

and beautiful in our scenery, but that is not enough. Such scenery implies artists, and it is something to know that already the existence of a distinctively Canadian school has been recognized by those authorized to speak on the subject. There is another point worthy of mention. One of the charms of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was the beautiful display of paintings of Canadian wild flowers by Mrs. C. P. Traill, sister, and Mrs. Colonel Chamberlin, daughter, of Mrs. Moodie. It covered four large screens, and comprised 250 plates of wild flowers. In Western Canada there is a flora of peculiar beauty, and the roses of British Columbia, some exuberant types of which have been shown in our engravings, would be well worthy of the higher class of illustration. Our fauna has never yet, we believe, been worthily dealt with in art, nor has Mr. Montague Chamberlain's book of birds found its Canadian Bewick. In sculpture, decorative and industrial art, architectural design and engraving Canada should also give our West Indian fellow-colonists some examples of her originality and skill.

Every now and then the desirability of appointing a permanent Railway Commission for dealing with questions arising between companies and for inquiring into grievances suffered by the public at the hands of the railway authorities is urged by some portion of the press. The accident at Lachine has once more suggested to some of our contemporaries the need of such a commission. In August, 1886, a commission consisting of Sir A. T. Galt (chairman) and Messrs. Collingwood Schreiber, George Moberly and F. R. Burpee, was appointed to consider the "advisability of creating a commission with power to determine matters in dispute between railway corporations, and generally to regulate the system of railway management in its relations to the commerce of the country." The commission was also to inquire into the expediency of having a general railway law for the construction of railways instead of special charters. After making inquiries as to the systems in vogue in Great Britain, the United States and other countries, and collecting data as to the course of railway legislation at home and abroad, the commissioners recommended a number of amendments to the existing railway laws, desiring it, however, to be understood that they in no respect proposed to alter or diminish the actual statutory obligations for prevention of accident and general oversight. They suggested that special provision should be made for the investigation of serious accidents, as provided under the English law—the task being entrusted to the proposed railway tribunal. As to the formation of such tribunal, one of two courses ought to be selected—the creation of a commission, independent of Government control, with practically irresponsible authority, or the maintenance of the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, with such extension of its powers and Departmental machinery as would secure the proper execution of the law. The Commissioners indicated certain objections to either of these courses—the main drawback, in the public mind, to the efficiency of the Privy Council Committee being its necessarily limited time for such duties and their consequent devolution on subordinates, and its liability to change of *personnel*, with the implied loss of valuable experience. These objections are, however, outweighed by the manifest advantages of having the changes and application of the law identified with the Government, which would deal with the questions submitted to it as affecting the entire progress and commerce of the country. The Commissioners, therefore, recommended that the powers of the Railway Committee of the Privy Council should be so enlarged as to enable its members themselves to administer the law and decide such questions as might arise, and that it should have power to appoint officers in every Province to take evidence and to hear and determine all complaints against railway companies.

CANADA AND THE WEST INDIES.

There seems to be a fair likelihood that the representation of Canada at the Jamaica Exhibition of next year will not be altogether unworthy of

our resources and manufactures. The occasion certainly offers facilities for the interchange of information regarding the productions of Canada and the West Indies which, in view of the widely avowed desire of enlarging the trade between the two countries, it would be folly to disregard. It is now some six years since negotiations to this end were first opened. The subject was at first complicated by a proposal for a political union between the Dominion and our fellow-colonists. The disastrous competition of the bounty-supported beet-root sugar of the continent of Europe had caused in the Islands a depression which naturally created discontent, and a deputation from Jamaica consulted the Colonial Secretary as to the advisability of a reciprocity treaty with the United States. The Government of the day declined to assent to the arrangement, but suggested to the delegation that it would be well to enter into relations with Canada. In the discussion that ensued in the English press, the question was mooted that the West Indies might advantageously seek admission into the Dominion. An agitation arose in the Islands, in which the advocates and opponents of the scheme freely expressed their opinions, and the Canadian press dealt with the subject in a tentative manner. While it was generally felt that commercial intercourse between Canada and the inter-tropical colonies might, with benefit to both communities, be greatly extended, it was, in the judgment of most Canadians, a most hazardous experiment to assume the responsibility of administering colonies so far away. In Jamaica the plan of political annexation to the Dominion found one determined champion—Mr. Michael Solomon, a member of the Legislative Council of the Island—who was not satisfied till he laid his views before Sir John Macdonald. The Premier and his colleagues were reasonably reluctant to pronounce decisively on such a question without having at their disposal more convincing data than Mr. Solomon had brought with him. They were, however, perfectly willing to consider any proposal for closer commercial relations between the two countries. On his return home Mr. Solomon, nevertheless, moved in the Legislative Council of Jamaica that it would be for the interests of the Island that steps should be taken for entering our Confederation. At the request of the Lieutenant-Governor, the Crown-appointed Councillors did not vote, and of the elected members all but Mr. Solomon opposed the motion. In the Leewards Islands also the preponderance of opinion was opposed to political union, though strongly in favour of commercial reciprocity. St. John, N.B., which took a lively interest in the movement for improved trade relations with the West Indies, sought, through its Board of Trade, the co-operation of other commercial centres in attaining the end in view. The Government was also stimulated to greater exertions by the proceedings of the United States in connection with Cuba and Porto Rico, and Sir Charles Tupper secured favourable terms from Spain.

