

UNIFICATION.

UNITED WEST INDIES.

BY

JOSEPH RIPPON.

Nec nos mare separat ingens . . . exigua prohibemur aqua.

—OVID, MET. iii., 448.

1/-

JANUARY, 1912.

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Rippon, Joseph
Unification



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P R E F A C E .

The unification of the possessions of Great Britain in the West Indies and Central and South America has, for many years, been discussed and recognized as essential, but it is only within the last few years that any formulated or organized attempt has been made to bring the subject into the field of practical politics.

Various papers have been read and published by those having knowledge of the subject, and with the view of facilitating study, those of a recent date are now brought together, in what seems to be the most convenient form for reference.

It would appear that words not applicable in their true meaning should be avoided, such as treaty, annexation and federation, as the West Indian Colonies are not sovereign states, and the trend of opinion in the Colonies, upon which everything depends, is gradually towards a simple and economical way to provide for unification, so as to deal as a whole with commercial arrangements and other matters, such as the judiciary, codification of laws, &c., most advantageously. In fact there seems to be no doubt that unification is being gradually and satisfactorily reached, as conferences of delegates from all the Islands and the United Kingdom have been held on various subjects at Trinidad and Barbados, and this should lead to the appointment, jointly by all the Legislatures, of a permanent Secretariat (of, say, two persons), whose duty would be to preserve records, to maintain continuity and activity, and to summon Conferences on subjects demanding consideration; the delegates to such Conferences, to be appointed by the Legislatures, would naturally be selected with a view of their qualification to discuss them.

THE PRESENT DIVISION OF THE WEST INDIAN COLONIES.

The division of the Colonies and Possessions in Central and South America having Crown government and not self-government, but having Representative Assemblies, either wholly or partly elected on a property franchise, are as follows :—

1. THE BAHAMAS.

Consisting of many islets and rocks, and the following principal islands :—

New Providence, St. Salvador, Abacos, Grand Bahama, Long Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Mayaguana, Great Inagua, Andros, Watlings, Rum Cay, Long, Ragged, Crooked, Acklins.

2. BARBADOS.

3. BRITISH GUIANA.

4. BRITISH HONDURAS.

5. JAMAICA, with the dependencies of :—

Turks and Caicos Islands.
Cayman Islands.

6. The LEEWARD ISLANDS (United), consisting of :—

Antigua, with Barbuda and Redonda.
St. Christopher and Nevis, with Anguilla.
Dominica.
Montserrat.
The Virgin Islands.

7. TRINIDAD and TOBAGO.

8. The WINDWARD ISLANDS, consisting of :—

Grenada and the Grenadines.
St. Lucia.
St. Vincent.

UNIFICATION.

UNITED WEST INDIES.

FEDERATION OF THE LEEWARD ISLANDS.

By the Leeward Islands Act of 1861, Antigua with Barbuda and Redonda, St. Christopher and Nevis, with Anguilla, Dominica, Montserrat and the Virgin Islands, were "federated" into one Colony called "The Leeward Islands."

ATTEMPTED FEDERATION OF BARBADOS AND THE WINDWARD ISLANDS.

Blue Book C—1539 of 1876 shows the proceedings in connection with an unsuccessful attempt to "federate" Barbados and the islands of the Windward group. After serious hostility and trouble the truer grasp of constitutional history, that the Crown alone had no power to vary the Constitution of any Colony acquired by settlement, prevailed, and Lord Carnarvon decided in a despatch "that Her Majesty's Government could not proceed with any measure of confederation except on the spontaneous request of each legislature concerned," and the incident then closed.

It is important, and should be generally understood, that a Colony acquired by conquest or cession is, by the common law, prerogative of the Crown a subject for legislation by Order in Council. Under such an order, the King, by Instructions given to the Governor, can provide for the government of a Colony, but this power does not exist in Colonies acquired by settlement, and is lost when once representative institutions have been granted to a Colony.

PROJECT OF WEST INDIAN FEDERATION.

Blue Book C—8655 of 1897 contains the following project of the West India Royal Commission, appointed December 22nd, 1896, to inquire into the conditions and prospects of the sugar producing Colonies of Jamaica, British Guiana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and the Leeward Islands. The members of the Commission were:—General Sir Henry Wylie Norman, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., C.I.E., Sir Edward Grey, Baronet, M.P., Sir David Barbour, K.C.S.I., and Sydney Olivier, Esq., B.A., Secretary.

“ We have not overlooked the fact that suggestions have been made for a federation of the West Indian Colonies under a single Governor-General, and in the course of our journeyings through these Colonies we gave special consideration to the question of such a reform. We are, however, unable to recommend such federation, and we are doubtful whether any economy would be effected by it.

“ The Colonies, as we have said, are widely scattered, and differ very much in their conditions ; and we are not satisfied that, at all events at the present time, the control of a Governor-General could be exercised in an effective and satisfactory manner. Even if the great waste of time and the physical strain that would be involved in the necessary journeys be disregarded, the absence of any residence for a Governor-General in the several Colonies would, if he were to visit them with any sufficient degree of frequency, and remain in each for periods long enough to enable him to gain a real knowledge of the officials, the people, and the condition of the Colony, make it necessary that he should be furnished with a special vessel and establishment, which would involve a considerable cost. A General Council would also be required, and great difficulties would be involved in arranging for its constitution and for the conduct of its business.

“ Nor does it seem to us that the very important Island of Jamaica, which is separated by many hundreds of miles of sea from all the other West Indian Colonies, could dispense with a

separate Governor, even if there should be a Governor-General ; whilst the circumstances of British Guiana and Trinidad almost equally demand the constant presence and attention of an Administrator of Governor's rank.

“ It might be possible, without disadvantage, to make some reduction in the number of higher officials in the smaller islands, and we are disposed to think that it would be conducive to efficiency and economy if the islands of the Windward Group, that is, Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Vincent and St. Lucia, were again placed under the Governor of Barbados, as they were for many years previous to 1885. We have no doubt that a Governor residing at Barbados could efficiently control the administration of these islands, and that the Judges of one Supreme Court could perform all the higher judicial duties for this group, especially if our recommendations for the improvement of steam communication are adopted. This change would enable a material saving to be made.

“ We are also disposed to think that the Island of Dominica, which is not much further than Grenada from Barbados, and which, in its physical, social and industrial conditions, partakes more of the character of the Windward Islands than of that of the other Leeward Islands, might be placed under this Government instead of being considered one of the Leeward Group.

“ It might, indeed, be found possible to bring the whole of the Leeward Islands under the same Government as Barbados and the Windward Islands, and thus effect a further economy. This arrangement might receive the consideration of Your Majesty's advisers when improved steam communication between the islands had been established for some years.”

The "STANDARD" and the "COLONIAL OFFICE JOURNAL," between April, 1907, and February, 1909, published the following articles by Mr. J. RIPPON, on Representation and Consolidation :—

The use of the word "Federation" has been avoided because "Federacy" (*fedus*) means a treaty, an alliance, *i.e.*, a confederation or union of several sovereign states under one central authority, and it would not apply in the case of the West Indies, as they are not independent but are united by the ties of a common allegiance to one Sovereign. To federalize is to unite, to bring together in a political confederacy. The settlement of questions bearing on the welfare of the whole without interfering with local self-government is a subject for discussion, and the suggested title for the Consolidated Colonies is "West India."

REPRESENTATION.

17th April, 1907.

