

to inquire into the condition of the British West India colonies. That commission was composed of General Sir Henry Norman, Chairman, Sir David Barbour and Sir Edward Grey. These gentlemen made a very exhaustive inquiry into the condition of the West Indies, and they reached conclusions, some of which were unanimous, and some of which were matters of division. It was agreed that the financial position of the West Indies was so embarrassed that the Imperial Government would have to grant aid in the way of loans and grants for public works, and that, I may say, is being done at this moment by measures which are before the Imperial Parliament. The chairman of the commission, Sir Henry Norman, went further. He claimed that they were not likely to be successful in dealing with the West India question unless they were prepared to adopt a policy of countervailing duties, that is to say, that wherever a continental nation granted a bounty upon its beet sugar, there should be a countervailing duty upon that sugar if imported into Great Britain. That subject has been very much discussed in Great Britain. I do not think the advocates of countervailing duties there are very numerous, but they are certainly very intelligent, able and influential, and an impression existed in the minds of many people that Her Majesty's Government would yield to the recommendation of Sir Henry Norman and establish countervailing duties. However, any doubt that might have existed on that score has been removed of late by a speech delivered at Liverpool by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain. In that speech he indicated that the British Government were not prepared to accept the remedy of countervailing duties, but that they would seek in other ways to assist the position of the West Indies. I have already stated that measures are before the Imperial Parliament now to give aid in the shape of grants and loans for public works. It is also the desire of Her Majesty's Government to assist the West Indies in other ways. Efforts are be-

ing made to induce the West India people in some of the islands to give up the growing of sugar, and devote their attention to other products which it is thought the islands will successfully produce and no doubt something will be done in that direction. While the production of sugar has been steadily falling off, the production of other articles, chiefly fruits, has been very largely extended. Still, sugar is and must be the chief product of the West Indies for the present and for a long time to come; and unless there can be a profitable market for the sugar of the West Indies, I am afraid there is not very much hope of the relief which the West Indies desire being obtained. Knowing as we do that Her Majesty's Government are following this question very closely, knowing that they are dealing with a serious problem in the face of many difficulties, it has occurred to us that, as the West Indies are our natural market, as they are British colonies, though far away in one respect, colonies with which we have close relations, that we have some Imperial responsibilities in this matter—it has occurred to us that we should be willing in a small way to lend a helping hand to those colonies in the sunny south. If we adhere too rigidly to the underlying feature of our preferential tariff, I am afraid we shall have to admit that the terms of the tariffs of the West Indies are not favourable to us, and perhaps we could not by a mere reciprocal clause extend the preferential tariff to the West Indies.

We have examined the tariff of the West Indies, and we find that while they are high tariffs to a considerable extent, they are in no sense protective tariffs. The duties imposed are largely on food products, and these, as we can well understand, are the very things that Canada might hope to sell. I have here a statement which I shall summarize, if my hon. friends will permit me to do so, showing the operation of these West India tariffs on some of the chief products of Canada: