

countries—the United States of America might claim to be a better field. But the United States has this great disadvantage, that, so far as you are concerned at least, if a man gets there he ceases to be a British subject, and, as I shall presently have occasion to show you, he thereby ceases to be one of your best customers. Now the institutions of the country are certainly as good in Canada as they could be anywhere. We have the most perfect system of self-government. We have as good a system of education as exists in the world. We have the most efficient administration of the law; justice is done as perfectly as it can be here. There is nothing to desire in that respect. Indeed, I believe that in some important particulars we have even advantages over you, because in our legislation—I speak it with all submission—we have perhaps been able to avoid some of the errors which you have borrowed from your ancestry. If, then, it be true that the colonies are the fittest point to which you can direct yourselves, and if a man going there and remaining a British subject connects him still with you in a material sense, and enables him to serve your interests, I think it only remains for me to take up the other branch of the subject with which I started—to prove to you that the British colonies are the best customers which this country has. Now, having been an old Finance Minister, I am very little indeed unless I use figures. At the same time I would scarcely venture to do so in an ordinary assembly, but I had the honour of an invitation from the Chamber of Commerce, which has been united with that which the Provost and Magistrates gave me, and, speaking to commercial gentlemen, I may venture to use as few as I can, sufficient to prove the contention with which I set out, when I undertook to show that the British possessions are the best customers which this country possesses. I could perhaps come near enough the facts from recollection, but I prefer using figures. Now, on this subject I had occasion to make an official report about a year ago—I mean on the question of the British export trade—to the Government of Canada. It was a confidential report, but I venture, notwithstanding that, to use some of the figures, which