The following interesting communication on the subject of Crown Colony representation at the Colonial Conference has been received from a correspondent who is in a position to speak with authority from the West Indian point of view :—

"In all the correspondence, whether in newspapers or in Government publications to be 'presented to both Houses of Parliament, by Command of His Majesty,' there seems to have been omitted any notice of the position to be occupied by the Crown Colonies at the Conference. Indeed, until it was notified that Sir James L. Mackay had been nominated by the Secretary of State for India to attend meetings at which questions affecting that country might be discussed, India also was to have no direct representation. It might be stated with some reason that if Crown Colonies were distant rocks, the act of taking them into the Empire makes them part of it, and, therefore, entitles them to representation, not through an intermediary born and bred in the Mother Country, but by a man of the Colony. In the case where Crown Colonies are of vast importance, as are the West Indian Islands and British Guiana, which extend over thousands of miles of the most fertile country in the world, and have the

most important strategic positions, it would seem essential that men from those Colonies should be present if proper decisions are to be arrived at.

“ There must assuredly be men in these Colonies who have learned their history and know their future, who have also a patriotic feeling for them, and whose local standing and business interests should command a position and recognition in the Conference of our Colonies, as they do in the islands they would practically represent.

“ The lack of encouragement and direct representation of Colonial opinion does not, therefore, seem advisable, and, as stated by a contemporary, ‘ the restraining influences of kinship, unmarred by any historical cause for bitterness, such as that which has so long troubled our relations with the United States, ’ would be of uncertain value if material interests clashed, and sentimentality after separation, it may be stated, would go for so much as it is worth.

“ The object of the Conference, it is generally understood, is the cementing of the bonds of the Empire, which without direct representation does not appear possible. The community of interests is graphically shown in the agenda put forward by the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand, in which they affirm that, in view of the probable completion of the Panama Canal, it is desirable that all possible means of strengthening British interests in the Pacific should be adopted. The importance of the Panama Canal is, perhaps, not so much as a British trade route—for most purposes the Suez or Cape route will be shorter between Great Britain and most of her Colonies, excepting New Zealand—as in the ability by this means to pass naval forces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and *vice versa*, and it may be assumed that the power of controlling the canal will put any country in a commanding position. We see, therefore, that the West Indies, and Jamaica particularly, cannot be divided from the uttermost parts of the Empire, and, as the present Conference may be considered as one met to express opinions, and at which no binding results will have to be voted upon, there seems to be no reason for the absence of representatives from the Crown Colonies. If

later it be resolved that an Imperial Council or Conference, or whatever a permanent body may be termed, shall be instituted, at which binding decisions are to be taken, some method might be devised to create a fair voting power for each unit of the Empire.”

THE POSITION OF THE WEST INDIES.

29th August, 1907.

“As a West Indian, I have noted with some regret that all writers on the recent Colonial Conference have ignored the position which the Caribbean Islands will take, in common with British Guiana and Honduras, when they are as free from dependence upon the Mother Country as Newfoundland or Canada.

“Before the delegates met at the Conference the ‘Standard’ wisely asserted that each Colony, whether self-governing or under the Crown, was entitled to a share of the general consideration, and ought to be represented on any Imperial Council. Is it not, therefore, rather remarkable that representatives of a Liberal Government, professing democratic ideas, should have been the ones, above all others, to conserve to themselves the voice of the Crown Colonies? Why should they not, of all people, have democratised the position of these Colonies, and have given the men who best understand the interest of these Colonies commercially, if not politically, a proper voice in the management of their country’s affairs?

“It is not generally known that representatives from the West Indies were not present at the Colonial Conference, and apparently no determined effort was made to obtain the presence of such delegates. It would, therefore, seem that the Responsible Colonies’ representatives did not think that at that moment their presence was material, nor could they have realised that Crown Colonies—like themselves before finding release—were of the same stock as themselves, and that all the population of these tropical and rich Colonies were not coloured. Even if the people were coloured, the value of their country called for as much recognition as did any other. After all, these places are giving their best to the Mother Country, and even if in some cases they are giving more to foreign countries, on account of those countries’ greater

enterprise and better fiscal laws, that is not their fault, but the Mother Country's.

"Probably the majority of the delegates came to the Conference without having made up their minds as to the concrete results to be looked for. But may I point out that, if these conferences are to remain merely consultative, their value must eventually be reduced to nullity, and that their resolutions, even when unani- mously passed, will probably never have a binding or executive effect? It may be mentioned now that India was also tabooed at this last Conference, but a representative of that country was ultimately admitted and supported the Mother Country in a fiscal debate.

"Although not perhaps quite pertinent to the subject under consideration, it may be pointed out that the position of the West Indies as a confederation and a responsible state might very well have formed a subject for consideration at the Conference. For instance, the people in the Caribbean do not quite agree with a view taken by a recent writer that the British West Indian Islands might be transferred to a foreign country in exchange for the Philippines, containing Asiatics. Indeed, all such arguments strike them as having no other effect than exhibiting a want of knowledge of the existing conditions in these British Colonies and their past history, which history alone might have exhibited the folly of such an exchange of British subjects for Malays to the mind of any opportunist.

"To my mind, the whole question of the admittance of the West Indies to the Colonial Conference might have been justified if the following three reasons had been considered in time, viz., area, population, and trade value. True, the area basis may be held to be unsuitable by reason of the vast number of square miles in some countries still unpopulated, uncultivated, and un- explored. Also there are objections to the population basis, because of the great preponderance of coloured inhabitants not yet advanced to the standard of the white population; but even then we come to the last, and, it would appear, the most reasonable qualification for a seat. Now, trade in all cases reflects the

activity of a country and the degree of its influence and value in any Imperial partnership. Such a basis, in fact, gives the true value of the Crown Colonies and small possessions, and I do not think I can do better than close this appeal with a properly tabulated list of Colonial trade information, which will give the true position of our West Indian possessions at a glance :—

Country.	Area Square Miles.	Population. Census 1901.	Trade Returns, 1905, including Bullion and Specie.		
			Imports.	Exports.	Total.
Africa—			£	£	£
British South ...	1,197,048	6,759,402	35,017,000	35,759,000	70,776,000
British West ...	486,539	16,209,880	5,470,000	5,340,000	10,810,000
British Central & E.	499,581	8,319,000	1,404,015	733,386	2,137,401
India ...	1,766,597	294,361,056	104,878,522	125,698,410	230,576,932
Straits Settlements ...	1,600	572,249	33,223,382	28,296,069	61,519,451
Ceylon... ..	25,332	3,565,954	7,682,482	6,832,671	14,515,153
Labuan	30	8,411	108,766	130,135	238,901
Australia	3,225,324	4,589,110	51,175,588	72,497,082	123,672,670
British New Guinea ...	90,540	350,000	67,188	76,345	143,533
Fiji	7,740	120,124	460,645	706,403	1,167,048
Channel Isles... ..	303	150,370			
China	674	530,258			
Malta	117	184,742			
Gibraltar	2	20,355			
Ascension	34	410			
Cyprus... ..	3,584	237,022	482,079	438,241	920,320
Canada, &c.	3,908,308	5,592,299	56,962,263	43,986,056	100,948,319
Bermudas	19	17,535	543,222	158,421	701,643
British West Indies ...	12,021	1,572,644	7,638,031	7,064,446	14,702,477
British Guiana	90,277	293,958	1,584,054	1,916,242	3,500,296
British Honduras	7,562	37,479	385,737	377,246	762,983
Mauritius	835	375,282	1,823,167	2,346,406	4,169,573
Seychelles	149	19,237	54,897	59,297	114,194
Falkland Islands	6,500	2,043	58,155	167,450	225,605
St. Helena	47	3,342	52,787	7,635	60,422
Great Britain and Ire- land... ..	121,091	41,458,721	565,019,917	329,816,614	894,836,531

These figures are taken from the Statistical Abstract for the several British Colonies, Possessions and Protectorates in each year from 1891 to 1905, 43rd number, 1906.