In 1885 the negotiations were renewed by a deputation from Jamaica, consisting of the Hon. Messrs. Hocking, Gillard and Farquharson, and Mr. Charles Levy was sent to Ottawa to treat with the Government regarding commerce with that colony. The Boards of Trade of Montreal and Toronto and the Chamber of Commerce of Halifax passed resolutions in favour of increased intercourse between the two countries. The first decisive action on the part of Canada was taken in 1886, when Mr. John T. Wylde of Halifax, was appointed by the Dominion Government its commercial agent to visit Jamaica and the Spanish West Indies and to ascertain the feasibility of establishing a line of steamers between those Islands and Canadian seaports. The mission bore fruit in time, and regular communication between the Maritime Provinces and the West Indies is now an accomplished fact. The Hon. Senator Drummond urged at a meeting of the Board of Trade, called to hear Mr. Adam Brown, M.P., the Honorary Commissioner representing Canada at the Jamaica Exhibition, that this was not enough; that, in order that the interior of Canada may derive the fullest benefit from this line, the vessels must come to Montreal, and to Montreal they will,

doubtless, ultimately come. Meanwhile, a great deal depends on the showing that Canada makes at the approaching exhibition. It is acknowledged on all sides that, although during the past summer there was a considerable improvement in the volume of trade between the West Indies and Canada, the movement is as yet only (so to speak) in its infancy. In January, 1889, the late Hon. Senator Macdonald complained, at a meeting of the Toronto Board of Trade, that the producers, merchants and manufacturers of Canada had not yet begun to secure their full share of the trade with the West Indies, and he insisted that from proximity and affinity Canada and the British West Indies should be, commercially, much more closely and fruitfully related to each other than they had yet been. The progress made in the two years that have passed away since then is full of promise and the list of firms that have signified their purpose of sending exhibits to Kingston, W.I., shows that our people have at last awakened to the importance of the policy which Mr. Brown has been urging on them. There is, indeed, no branch of business, no product of soil or mine, fisheries or forests, no class of our manifold manufacturing industry, unrepresented in the published enumeration. The Governments, Federal and Provincial, we are glad to see, resolved to send choice illustrative assortments of our cereals, our minerals, our woods, and of the harvest of our waters. In manufactures, all sorts of woodwork, ironware, tinware, copper and bronze goods, agricultural implements, woollen and cotton goods, tweeds and other cloths, doors, sashes, window-blinds, furniture of all kinds for houses, offices and schools, mattresses and hammocks, boats and canoes, flour, canned eatables (flesh, fish, fowl, vegetables and fruits), engines of all kinds, awnings and tents, harness, carriages, works of art, mechanical appliances, starch, drugs, liquors—in fact, the entire range of commodities used for food, clothing, construction, the household, the workshop, the factory, and every walk of industrial and social life, is comprised in the catalogue of Canadian exhibits. Such a display will surely not return to us void.

We owe to Mr. George Johnson, Dominion Statistician, some timely data touching the resources of the West Indies and the requirements of the people, which should be carefully studied by all who are interested in a trade which is now more significant than ever before. Of Jamaica itself—the largest of the British Islands—about half the trade goes to Great Britain, about 30 per cent. to the United States; Canada has a share in the remainder. In 1873 the imports of the Dominion from the British West Indies amounted to \$964,005; to the entire archipelago (including the possessions of Spain, France, etc., as well as of England), \$2,591,131. The exports in the same year from Canada to the West Indies amounted to \$5,273,131, of which the British Islands received \$1,969,543. In 1879 these figures had not increased. The total trade for the seven years was valued at \$45,414,785, of which the trade with the British West Indies claimed \$20,144,584. In the seven years, from 1883 to 1889, the total trade amounted to \$59,086,830; but that the increase cannot be assigned to our intercourse with the British Islands is proved by the fact that the trade stood in 1889 at \$20,354,586—only a very slight advance. During the years 1883-89, as compared with the years 1873-79, the trade with South America had increased from \$7,500,726 to \$17,965,976; with the Spanish West Indies, from \$14,466,875 to \$19,043,126; with the French Islands it had decreased from \$2,203,341 to \$1,118,021, and with other islands from \$1,099,756 to \$404,221. From this statement our readers will see what scope there is for enterprise. What Canada produces they know; what the West Indies produce they also know. And they must be aware that what the one community has to dispose of answers very largely to what the other needs. If a very much larger trade is not developed, it will be to a very appreciable extent owing to the lethargy and lack of initiative of the people of Canada. The visit to the Islands of the Hon. Mr. Foster is likely, after certain difficulties have been overcome, to result in arrangements that will be mutually advantageous