36,000,000 bushels.

#### THE WEST INDIAN QUESTION.

Nothing can be more unfair than the systematic attempts which have been made by the Opposition press to create an impression on the public mind that the Dominion Ministers, and especially the Premier, Sir John A. Macdonald, are favorable to the annexation of the Island of Jamaica to the Canadian Dominion. The discussion of the Jamaica question is quite premature. All that is known is that Mr. Solomon, who it may be presumed is a gentleman of local influence in Jamaica, during a recent visit to England broached a scheme of annexing that Colony to Canada, and that on his return home he visited Ottawa, with the view of ascertaining, if possible, what probability there was of its being entertained by the Canadian Government. It is a matter of notoriety that Mr. Solomon was much disappointed at finding that he could not obtain any information whatever as to the views of the Canadian Government; Sir John A. Macdonald acted precisely as a prudent statesman would have done under the circumstances, which was simply to decline to discuss the subject

with one, who had no credentials, and who was wholly unauthorized to make any proposition whatever. Mr. Solomon was, we have heard, informed of the proper course to be followed if any proposition should be thought expedient. Jamaica is a Crown Colony, and its Legislature would have, in the event of its seeking a constitutional change, to apply in the first instance to the Secretary of State, requesting the intervention of the Imperial Government to propose the desired change, which it is highly probable might not meet its approbation. At all events the proposed change must pass the ordeal of the Imperial Government and of the Jamaica Legislature before it can be offered for the consideration of the Canadian Cabinet.

The question, looking at it from a West Indian point of view and without reference to Canada, is surrounded with difficulties. It is tolerably well known that Jamaica is not the only West Indian Colony desirous of a closer connection with Canada. The group of Islands known as the Leeward Islands of which Antigua is the most important, would join as readily as Jamaica, as may be learned from a published letter from Mr. Berkley, one of the officials of that Island. It has long been known that Barbadoes is most anxious to be annexed to Canada, and that on the least encouragement it would take the necessary steps to formulate its wishes. Of the various Islands Jamaica is clearly the one that it is least desirable for Canada to be connected with, while, if it were thought desirable to annex a single West India Colony, Barbadoes would have much to recommend it.

Pending the receipt of further information it may be well to consider the question as an Imperial Minister will have to do. That the West India Colonies are all discontented, owing to the abnormally low price of sugar, is a fact that is undisputed. All have remonstrated through their London general committee and have demanded the adoption of a new fiscal policy, which they doubtless believe would afford them relief, but which there is reason to fear would be absolutely useless. The question, however, is how far the Imperial Government would deem it sound policy to single out one out of a group of some fifteen Colonies, and to annex it to a Colony like Canada, which has adopted a tariff that is prohibitory of several descriptions of British manufactures which are at present consumed in Jamaica. This is far from the only difficulty. The avowed object of Jamaica is to procure a market for its sugar free of duty, the effect of which would be to dis-

criminate against the sugars of the other British and Foreign Colonies. It would most assuredly be looked on with disfavor by Spain, with which country our High Commissioner has been engaged in negotiating a treaty. We have not referred to the very important subject of defence. People in Canada have got but a slight idea of the responsibilities entailed on the Imperial Government in connection with the defence of their Colonies. We can scarcely doubt that, in the event of Jamaica seeking a new constitution, and if minor difficulties were removed, the Imperial Government would insist on being relieved from all further responsibility for its foreign relations. It is but a year or two ago that a case occurred of a seizure of a foreign ship by the Jamaica Government which ultimately, not being sustained, led to a bill of costs. The Imperial Government directed that this charge should be defrayed by Jamaica, as was reasonable and proper, but Mr. Solomon and others protested strongly that it should be borne by the Imperial Government. This case led to much dissatisfaction. We own that we fail to comprehend any conceivable object that Canada could have in annexing such an island as Jamaica with the certainty of giving mortal offence to all her other customers. Can it be imagined that if Jamaica sugars were admitted duty free and heavy duties imposed on those from other colonies the latter would not retaliate by imposing discriminating duties on all Canadian exports? The subject is one requiring the gravest consideration but it is premature to discuss it, and quite unfair to impute to Sir John A. Macdonald a desire to support it.

#### THE SUGAR BOUNTY QUESTION.

There is probably no higher authority in regard to statistics than Mr. Robert Giffen, the ex-president of the Royal Statistical Society. Those who differ most widely in opinion with Mr. Giffen on his theoretical views on the subject of Free Trade will readily admit that he is quite incapable of misrepresenting facts, and must therefore attach great weight to the conclusion at which he has arrived on the subject of the late serious depression in the price of sugar. That depression has been felt so severely in the sugar producing colonies in the West Indies as to have led to urgent representations to the Imperial Government to adopt measures to neutralize the effect of the bounty, allowed by Germany, France and other States on the export of sugars; and, on the failure of those representations, to an agitation for