“It is not conceivable that at any time the West Indies may be able to fully defend themselves against the aggression of larger countries, but the orderly parts of the islands are quite equal to the preservation of internal order and of meeting, as other Colonies do, the necessary charges for the forces, more than local, needed to maintain order or resist aggression. The withdrawal of these last mentioned forces from the West Indies has been widely discussed and generally condemned,”

10th September, 1907.

"In my letter to you 'On the position of the West Indies,' published in the 'Standard' of the 29th instant, the returns for Canada, etc., include those of Newfoundland, but as a representative of this Colony attended the Colonial Conference, it would be well to quote the figures for this part of the Empire separately, viz. :—Area, 42,734 square miles; population, 197,934; exports, £2,193,143; and imports, £2,112,966."

CONSOLIDATION.

1

2nd June, 1908.

"The following notes on the 'Future of the West Indies' form a contribution influenced by the sincere desire to make those valuable Colonies more effective to their common good in the great world-wide competition now in progress. To those who, with experience of the past, have studied the question of the future of the West Indies in relation to other Colonies and foreign countries, some effective union has long appeared to be an absolute necessity, and the general utility of coming together for certain purposes, so as to give greater effect to representations coming from the West Indies, does not seem to need further discussion.

"The area of the West Indies, and value of the united trade, would reach an aggregate which would command permanent attention from other parts of the Empire, like Canada, as well as from foreign countries.

"In order to give effect to a union it would be necessary to have a central council. This council should be representative of the several executive and legislative bodies in the West Indies. It would accept from them such powers as they cannot make use of for themselves. To such a central council, I think, the following subjects would most likely be remitted:—

(i.) Trade and commerce with other countries and among themselves.

(ii.) Bounties on the production or export of goods, but so that such bounties shall be uniform throughout the West Indies.

(iii.) Postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and other like services.

(iv.) Lighthouses, lightships, beacons, and buoys.

(v.) Astronomical, meteorological, seismic, and other allied observations.

(vi.) Quarantine.

(vii.) Census and statistics.

(viii.) Currency, coinage, and legal tender.

(ix.) Marine and fire insurance.

(x.) Weights and measures.

Codification of the West Indian Acts and Ordinances on the following subjects :—

(a.) Bills of exchange and promissory notes.

(b.) Bankruptcy and insolvency.

(c.) Copyrights, patents of inventions and designs, and trade marks.

(d.) Foreign corporations, and trading or financial corporations formed within the limits of the West Indies.

(e.) Marriage.

(f.) Divorce and matrimonial causes, and in relation thereto parental rights and the custody and guardianship of infants.

(g.) The civil and criminal process of the courts of the West Indies.

(h.) Immigration and emigration.

5th September, 1908.

“Some encouragement is given to write again by the indications apparent throughout the West Indies and amongst West Indians in other parts of the Empire of a trend of thought towards seeking some form of closer association by which objects such as have been mentioned—common to the interests of all—may be secured.

“Those who have studied questions of the nature of those under consideration know that the Constitutions, as devised by and for the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia, are those which appeal to British people, as leaving that freedom to British subjects which is so necessary for them, and if it be

within the practical politics of the near future to consolidate the West Indies, and perhaps include the Bahamas, British Guiana and Honduras, it would seem that the gradual and spontaneous evolution of the Australian Commonwealth would be a guide to each of the several communities. Step by step that evolution might be studied and followed as far as could be with great advantage and progressive despatch, and the success following actual working and experience would invite absolute confidence.

“The Constitution named would be found to be the most suited to the means of unification of the West Indies as preserving and securing to them all their present rights and liberties in respect of self-taxation and domestic legislation. There can be no remodelling of forms of Government which does not preserve these Constitutional rights unimpaired, and it was subject to this *sine quâ non* that the Australian Commonwealth was accomplished by impulse from within. What was done by the Commonwealth can be done by the West Indies, as to any student it is apparent that every West Indian Community has been well trained in legislative work, and the rights of self-taxation and Government—the bed-rock of Constitutional progress—have been well exercised by the several legislatures. Public-spirited and fearless, but factionless, discussion seems to have characterised these Communities, and if some inner impulse towards development should arise, the dawn of a new era in those rising Colonies will be looked for with hopefulness.

“Should, therefore, public opinion in the West Indies gain ground in favour of consolidation of common interests, a Convention of delegates elected by each separate legislature might assemble in London for the purpose of discussing and formulating a Constitutional arrangement which might then be submitted to each of the separate Governments and Legislatures, and on adoption by them come into operation by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and in this manner the West Indies would follow the course and procedure of the Commonwealth of Australia.

“In conclusion it might be well to recommend, to those desirous of studying Canadian and Australian Constitutions, the perusal of an address on ‘Federal Constitutions within the Empire,’

delivered in May, 1900, by the Rt. Honourable R. B. Haldané, K.C., M.P., at the Royal Colonial Institute, and published in a book entitled 'Education and Empire,' by John Murray, London."

3

24th November, 1908.

"A reference to preceding notes on the above subject will show that the lines laid down by the Commonwealth of Australia in the formation of their Constitution have been closely followed, and from current information it may be gathered that the Australian methods have guided the preliminary propaganda for the formation of a Constitution for a United South Africa, which resulted in the Convocation of the National Convention recently held at Durban and Cape Town. The meeting place was in the Colony, instead of, as suggested for the West Indies, in London. But it must be recognised that the several Colonies in South Africa already have, and are exercising in their respective Governments, the powers required by the West Indies as a whole.

"The verdict of the authors of the work entitled the 'Government of South Africa' is, that in the proposed Union reposes South Africa's only hope of fully realising her destiny. The unsparing efforts of a small band of enthusiasts, each an expert in his own domain, who for eighteen months have been engaged as an Unofficial Committee of Enquiry, and with the cognizance and assistance of the various Governments, in accumulating, sifting, classifying, and condensing an intricate mass of facts, figures and general information regarding the present Government of South Africa, have brought about and made possible the meeting of the South African Convention. In the case of the West Indies, if some similar method were followed, they would prepare the way for a Convention in London of delegates elected by each separate Legislature in the West Indies. If such a band of workers for the West Indies could be formed and then dissolved when the Council meets, the most legitimate expectations of success might be entertained.

"The Convention of the delegates of the various Colonies of South Africa shows that the fact of different nationalities with

divergent opinions and interests, and the existence of the most complex questions, forms no bar to the policy of a Union. On the contrary, it has been proved that delegates so various as de Villiers, Merriman, Sauer, Malan, Beck, Jameson, Smartt, Stanford, Maasdorp, Van Heerden, Walton and Jagger for the Cape Colony; Botha, Smuts, Schalk Burger, De la Rey, Farrar, Fitzpatrick, Hull and Lindsay for the Transvaal; Fischer, Steyn, Hertzog, de Wet and Brown for the Orange River Colony; Moir, Greene, Smythe, Morcom and Hyslop for Natal; and, lastly, Milton and Mitchell for Rhodesia, can meet in a Convention and decide questions long the source of continuous conflict.

“The West Indian question is not one so different as to be beyond the power of a like settlement, provided that the Colonial spirit exists, with the customary British way of adapting and strengthening the potential resources of the part of the world in which our countrymen find themselves placed.

“As regards Jamaica, the formation last August of the Kingston Citizens' Association has some bearing on the question now discussed. The objects of this Association are (*inter alia*) ‘to create and keep alive public interest in public affairs.’ Similar associations already exist in other West Indian Islands. All of these might be subservient to the formation of a suitable Sub-Committee charged to collect data, &c. In conclusion, it would seem from the example of what has been done in Canada and Australia, and is about to be done in South Africa, that the West Indies might, without loss of independence, re-arrange their legislative and executive powers so as to make that independence within the Empire more effective than now in promoting objects of common interest to the West Indies as a whole.”

