

there are high duties, there will also be consumers to protest against them, and I think that the manufacturers will show the best understanding of their own position, and best consult the permanent interests of manufacturing enterprises, if they will realize that very important fact. It is well, if they are to-day in a position which affords them some comfort and advantage, that they should apply their time and use their opportunity to get their business upon such a basis that it will be as little as possible dependent upon tariff aid. The tendency of a high tariff policy is to lead men to look too much to tariff and too little to the efforts they should make for the benefit of their business. What a world of good might have been accomplished for the true interests of manufacturing in the Dominion of Canada, if all the time, and all the energy, and all the labour, and all the money that have been expended in the last twenty years in tariff watching and tariff wire-pulling at Ottawa, had been expended in the factories, in the development of business, in new invention and discovery, in producing labour-saving machinery, in learning what might be done with waste products, in dealing with all those forms of industrial progress which have to be dealt with by the manufacturer when he has keen competition. We would, therefore, say to the manufacturer that if he desires permanency in the tariff, he must never expect permanency until the tariff gets down to a moderate point; and to-day there are duties in the tariff so high that I am sure the Government are not prepared to treat them as part of a permanent tariff. I say this, Sir, in no spirit but that of friendliness to the manufacturing interests. While the manufacturers are in a fairly good position to-day, it would be a mistake for them to fail to realize the fact that Canada has turned her face away from a high tariff policy, and though we may proceed slowly, whatever progress we make from this time forward must be and should be in the direction of greater freedom of trade.

Hon. gentlemen have already observed that in the Imperial Parliament the Colonial Secretary, the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain, made some reference to negotiations that were taking place between the Dominion of Canada, United States and the West Indies with regard to reciprocal trade. These negotiations, so far as Canada is concerned, have not gone very far, and we have not much to communicate to the House concerning them. But we are of opinion that, without waiting for the completion of these negotiations, without waiting for the development of all that is likely to arise in connection with that subject, there are opportunities opening to us to-day of which we should take advantage to enlarge the trade between Canada and the West Indies. We think that something of this kind should be attempted in the interest of Canadian trade, because there are large opportunities of

Mr. FIELDING.

development in that quarter. There are a million and three-quarters of people in the British West Indies, if we include Bermuda, who are our natural customers, with whom we should have more extended trade relations. When we remember that of the 330,000,000 pounds of sugar consumed in the Dominion of Canada, only 25,500,000 pounds come from the British West Indies, our natural customers, and that the remainder comes from other countries, largely from continental nations which supply us with beet sugar and take little or nothing from us, I think the House will agree with me that we ought to desire an extension of our trade with the West Indies and to consume to a larger extent the products of that country. If we were to put aside all other considerations, the advantages of trade with that country appeal so strongly to us that I am sure the House would desire us to make some special effort to extend our business in that quarter.

But there is another consideration which we may well take into our minds. The West India question to-day is one of the great problems of the Empire. In the olden days when sugar was king, when cane sugar was in great demand and at high price, the West India colonies were among the most prosperous colonies of the Empire. But times have changed in that respect, to some extent, and the West Indies are suffering to-day from a very severe depression. What the causes of that depression are, may possibly be a subject of contention, to some extent. It is alleged that the depression is the result of a failure on the part of the West India planters to live up to the times, and to improve their methods of growing and their methods of treating sugar. I give that as one reason which is sometimes alleged against them, not that I endorse the opinion. There is no doubt whatever that another condition has operated very largely against them, and that is the development of the beet sugar industry, particularly in the case of the continental nations where bounties are given. The West Indies claim that as respects the conflict between cane sugar and beet sugar, the West Indies could hold their own but for the difficulty which is created by the bounty system of Europe, notably of the various continental nations. Just how far that is correct is perhaps a matter upon which none of us can give a conclusive opinion. What we do know, however, is that these million and a half to a million and three-quarters of people in those islands, are suffering a very severe depression. Their finances are in a bad position, the business of the islands is in a bad position, the condition of the West Indies is at this moment a very serious subject to the people of the colonies, and a very grave problem for the Imperial Government and the Imperial Parliament. So keenly has this matter been felt of late, that a few months ago a royal commission was appointed by Her Majesty