

Trunk infants by the clever Laurier Government, will turn back its own pages it will find that at the time referred to those with whom it cordially co-operated in the field of politics represented that the contract was a rich bonanza, flung into the hands of the Grand Trunk Company by a too generous Government, and on that ground chiefly the scheme was opposed. The truth is that the contract was carefully drawn and satisfactory to both sides. It was certainly not too generous to the Grand Trunk. While it provided a liberal assistance it also bound the company to conditions, made in the public interest, which were more than usually severe. The enterprise suffered heavily from the sad death of its courageous organizer, Charles M. Hays, and suffered further from the financial depression which arose, and later still from the closing, in consequence of the war, of the money markets on which it had always relied to supply the funds necessary for its operations. But for these difficulties the great enterprise into which it so bravely put its cash, its credit and its energies would probably have proved reasonably successful. By all means, let the old Grand Trunk be treated generously. But let nobody plead any baby act for its benefit.

## Canada and the West Indies

ONCE in a while the interesting proposal is made by some writer or speaker that the British West India islands should be annexed to Canada. It is received with more or less of passing favor. Canada is feeling her importance, and the idea that other parts of the Empire desire to unite with us is flattering. Whether, after full discussion, either side would really desire the union is by no means clear. If there is attractiveness in the first view of the proposal, there are difficulties which appear on a more careful inquiry. A few days ago, before the Canadian Club at Halifax, an address on this subject was delivered by Judge Rowan-Hamilton, of the Supreme Court of the Leeward Islands, who in the very strongest terms advocated the union. He is thus reported:—

"Touching on the future of the West Indies, Judge Rowan-Hamilton said that the British West Indies had no future in the British Empire unless union with Canada was considered, and, if this does not come, ultimately there must be a union with the United States.

"The officials of the Colonial Office govern the islands, and each of them is a petty kingdom. Each has its own regulations and its own administration. There will be no future for them in the Empire unless there is a union with Canada. He asked if the Canadian people were prepared for this union and were willing to pay the price to take in those productive islands. If Canada does not, eventually the United States will."

It would appear from the Judge's remarks that the present form of government of the island colonies is objectionable, and a fair inference seems to be that it is to get rid of that system that the union with Canada is advocated. There is room for doubt, however, if any very material change in the system of government could be effected by a union with either Canada or the United States. If anybody has

received the impression that the condition of these islands is such as would allow their people to be brought into a common citizenship with the Canadians, he will do well to give the subject a more careful study. If each of the islands is governed as "a petty kingdom," it is because that kind of government seems to have been best adapted to the situation. A union of the islands under one government, or even under something like a federal system, would have much to recommend it, but even that has not hitherto found much favor among the islanders. It is safe to say that if the condition of the various islands admitted of the establishing of such a self-governing system as exists in the Dominion of Canada, the Imperial Government would gladly grant such powers, instead of adhering to the Crown Colony system. It cannot be the desire of the British authorities to keep the islands in leading strings longer than is necessary. It is the well-established policy of the British Colonial Office to grant the right of self-government to every colony that is in a position to undertake the responsibilities of such a system. The truth is that the islands are not in that position, and if they were to become a part of Canada or the United States, while some change in their laws might take place, it is probable that they would still have to be governed under something like the present system. Whether the islanders would find more satisfaction in receiving rulers from Ottawa or Washington than from London may well be doubted. British rule over the island is, on the whole, a just and wholesome rule. Grievances of the people against the Colonial Office in London are rare in these times. There is no reason to suppose that either Canadian or American rule would be any better. The mass of the inhabitants, it must be remembered, are not of the white race. A handful of white men from the old country have been remarkably successful in guiding and directing West Indian affairs, and in enlisting the sympathy and cooperation of the native races, who are given as large a share in the business of government as circumstances permit. That better men could be sent out from Ottawa or Washington to discharge these duties is doubtful.

Pleasing though the idea may seem to many, it is very questionable whether any scheme of union with Canada could be devised that would be regarded by either side as desirable. There are, however, many reasons to favor closer relations with the West India islands. There is a natural interchange of products of the two countries, which might be enlarged. The people of the islands are consumers of the things we produce in our northern land. The islands are producers of numerous articles which find a ready market in Canada. Except in its relation to the raising of revenue, there is no reason why there need be any tariff between the two countries. It may not be generally known now that a few years ago there was almost a commercial union between Canada and Trinidad, one of the most important of the West India islands. At a time when the Trinidad authorities were anxious to extend their trade, a mission came from the islands to the United States and Canada. The delegates, after spending some time in the States, came to Ottawa, where the Canadian Government entered into an agreement with them which provided for free trade between Trinidad and Canada. When the delegates returned to Trinidad the Governor held that they had exceeded their powers and that they were in honor bound to await further developments at Washington before making an arrangement with Canada. The Canadian agreement was therefore not ratified. The Trinidad folks

then waited for action at Washington, but nothing came of the negotiations in that quarter.

If the authorities of the several West India islands are disposed to do so, doubtless they could now make favorable commercial arrangements with Canada. The broader scheme proposed by Judge Rowan-Hamilton would seem to be more difficult, but, of course, any proposal of the kind emanating from the West Indian governments would be received in Canada with much interest and would be fully inquired into.

## Women in Industry

IN a previous issue we drew attention to what we thought would be one of the industrial problems likely to arise at the close of the war—the great extent of the occupations in which women are now being employed and the probability that many of these women will endeavor to retain their positions when the men coming back from the battlefield will expect to take up their former engagements in civil life. We note that this question was discussed last week in an address delivered in Boston by the distinguished Archbishop of York, who has come out from England to speak to the people on this side of the ocean on matters of common concern to Great Britain and her American ally. His Grace does not think there will be any difficulty on the question of the women's employment. "Many of them," he says, "have entered industry to do their bit and will be glad to return to their homes." There is no doubt that what His Grace says respecting many of the women is quite correct, but it does not follow that there will be no serious problem as respects the others. Many women who have entered industry have done so chiefly from a patriotic desire to help the cause. Those whose circumstances make them indifferent to matters of money will naturally be ready to return to their own homes when their services are no longer needed in factory or office. But many of the women who did not enter industrial life because of need of money, as their parents were able to provide for their wants, have learned the value of the independence which their earnings have brought them, and will on that account be disposed to continue their work. In many other cases women will wish to remain in industrial life because their earnings are really required in the economy of their homes, where a standard of comfort has been created which perhaps did not exist before, and which they will be reluctant to change.

The question was lately discussed by Mr. Gordon Selfridge, the head of a great departmental store in London, and a large employer of labor. Mr. Selfridge is an American, trained in the great Chicago store of Marshall Field & Co., who since his entry into business in England has given much attention to questions concerning employment. He has had more than ordinary opportunities of closely observing the part women have been taking in business and industrial life. His judgment is that a great many of the women who have entered the factories, shops or offices will desire to remain in the work after the war, and that their services are proving so satisfactory that the employers will not desire a change.