“Returning to this very interesting subject, it will be found that the first note was intended to show how the existing executive and legislative bodies in the West Indies could constitute a Central Council representing themselves, to which they could delegate

executive and legislative powers over certain defined subjects and matters of common interest, and be thus enabled to deal with those subjects more effectively than by independent action.

“A second note, written in October, indicated the principles of the Australian Constitution as a model, and suggested London as the first meeting place of a Convention of Delegates to be elected by the local legislatures for the purpose of formulating a draft scheme and, finally, a third note, dated January last, pointed out how the difficulties of consolidating separate Colonial Governments for purposes in common had been overcome by other Colonies, and the manner in which preliminary steps had to be taken to accumulate information, and arrange a meeting of a Convention.

“In this note it is suggested that the Executive and Legislative Councils in the Colonies should take the first step by passing a measure having for its object the selection and summoning of members for the deliberative Convention, as there appears to be no doubt that there is a general agreement as to the necessity of providing that matters common to all the islands might be legislated for centrally, whilst leaving all local matters to be dealt with expeditiously on the spot and without any other than local authority. If, therefore, it is agreed that ‘Union is Strength,’ it is becoming more and more apparent that it is incumbent on the governing bodies of the West Indies to come to an agreement, that subjects of common interest should be dealt with by a central and representative authority.

“The best means towards effecting this would be a meeting in London of representatives of each Colony, so as to bring together in one place all the persons most capable of deciding what is necessary to carry out the work which in previous letters has been shown is the preliminary necessity, and the Imperial Government might assist by inviting representatives to meet in London. Thus we see there would be no difficulties about the preliminaries towards effecting the above objects for the mutual benefit of the whole of the West Indies.

“Before closing it would, perhaps, be as well to state one, if not the most important, question upon which a common agreement

should be arrived at, viz., the settlement of uniform inter-Imperial import duties throughout the whole of the West Indies. Such uniformity has an immediate and practical bearing upon the trade relations between the West Indies and the rest of the Empire. Canada, for instance, could not deal effectively with the West Indies if each island required separate treatment because its tariff differed from the others. The preference Canada could give us is to one and all alike, and, therefore, each and every one of the islands must be prepared with a common tariff and a schedule which will meet the views of the finance ministers of Canada. In any tariff arranged to meet the views of Canada, the Mother Country and all British Colonies must share.

“It is for the above reasons, and those contained in previous notes, that it is suggested West Indians might usefully study, and follow on simple lines, the principles which have developed in the Commonwealth of Australia.”

OUTLINES OF A “UNITED WEST INDIES CONSOLIDATION ACT.”

AN ACT TO CONSOLIDATE THE WEST INDIES.

WHEREAS the people of the British West Indian Islands, Bahamas, British Honduras, and British Guiana (enumerate all places) have agreed to consolidate and continue in a legislative agreement under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Consolidation hereby established.

And whereas it is expedient to provide for the admission into the Consolidation of other contiguous Colonies and possessions of the King :—

Be it therefore enacted by the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

1. This Act may be cited as the United West Indies Consolidation Act.

2. The provisions of this Act referring to the King shall extend to His Majesty's heirs and successors in the sovereignty of the United Kingdom.

3. It shall be lawful for the King, with the advice of the Privy Council, to declare by proclamation that, on and after a day therein appointed, not being later than one year after the passing of this Act, the people of (here state all places which have agreed), and such other Colonies as may be hereafter admitted hereto, shall be consolidated and continue in a legislative agreement under the name of the United West Indies. But the King may, at any time after the proclamation, appoint a Governor-General for the United West Indies.

4. The Consolidation shall be established and take effect on and after the day so appointed.

Clauses to follow, stating :—

(a.) The General Council, numbers of Members to be chosen in each Colony, term, qualification, method of election, times and places of meeting, rotation, president and all matters relating thereto.

(b.) The power to be vested in each member of the General Council by the various legislatures.

(c.) The various subjects to which power is to be given to members of the General Council to deal with, such as : Trade and commerce with other countries and among themselves, &c.

(d.) The subjects which may be generally considered and reported upon by the General Council, such as Codification of the West Indian Acts and Ordinances on certain subjects, such as bills of exchange and promissory notes, the civil and criminal process of the Courts of the West Indies, &c.

N.B.—A concise Act may be built upon the lines of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act of 9th July, 1900.

The following Article, written by Dr. G. B. MASON, appeared in the "COLONIAL OFFICE JOURNAL" for April, 1908.

THE FUTURE OF THE WEST INDIES.

In the "Empire Review" for July, 1903, in an article on "The Needs of the West Indies," I referred to the question of confederation, and made certain suggestions as to how it might be carried out. The chief of these was, that each Island should put aside a fixed percentage of its annual revenue for confederate expenses, which would include the whole cost of the machinery of Government, plus a sum for defence and communications, and should be free to spend the balance of its revenue on local projects, as seemed best to the Governor, and the local Administrator and his Council. A common West Indian legal, medical, and civil service, with a proper entrance examination, such as the London Matriculation or the Senior Oxford or Cambridge Local Examination, good pay, and a pension, was also touched on. From subsequent experience I desire to modify somewhat the proposals then made, in the hope that they may assist, in some way, in the practical solution of this problem in the near future.

The first factor in the situation is, that all these Colonies, except Barbados, are under the Crown; therefore, all arrangements as to confederation can be made from Downing Street. Whether it is desirable to appoint a Commission to enquire as to the best method of confederation or not is a matter which rests with the Crown.

In the article referred to the suggestion was made that it was possible to confederate the Colonies without interfering in any way with the constitution of Barbados, and this, I still think, is the case.

The Barbadians have done very well with their constitution, and have managed their affairs well on the whole. The members of the Legislature are educated men, and are not so blind to the interests of the Colony they represent as not to realise how much it would benefit them if Barbados were the seat of Government of the Windward and Leeward Islands. This is the first point to emphasise, viz., there should be one Governor for Barbados

and the Windward and Leeward Islands (the Antilles) resident in Barbados, with a salary of £4,000 per annum, paid by each Island in proportion to its revenue. The late Sir Robert Hamilton made a similar suggestion in his able report on the Island of Dominica, which was laid before Parliament in 1894. The present arrangement of an Administrator or Commissioner in each Island, with a nominated Council representing all interests and classes, should be left untouched. The Colonial Secretary of the Antilles could also be appointed the Lieutenant-Governor of Barbados, and act while the Governor was visiting the other Islands. It should not be forgotten that when the closer union of St. Vincent and Grenada was brought forward the other day, the St. Vincent people were against it, but said they were quite willing to join Barbados.

