

dustry, and in its bearing on the needs of the future, it affords abundant further opportunities for research. Even when chemistry has only a partial, although important, part to play in what are, otherwise, mechanical or metallurgical processes, the opportunities are large. For instance, some of our common plants, and weeds of the wayside, capable of extensive cultivation, may yet furnish fibres of a fine grade suitable for high-class paper, or for use directly for, or mixture with, silk goods, or for

mixture with wool to give a closer texture and a more attractive and warmer material than the present union goods. The discovery would be very important if, by some chemical or mechanical process, or both, the curl which is characteristic of sheep's wool, and which chiefly gives rise to the warmth of woollen material, by creating air interspaces everywhere with similar effect to that of the double window, could be communicated to any other sort of hair or fibre which is available in quantity.

CANADA AND WEST INDIES

Transportation Facilities Must Be Improved—Halifax and St. John

Editor, *The Monetary Times*:—

Sir,—The subject of closer commercial relations between Canada, the British West Indies and contiguous British territory—a reference to which appeared in a recent issue of *The Monetary Times*—is an opportune one for consideration at any time, and particularly now that Britishers everywhere should be arranging their post-war trade programmes. So far as Canada and the British West Indies are concerned, each country has commodities the other needs and which could be exchanged with mutual profit.

It was this feeling of mutual interest which led to the extension in 1913 of Canada's preferential tariff to the British West Indies and to the adjoining colony of British Guiana. Under this tariff there has been an increased development of trade between Canada and the British West Indies, but this has been comparatively small. If our manufacturers and shippers were thoroughly alive to the importance of their West India trade connection, and the necessary transportation facilities were available, it would be much larger.

During the fiscal year 1917, the exports from Canada to the British West Indies amounted to \$5,179,083, as compared with \$4,134,901 in 1916. Imports from the islands showed a much greater increase the figures for 1917 being \$14,239,595, as against \$6,354,991 in 1916.

Exports and Imports.

An analysis of the export figures shows increases in coal, codfish, herring, planks and boards, butter, canned or condensed cream and milk, flour, cereals, potatoes, clothing, cordage, drugs, fertilizers, glassware, rubber tires, boots and shoes, nails, steel manufactures, harness leather, paper, paints, ships, trunks, automobiles and household furniture, while there was a decrease in meats, pork, mackerel, pickled fish, salmon, scantling, staves, oats, peas, biscuits, brooms, oil cake, parts of automobiles and carriages and manufactures of wood.

In the matter of imports from the West Indies, increases are noted in beans, cocoanuts, cocoa, coffee extract, feathers, package fruits, honey, lime juice, sponges, nutmegs, sugar, syrups, vegetables, wax, cocoa beans, dyeing articles, drugs and old copper, the decreases being chiefly noticeable in molasses, salt, hides, oranges and grape fruit, bark extracts and crude lime juice.

The Barbados Advocate, in discussing improved commercial relations with Canada in a recent issue, remarked that:—

"It cannot be too strongly pointed out that this one market, that of the British West Indies, is comparatively close at hand, is waiting for further development, and possesses these direct advantages that the merchants there (in Canada) are strongly desirous of having more extensive and closer relations with us, and that, already, throughout these colonies there are active branches of two leading Canadian banks, ready to assist with information and banking facilities in developing our trade."

Transportation Facilities.

The same paper declares that these advantages would be futile if they were not linked with such transportation conditions as more frequent and quick steamship services between near Canadian ports and the British West Indies, fast through freight services with Canadian business centres timed to meet the arrival and departure of the steamships, and through freight rates and charges between the West Indies and Montreal and Toronto via a Canadian port not exceed-

ing those via New York and Boston. There must also be cold storage facilities, cool, ventilated accommodation, especially for fruits, in both steamships and cars, rapid sailings and prompt handling of cargoes.

These results can be obtained only by the utilization to the fullest extent of the advantages possessed by the Canadian ports of Halifax and St. John. Both ports are open the whole year round. Both have close connection with central Canadian points, St. John having two transcontinental lines, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian Government Railway, while Halifax has the Canadian Government Railway. There is practically little difference in the ocean distances between Halifax and St. John and the West India Islands, Halifax having the advantage in the run to Bermuda of 21 miles. Against this, St. John has a decided advantage in the matter of land haul, by both transcontinental lines. By the Canadian Pacific, the rail and ocean mileage, from Montreal to Bermuda via St. John is 1,254 miles, while via Halifax and the Canadian Government Railway it is 1,588 miles. If the Canadian Government Railway line via Moncton were employed, St. John would still have a considerable advantage in the rail haul. This advantage will be increased with the completion of the Valley Railway connection with the government transcontinental line.

A recent bulletin from the trade commissioner at Barbados shows that in the shipment north of the molasses crop of 1917, a much larger proportion came via St. John than via Halifax. In other commodities, no doubt, Halifax excelled St. John.

St. John and Halifax.

In any scheme for increased development of West India and contiguous trade, which may be exploited after the war, the ports of St. John and Halifax must be considered together. Neither St. John nor Halifax would be satisfied with anything less. Whether the increased development scheme would be covered by an alternate direct service from and to the ports of St. John or Halifax by the Royal Mail Steam Packet line, or a direct service by either the Canadian Pacific Railway or the Canadian Government Railway, or both, are matters for future determination. There is no doubt that considering the short railway haul a direct Canadian Pacific Railway steamship line from St. John via Bermuda to the West India Islands and contiguous British territory in South America would be a most attractive one to Montreal and Upper Canadian shippers, and would greatly facilitate trade in the directions indicated.

What is more particularly needed at this moment is the concentration of the business thought of Canada upon the possibilities of these trade connections for Canadian manufacturers and shippers. The more publicity that can be given to this matter the better. Geography can be relied upon to furnish the balance of the argument.

Yours, etc.,

R. E. ARMSTRONG.

St. John, N.B., March 12th, 1918.

ANOTHER PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT LOAN

Another provincial government loan will be offered next week, the amount probably being \$1,000,000. The prospectus is in preparation. So far this year \$6,630,000 of Canadian provincial bonds have been successfully floated, at prices yielding the investor from 6 to 6½ per cent. The provinces thus accommodated are Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Ontario. In the entire year 1917, the provinces borrowed only \$6,382,500. Next week's loan will bring this year's total of provincial bond sales to \$7,630,000.