

"A large volume of Canadian productions reaches the West Indies by foreign steamers *via* foreign ports. This circumstance while it may be viewed, from a Canadian standpoint, with a certain degree of humiliation, has its interested aspect to the West Indies, in the enhancement of cost undoubtedly entailed by indirect transportation.

Our American neighbors are active and most enterprising, and they have not been slow to observe the signs of the times. We see evidences of this in the numerous steamship lines of various nationalities trading to their ports, and affording rapid business avenues throughout the West Indies. They have discarded the old-fashioned ways, and as a result are largely monopolizing the trade. In order to increase their business in the Tropics, they are pursuing methods which are recognized to be absolutely necessary to success in many branches of trade; and however novel it may appear in connection with the article of fish that commercial travellers should be employed in procuring orders, American fish firms are thus represented in the West Indies, and even in this Island I have conversed with a special fish agent, who informed me that he was doing a large business, and that dealers were being put in the way of having their regular wants supplied in a regular manner.

"The important commercial treaty concluded by England with Spain, which came into operation last October, gives Canada the advantage of exporting to the Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico under a reduction from the old rates of duty of about 25 per cent. The inquiry of the undersigned has, under instructions, been directed to the establishment of communication between Canada and other parts of the West Indies besides Jamaica, and it will be for your Honorable Chamber to consider, in the event of your expressing a willingness to join in aiding the enterprise by a subsidy, how far direct trade with Canada may be united with a service to your neighbors of Cuba.

"To give the steamship route what was considered to be a good commercial basis, the undersigned has suggested that the Ports of Havana, Kingston and Santiago be united in one itinerancy, in a service embodying two steamers of 1,000 tons each, maintaining a speed to average not less than 11 knots per hour, and which after getting into working order, should be able to keep up a fortnightly communication; a third ship to be added as business developed, and in order to ensure regular service.

"I believe there is a desire in official circles for a mail service between Jamaica and Turks Island. To embrace Turks Island in the route mentioned would be to disturb the plan essentially, and this phase of the subject ought to receive grave consideration. Jamaica having, in a marked manner, manifested a desire for closer intercourse with Canada, the greatest weight would doubtless be given to whatever resolution your Honorable Chamber may come to, and I feel safe in assuring you that to develop the trade between Canada and Jamaica by ensuring your hearty co-operation was one of the leading considerations that led to this mission; it having been pointed out that through the medium of the Cunard line an extended business was gradually developing, the loss of which was felt as a mutual inconvenience.

"The annual foreign trade of Canada as represented by her imports and exports aggregates about \$200,000,000, which in 1885 amounted with the United States to 46 per cent., with England 42 per cent., with the West Indies 3 per cent.; the small remainder being divided among several other countries.

"In order to convey to you some idea of the capabilities of the country, to have closer relations with which I am humbly endeavoring to draw your attention, and to indicate what possibilities may be in the future, I will state a few facts. In 1875 Canada had 4,826 miles of railway. In 1885, 10,150 miles. The number of passengers carried in 1885 was 9,672,599 against 5,190,416 in 1875. The quantity of freight in 1885, 14,659,271 tons, against 5,670,836 tons in 1875, and the gross earnings \$32,227,469 against \$19,470,539. Quoting from the Canadian handbook, I find the following:—"It was a remarkable commercial incident that the first car of ordinary merchandize consigned to British Columbia was a cargo of Jamaica sugar refined at Halifax and sent overland to the Pacific terminus nearly 4,000 miles in one stretch under the flag of Great Britain."