One instance will show how confederation could benefit Barbados. It is proposed to raise the salary of the Attorney-General there from £750 to £900 per annum; this seems a large salary for Barbados to pay, but it is well-known that the present officer has made more than £900 per annum by private practice; he, therefore, loses by accepting the post of Attorney-General. With confederation, the Attorney-General of the Antilles could be paid £1,000 per annum for the whole Colony, and the present Solicitor-General of Barbados could become the legal adviser of the Barbados Government at £250 per annum, with private practice. Besides this, their Governor and Colonial Secretary, and other heads of departments would cost the Barbados taxpayers less, their salaries being paid by the other Islands of the confederation, as well as Barbados. The Colonial Secretary of the Antilles, and the heads of departments would all have assistants in each Island needing them, with salaries of from £250 to £400 per annum, according to the importance of the Island. The Chief Justice of Barbados would become the Chief Justice of the Antilles, at increased pay, with a puisne judge in each Island requiring one. The Appeal Court of the West Indies would consist of three of the Chief Justices on the Bench in the Antilles, Trinidad, British Guiana, and Jamaica, while that of the Antilles would be made up of the Chief Justice and two puisne judges. The saving which

confederation would bring to the Windward and Leeward Islands, in the salaries of high officials, would be very great; 37·7 per cent. of the revenue is spent in administration in the Leeward Islands, and the cost is 7s. 3d. per head of the population, according to the Blue Book. In a paper read at the Royal Colonial Institute two years ago, Sir Nevile Lubbock pointed out how much expense was saved these Colonies by their Governor-General being practically resident at Downing Street. This is such a sound argument that it effectually disposes of the question of a Governor-General for the West Indies. With a good mail service, and the telegraph, these Colonies are constantly in touch with the Colonial Office. But it would be of advantage if the Governors of the West Indian Colonies could confer annually, being attended by such members of their staffs as they need. These conferences would aim at co-operation and uniformity in the laws, and general business of the Colonies, and could be held in each Colony in turn. The facilities afforded by the new mail service, and other steamers, can be utilised in this direction. With such an arrangement the Confederate Council could consist of the four Governors of the Antilles, Trinidad, British Guiana and Jamaica, with such numbers of their staffs as they wish, the Imperial Commissioner of Agriculture for the West Indies, the General Officer commanding the troops in the West Indies, the Senior Naval Officer on the station, the Archbishop of the West Indies, the Archbishop of Port of Spain, the Federal Treasurer, and such prominent West Indians as the Secretary of State nominates from time to time. Each Colony would pay the cost of transport of its own officials, and the transport of the others could be paid from confederate funds. The Confederate Council need not exceed 20 in number, and would dispose of the funds contributed by each Island for confederate expenses. The President, *ex officio*, would be the Governor of the Colony where the Council meets. The nominated Councils in each Island would be able to give the Governors all the advice they require through their administrators, and there would be four Governments in the West Indies instead of six, as at present.

No one who knows the West Indies could say that they are ripe at present for representative Government, whatever they may

be in the future. With a rapid mail service, landowners live in England when they can, instead of on their estates, as in the old days, and the best men are not available for local assemblies. The men whose money is in the land, and who are educated, and able to give good advice, join the West India Committee, and go to Downing Street in person. This material can be organised into a West Indian Advisory Council, if the Secretary of State requires their help.

Two things are needed to develop the West Indies besides improved government, one is capital, the other is labour. Since the Brussels Convention was entered into, capital has been coming into the West Indies, though slowly. If Canadians would wake up it would come more rapidly. There are many sound projects for Canadian capital in these Islands in hotels, electric lighting, railways, harbour works, fruit steamers, central sugar factories, cotton and sugar planting, &c. It cannot be said the present agricultural labour is good, nor is it cheap; the negro's wants are few, and he prefers to work for himself, rather than for the white man. Where cane farming, rice farming, and cotton planting exist, the best result can be obtained from negro labour by sharing profits, not by paying wages. One of the alternatives to negro labour is the importation of indentured Indian coolies, which, though troublesome, seems to be a success in British Guiana and Trinidad. The English engineers of the harbour works at La Guayra, in Venezuela, found that their best labourers were Spaniards from the Canaries, who are white men, and require higher pay than the negroes, but are far cheaper in the end. One advantage of this class of labour is they do not settle in foreign lands, but return to their native country. Neither Chinese nor Japanese labour is wanted in the West Indies, though there is no doubt as to its cheapness and efficiency. As regards the proposal for the exchange of the West Indies for the Philippines, recently made in a London review, no British Government could consent to such an arrangement, by which they would lose heavily. The West Indian Colonies may be backward, but they do not require an arduous campaign, costing millions, to subjugate an uncivilized warlike race, such as is found in some parts of the Philippines,

before they can be developed. Besides this, the people are too loyal to wish for any change of flag, however much the United States may want them to join the union. Nor have the United States the class of men available for civil service, such as are to be found serving in the West Indies for very moderate salaries, and living up to the best traditions of the English public service for honesty and straight dealing.

The question of a common tariff for the West Indies will, no doubt, be considered at the approaching Conference to discuss trade relations with Canada, which it is proposed to hold in the near future, on the initiative of the Imperial Commissioner of Agriculture for the West Indies. It is to be hoped that one result of this Conference will be a common tariff, so far as is possible, and common revenue regulations, with free trade between the Islands, a preference to British and Colonial goods, and reciprocity to those countries which give the West Indies reciprocity. The success of the present Quarantine Conference shows how useful the services of a tariff expert would be to assist this Conference at arriving at some practical result. A reference to the Colonial Office List for 1907 will show that the population of the West Indies, British Guiana, British Honduras, the Bahamas and Bermuda in 1906 was 2,078,477; the public debt was £6,937,494, the total imports were £10,229,196, and the total exports were £9,355,139; a trade worth cultivating by Canada. The best policy for the West Indies is the closest possible union with Canada, while keeping on the best terms with the United States. A Government Commissioner, travelling in Canada for the West Indies, and one travelling in the West Indies for Canada, would be of the greatest help in promoting trade between the two countries. With the Canadian market, and with good management, the future of the West Indies is well assured, especially if good fruit steamers are built to run between the Islands and Canada, and a West Indian sugar refinery is put up in Halifax or Montreal, owned by the planters themselves and their friends, in connection with the central factories in each island. There is no German bounty-fed beet sugar in Canada, and no free imports.

The "COLONIAL OFFICE JOURNAL" for July, 1908, contained the following article by Mr. R. H. McCARTHY, C.M.G. :—

NOTES ON WEST INDIAN FEDERATION.

The April issue of the "Colonial Office Journal" contains an article on the Future of the West Indies, in which confederation is discussed, and this part of the subject is also touched upon by the Editors. An old and interesting part of the Empire, the West Indies collectively display an absence of that vitality which is as conspicuous elsewhere in the British Dominions. From time to time palliatives have been administered, but the disease is deep-rooted, and there is a growing feeling that more drastic remedies are needed if these Colonies are to become prosperous, or to be rendered able to work out their own salvation.

Last year in the "Fortnightly Review" a writer, signing himself "Imperialist," proposed to exchange the West Indies for the Philippines. The proposal exhibited more boldness than wisdom, and was very effectively dealt with by Mr. Norman Lamont, M.P., in the "Contemporary," and it is here only referred to as showing the lengths to which some thinkers go in search of an effective cure. The remedy most usually dwelt upon, and the most obviously reasonable, is the union of these Colonies either by unification or confederation. The home authorities have encouraged movements in that direction, but so far the only result has been the federation of the Leeward Islands. It is to be feared that one consequence of this step has been to discredit the idea of federation. With an area of 704 square miles, a population of 130,000, and a total revenue of £120,000, this little group was given five executive and five legislative councils, with 47 and 73 members respectively, while each port continued to levy customs duties on imports from the other ports. Unification would apparently have been more appropriate in this case than federation, whose machinery is unsuited to units so small. The "Journal" article already referred to advocates union over a larger area, while regarding the confederation of the whole of the West Indies as impracticable. This makes the question one of degree, but it is not quite easy to prove that while union over,

say, a line of 500 miles is advisable, it would be unworkable over a line of 1,000 or even 1,500. In passing, the author's suggestion may be noted that even the Governors of Colonies outside the confederation, with members of their staffs, should be invited to general conferences with the authorities of the federated Colonies. This suggestion seems to weaken somewhat the argument against a wider federation, as it implies the existence of common interests.

The present writer would welcome the confederation of Barbados, the Windward, and the Leeward Islands as a step in the right direction. However, while admitting that there are difficulties attending a larger scheme (about most things worth doing there are difficulties), he is satisfied that they are not insuperable; and as a contribution to the discussion he will examine, necessarily very briefly, the objections most commonly urged. These are:—

1. *Mutual remoteness, lack of means of communication, and diversity of laws, races and interests.*

2. *Consequent difficulties of administration, conspicuously with reference to inspection by Governor, or Governor-General. Alleged to be easier practically to govern from London.*

3. *Disinclination on the part of the West Indies, with which the initiative rests. Difference in resources and unfairness of partnership to the more prosperous.*

4. *Absence of advantages.*

Distance, communication and diversity.—The Australian Commonwealth measures approximately 2,700 miles by 2,000, and Canada covers from east to west over 3,000 miles, but the remoteness of the various parts has not prevented confederation. In these cases land forms the barrier of distance, and in that of the West Indies, water, a difference entirely in favour of the West Indies, though the fact is not always realized. When you have at immense expense spanned a continent with a railway, you have only rendered accessible a strip on either side, while on the sea you already have an easy road in whatever direction the head of a vessel is turned. Were the Atlantic land instead of water, probably the West Indies would still await their discoverer. Take

a local illustration. Practically, as regards ease, speed, or cheapness of transit, is not the capital of British Guiana nearer to Jamaica than to her own interior, say, 300 miles away?

It is true that means of inter-communication both by steamer and by telegraph are defective, and urgently call for improvement. If a reform be instituted which is needed in any case, the present defects will cease to be an argument against federation. On the other hand, had the West Indies a single authority and a joint purse these defects would, beyond any reasonable doubt, be speedily removed.

Assimilation of laws would be useful, and would probably take place by degrees were the Colonies under one legislature, but it is not absolutely necessary. Even now the laws of England, Ireland, and Scotland present many discrepancies.

The alleged diversity of interests is purely imaginary. There is more of such diversity in any one English county than there is throughout the whole of the West Indies, which are—broadly speaking, of course—purely agricultural, and with no greater variety of products than may be found on a single English farm.

Racial diversity is an equally fanciful difficulty. Trinidad alone has as varied an assortment of races as have the West Indies collectively.

Difficulties of administration.—Surely too much stress is laid on frequent visits by a Governor (why “Governor-General”?). Is there any large state or dependency whose every part is frequently visited by its head?

How often does the Governor-General of Canada visit Vancouver, or even Winnipeg? or the Viceroy of India ten per cent. of the cities in his charge? One is tempted to ask a similar question respecting the Governors of Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana. During a recent tour Sir Henry McCallum was told by the inhabitants of an important district in Ceylon that they had not seen a Governor for 25 or 30 years. It is suggested that except for perhaps an annual tour, occupying a month or so, the Governor of the West Indies would be better employed at headquarters, leaving inspection to his officers. With a special steamer, preferably a man-of-war, he would be actually at sea about ten days,

Governing the West Indies from London and government from a local centre have scarcely a feature in common. Even if the Secretary of State had such a body of advisers as the Indian Council, that is to say of men who had spent many years on the spot, and were familiar with local circumstances, there would still be a very material difference. Government by cable has its disadvantages, and in practice a distance of 4,000 miles is a factor of some importance. A Governor stationed in, suppose, Barbados, would be fairly near any part of the West Indies, and could within three days reach any Colony. Meanwhile, he would have at his side officers possessing an intimate knowledge of every Colony.

West Indian disinclination or indifference.—Bearing in mind the number of separate governments in the West Indies, and the arguments based on the remoteness and difficulties of communication, it seems unreasonable to expect these small communities to take the initiative in a movement as important and whose details are necessarily complicated. It will also be remembered that West Indians have long been struggling with economic troubles, with the heart-sickness engendered by hopes deferred. Nor must it be forgotten that the Crown Colony system of government, whatever be its merits, and however necessary it may be in the West Indies, does not encourage initiative.

An objection commonly urged in the West Indies is based on the relative poverty of some of the Colonies. "Why should we be linked with a miserable island like ——?" is a natural question. However, everything depends on the financial arrangements made. It would be possible to keep the purses separate, each Colony making a contribution to the Federal exchequer. That is not to be recommended, and in the opinion of the writer the best means of meeting this difficulty is by what may be called a wedding gift from the Mother Country on the occasion of the happy union. What direction this should take there is no need to discuss. It might take that of wiping out certain debts, or of a contribution towards setting up house; whatever its direction, it might be made to serve the purpose of removing glaring inequalities. The expectation of such a gift is not unwarranted. These Colonies have contributed largely to the wealth of Great Britain in the past;

now that many of them have fallen on evil times they have a claim to assistance. There is a more material reason. Looking back over the long list of grants and subsidies to the West Indies, it evidently would be well worth the while of Great Britain to contribute handsomely towards an arrangement calculated to put a stop to the stream of doles, and to diminish her responsibility for the poorer members of the group.

Absence of Advantage.—This point could not be discussed adequately except at considerable length, and here the benefits which might be expected will only be briefly indicated.

What has led to the development of the family into the tribe and thence into the nation? What prompted confederation in Canada and Australia, and is going to bring it about in South Africa? The knowledge that union is strength. In contiguous communities like those of the West Indies, mainly of the same race, with histories very similar, subject to the same economic conditions, and free from commercial rivalry, it must be obvious that Customs barriers, differences in laws, separate administrations and separate treasuries mean loss and inconvenience, and, in external affairs, weakness. How little is known in Britain of the West Indies, and how little attention their affairs receive from the public! For weeks together these Colonies are unmentioned in the London Press. The fact must be recognised that the West Indies do not fill a large space in the public eye. Compared with other possessions, they are small and poor. Excluding British Guiana and the Bahamas, their total area is 7,500 square miles. That of the comparatively insignificant Gold Coast Colony is 40,000, of Northern Nigeria 310,000, and of Australia nearly three million square miles. These possessions appeal more strongly to the investing public, and touch more forcibly the pride and the imagination of the masses than do small Colonies which, whatever their past, are now best known by their misfortunes. The combined West Indies, though still relatively small, would have more weight than they have now, and the existence of a common treasury, by enabling them to help one another and to dispense with Imperial doles, would cause them to be held in more respect by the materially minded, and would at the same time improve their credit.

The best thing done for the West Indies during the past fifty years has been the establishment of the Imperial Department of Agriculture. The Department derives strength from its centralised character, but at the same time its independence of local authority is a source of weakness. Similar work would undoubtedly be carried on, and under more favourable conditions, by a federal government. Science has, speaking generally, overlooked the West Indies, because the separate Colonies cannot afford such a luxury. Education, defence, communications—these are only some of the many matters for efficiently dealing with which a central authority and a joint treasury are necessary. It is said that much might be done by conferences. These have an educational value, but they are necessarily only advisory, and confined to one subject, and they could not be a substitute for a central legislature and executive.

If it were possible to calculate the total cost to the West Indies of the barriers they erect against one another by Customs tariffs and quarantine restrictions, it would be universally admitted to be appalling. If delay and expense be inflicted on your carriers, and obstacles be thrown in the way of your traders, sooner or later you pay for it in one form or another. Lately, on the initiative of the Colonial Office, quarantine law and practice, both of them discreditable to British communities, were amended, and, as was hoped, made uniform. A great deal of discretionary power, however, was left to the different health officers, with the result that the degree of loyalty and intelligence with which the law is now administered varies very considerably, and in the absence of central executive control uniformity shows an irresistible tendency to disappear, and with it much of the value of reform.

Though the average rate of pay in the West Indian Public Service is considerably below that of public departments at home, in spite of the lower cost of living in Britain, and very many of the officers are miserably underpaid, the total cost of administration is out of all proportion to the resources of these Colonies. This fact is mainly due to the number of separate governments, each with its crowd of small separate departments. Not only Governors, but other officers with high-sounding titles, are by far

too numerous, and to a great extent they are necessarily employed on work which might well be committed to cheaper men, were there more centralisation, with an efficient system of supervision. One result of federation would be a great reduction in the number of these high officials.

The writer, however, lays less stress on economy than on the increased efficiency which might be expected. The want of uniformity in the conditions of service precludes the free movement of officers between the Colonies. In one Colony no pension is payable unless a man has served in it for ten years; in another an officer is compelled to contribute to his own pension; scales of salary vary, not with the volume or nature of the work, but with the financial position of the respective Colonies; and the policy, explicable but disastrous, of regarding recruits from outside as trespassers, prevails almost throughout the West Indies. Some years ago, in the course of a Parliamentary enquiry, attention was called to the large sums spent by certain departments. At home, on the removal of officers, it was explained that the money was considered to be well spent in keeping men fresh and broadening their experience. A similar policy might be adopted, with immense advantage, in the West Indies, the drawbacks attending the retention of a public officer in one small community for many years, especially if he be a native of the place, being very grave. A Public Service, properly paid and graded, such as is found for the Eastern Colonies by open competition, would be by far more efficient, and probably, in the end, be far cheaper than is the present service. The formation of such a service, which is practically impossible in present circumstances, would be one of the most striking benefits likely to accrue through federation.

Other advantages might be anticipated from confederation, but the writer thinks that the case for union rests securely on the following:—Increased ability to develop resources and to meet passing difficulties by means of a central authority and a common exchequer; increased intercourse and trade through the abolition of Customs barriers; more liberal quarantine administration; improved means of steam and telegraphic communication; the growth of a more progressive spirit and of wider views in legislation; greater administrative efficiency, and probably economy, by

the consolidation of establishments ; more influence in England and elsewhere in advancing West Indian interests ; and improvement of West Indian credit by mutual assistance and independence of help from outside.

Comment by the "WEST INDIA COMMITTEE CIRCULAR," from 1908-1911, on the Federation and Unification of the West Indies, and the Annexation of the Bahamas to Canada or the incorporation of the Bahamas with the Dominion of Canada.

POLITICAL OR COMMERCIAL FEDERATION ?

1

The closer trade relations between the West Indies and Canada have brought about a revival of the question of West Indian federation, and we have received the usual contributions to the literature of the subject from armchair economists on this side. There is no doubt that to the outside and uninitiated observer the cost of government of our West Indian Colonies appears enormous. Islands, individual or collected into small groups, are seen possessing apparently expensive systems of official control, with consequent high cost of management per head of population, and, at first sight, an amalgamation of departments, whereby a reduction of staff and expenditure could be obtained, would seem a self-evident course to pursue. The machinery of government, however, would have to exist on each Island, and there would have to be a responsible head on each, no matter by what name he might be called. The small groups of Islands which, on account of their contiguity, lend themselves to confederation, are already federated as the Windward and Leeward Islands, and Tobago has been attached to Trinidad. When it comes, however, to dealing with Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica and British Guiana it is quite another question. Barbados and British Guiana have their representative form of government, which they naturally would be unwilling to give up. Besides, the latter Colony, with its enormous area awaiting development, requires especial handling, which can only be done by the man on the spot. Jamaica and Trinidad, it is true, are Crown Colonies, although the non-official members of the Council of the former are elected by the people,

but when the great interests involved and the distance between the Islands—over 1,000 miles—are considered, what would be gained by confederating the machinery of their control? It is this question of distance, indeed, coupled with the individual requirements of the several units, which so complicates the question. In fact, a Governor-General would have to have his home upon the sea, and would be nothing more or less than a travelling agent of the Colonial Office, while a considerable touring judicial staff would have to be maintained. When, however, it comes to a question of commercial and industrial federation, we feel that there is ample scope and opportunity for combination. The old and mistaken view that the interest of each industry and trade stands apart from its fellows is fast disappearing. The sugar industry of British Guiana has an interest in the maintenance of the cacao industry of Grenada, the prosperity of the fruit industry of Jamaica, or the development of the lime industry of Dominica as well as in its own welfare; for the prosperity of any one part of the West Indies is a factor in the prosperity of the whole. It may be that amalgamation of government and uniformity of laws may in theory be of benefit to the West Indies, although we confess that at the present moment we do not see how this can in practice be carried out; but what would be of paramount good would be the greater blending of the industrial and commercial interests. With this in view we would like to see the formation of a federated commercial and industrial West Indian Parliament, meeting regularly, and keeping a watchful eye on the external and internal industrial and commercial interests of the West Indies. Such a body, thoroughly representative, would constitute a force in the affairs of the West Indies which could not fail to make itself felt at home and abroad. Meeting periodically, the several interests would be strengthened by the unanimity of action which would result from the deliberations, and while concerted control of outside trade would thus be obtained, the representations of such a body on their home affairs could not be disregarded by any Government which might be in power. In this way a step towards practical federation would be made which, although not realising the Utopia of a self-governing West Indian Commonwealth, would materially help in the direction of progress.

WEST INDIAN FEDERATION.

2

The subject of West Indian confederation has recently been dealt with in the "Colonial Office Journal" in articles by Dr. G. B. Mason and Mr. R. H. McCarthy, and in a letter from Mr. J. Rippon. These gentlemen are so closely connected with the West Indies that their views are deserving of every consideration. The main point of Dr. Mason's suggestion is that the Governorship of the Leeward and Windward Islands should be incorporated with that of Barbados, with a diminution in the judicial staff of these Islands, and the formation of a Confederate Council. Mr. McCarthy is nothing if not thorough, and he advocates complete administrative reform; even to the extent of the formation of a West Indian Civil Service on the lines of the East Indian. His is essentially a scheme *de luxe*. A Governor-General in Barbados—an administrator in each Colony—fewer, it is true, highly-paid subordinates, with a higher average of general official pay—a civil service recruited from the successful candidates at high test examinations, and complete and rapid means of official transit between the several dependencies, would no doubt afford an ideal confederated administration. But it would be based on efficiency rather than economy. There are, however, two great difficulties in the way of carrying out such a scheme, which Mr. McCarthy has not taken into account. The one is that there are no less than four different systems of government in the West Indies, from the Crown Colony pure and simple to the representative institutions of Barbados and British Guiana. The amalgamation of these into one—for that would be an essential part of the success of such a scheme as Mr. McCarthy's—would be full of difficulty. It would mean that representative government would have to be extended throughout the whole of the West Indies and the Crown Colony system abandoned, whether advisable or not, for no Colony possessing such inalienable constitutional rights as self-taxation and independence in domestic legislation would be content to go back to a Crown Colony form of government. The other objection is the cost, which the West Indies are not in a position to stand at present. Such a confederated administration may come in time, and we hope it will, but it must be arrived at as the outcome of

other methods, and to these Mr. Rippon supplies the keynote when he advocates the formation of a Central Council to deal primarily with questions of common interest concerning trade and commerce. As we have already stated in these pages, commercial confederation should be the first step towards a unified West Indies, and this is what Mr. Rippon's suggestion would, if adopted, practically lead to. What is wanted is commercial solidarity based on uniformity of interest. It is in tariffs rather than red tape that the future of these Colonies lies, and an officially recognised commercial body fully representative of all sorts and conditions of commerce and industry is what is required in the West Indies in the first instance. The fostering of trade thus effected would mean increased welfare throughout, and the intercommunion thus brought about would automatically lead to administrative uniformity. The action recently taken by Barbados in passing a tariff which gives preferential rates to Canada in return for similar concessions is of a kind which should have been formulated by such a body representing the whole of the West Indies. By laying down the general principle that confederation is the correct thing, and by carefully applying that principle to the conditions as they arise, the whole problem will be solved satisfactorily. We should not, indeed, be surprised if, in a much shorter time than most could anticipate, a working scheme based on the lines we have indicated were evolved, resulting in a confederated West Indies, confederated not simply in administration, but in trade, commerce and industry. But no scheme will or ought to be entertained by the West Indies which would fetter or impair in any one of the communities its constitutional right of self-taxation and domestic legislation by elected representatives in the several legislative bodies.

A PLEA FOR UNIFICATION.

3

The terms of reference to the Royal Commission on trade between Canada and the West Indies were wide, and we shall be very much disappointed if the Commissioners do not have something to say in their report—the publication of which may be expected at an early date—about the unification of the West Indies, as to the

desirability of which there can be no two opinions, and about the present deplorable absence of uniformity in nearly everything that concerns these Colonies, and the inconveniences which arise from it. Unification can, as it seems to us, be effected in many respects short of actual political federation without the least difficulty, and the sooner the wheels are put in motion with that end in view the better will it be for the West Indies. At present there is a lamentable lack of uniformity about their legislation, Customs arrangements—as we are reminded by the present dispute in British Guiana—tariffs, medical and postal services and the like, which undoubtedly hinders progress and leads to differences of opinion, jealousies, and the isolation of individual Colonies of the West Indian group one from another. Without any violent upheaval it should surely be possible to bring about improvement. The initiative must rest with the Colonial Office, and in many directions steps might be taken towards centralisation and uniformity in the particular matters mentioned above, which should certainly not arouse opposition but prove valuable, not only in their immediate results but for the lessons which they would teach by showing the immense advantages of joint action. In this respect the Imperial Department of Agriculture has been a useful object lesson, for, though its active operations have been confined to Barbados and the Windward and Leeward Islands, it has helped to weld those Islands together by a community of interest, while the annual conferences have brought agriculturists from all parts of the West Indies, including British Guiana, into closer touch than they have ever been brought before. So, too, the West India Committee may fairly claim to have done something towards bringing about united action and a closer understanding between the residents in the West Indies, though modesty prevents our dilating upon this theme. Political federation may be a dream of the future; but unification should be a matter for the present time. Absolute uniformity in all respects would be too much to hope for where the economic products of the different Islands vary so much, rendering it hard to devise a uniform system of raising revenue, but many anomalies, which at present bewilder shippers, might be swept away. One has only to glance at the list of existing import duties to recognise the absurdity of the present system. Opening it at random we find

under the heading "Milk, preserved," no less than *ten* different rates of duty, varying from $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. in Dominica to 20 per cent *ad valorem* in the case of the Bahamas; and so it is with practically every article on the list! Then, again, there can be no possible reason why the medical, postal and civil services generally should not be unified. A general West Indian civil service would offer many and great advantages. It would be conducive to greater efficiency, improving as it would the chances of promotion, the absence of which must lead to stagnation and prevent many parents from putting their sons into the service. With unification the West Indies would be able to speak with a far more powerful voice. They would have practical entity in the Empire instead of losing, as they do now, their individuality under the general title of Crown Colonies. There are few who would venture to deny that, if the West Indies had enjoyed unification in the past, the revival of prosperity which they are now enjoying would have come to them far earlier.

THE CALL FOR UNIFORMITY.

The sittings of the Imperial Conference and the notes of their proceedings reported from day to day cannot fail to emphasize and to bring home to every man who thinks upon the subject the anomalous, not to say ignominious, position of the West Indies. Here are a group of Colonies, whose history is part of the inheritance of the Mother Country, whose trade is constant and increasing, whose loyalty is proverbial (though it has cost them much in days not far distant), with no status whatever in this great consultative Council of the Empire. Matters may be discussed in which they are intimately concerned, such as Imperial Defence and Steamship and Cable Communication; yet they can put forward no views, make no suggestion. New Zealand, with a population of barely over 1,000,000, and Newfoundland with less than 300,000 inhabitants, are taking an active part in every discussion; but the opinion of the British West Indies, with an aggregate population of 1,700,000, is unheard, and unacknowledged. Of course we all know the reason. It is because they are a group, and cannot speak with one voice and under one authority. In an article on August

29th, 1910, we expressed the hope that the Report of the Royal Commission on Trade between Canada and the West Indies might have something to say on the importance of unification of some sort among these Colonies ; but, wide as the terms of reference were, the Commissioners seem to have thought that matter outside their scope. It seems to us, however, that the time has now come when the subject can be discussed calmly and dispassionately. No one now believes what Mr. Pope Hennessy wrote to Lord Carnarvon on March 11th, 1876, that "Confederation would be the most natural and effective remedy for widespread poverty and growing crime"; but all sensible people have come to the conclusion that greater union between the Islands themselves, and British Guiana and British Honduras, must add to their strength, prosperity, and influence. As to the union of the whole under one nominal chief, that is essentially a political question, and one which any Government would require to consider very carefully. We are quite sure that they would not wish to destroy old existing constitutions, nor to mix up the finances of particular Colonies. But something on a larger scale may be attempted somewhat similar to the present constitution of the Leeward Islands. These Islands consist of five presidencies, all of them (except the Virgin Islands) having their own local legislatures. The five presidencies make up the Colony of the Leeward Islands, which is administered by a Governor, to whom the Administrators and Commissioners are subordinate, and which has also a general Legislative Council, possessing concurrent legislative powers with the local legislatures on certain subjects. Even the initiation of such a modified scheme as this should start from the Islands themselves, and opportunities of ample discussion should be given. It seems to us that at this juncture the matter might well form the subject of an Intercolonial Conference on the lines of those held in Barbados with reference to the quarantine laws, or when the Royal Mail Steam contract was being considered. There are many matters, even now, ripe for consideration, not for settlement. Quarantine has, we hope, been disposed of at least for a time ; but there are many anomalies concerning intercolonial passenger and freight rates and telegraphic communication which might conveniently engage immediate attention. Again, why should there not be uniformity of practice in such

matters as the registration of titles, in the usage in regard to bills of exchange and promissory notes, in bankruptcy laws and so forth. A uniform customs tariff may not be immediately obtainable, but considerable progress towards that end might be made even now by securing some uniformity of definition under the existing tariffs. Then there is an entire lack of uniformity among the systems of law prevailing in these Colonies. There is no better system than the Roman law, which forms the basis of jurisprudence in British Guiana, but it has been so much overlaid with judge-made law that it is often hardly recognisable. Is it too much to hope that one system of law might be devised for the whole of the West Indies? Then there is infinite diversity in the custom of practice before the courts. In Barbados, English Scotch and Irish solicitors may practise without examination. No one can practise as a barrister unless he has been called to the Bar in England or Ireland, or admitted as an advocate in Scotland. In British Guiana, persons admitted as solicitors are not thereby entitled to practise as barristers; but, if qualified as barristers, are not debarred from practising in both branches of the profession. In British Honduras there is no distinction between a barrister and a solicitor. In St. Lucia every barrister may practise as a solicitor, and so on. Surely it would not be difficult to come to an agreement upon such a subject as this. If any or all of the above points could be arranged, a great step would be gained towards the fusion of common interests, and we believe that deliberations entered upon with the view of finding common ground by mutual concessions and the laying aside of local jealousies would be productive of fruitful results. It must not be forgotten that there is already an ecclesiastic province of the West Indies, of which all the Bishops are members, and the Metropolitan—at present the Archbishop of the West Indies—is the head. The meetings of the Synod are held every three years in the different dioceses by rotation. We have thrown out these suggestions, because no harm, at all events, can accrue from discussing them, and the more they are discussed the more reasonable, we are convinced, they will appear to be. The Press can do much to help, if they approach the subject with a broad mind, and not in a partisan spirit. As the "Times" said in its

Empire number of 1910: "All the interests of the West Indies point in the direction of their closer co-operation. That their ultimate goal is to be welded together into one integral portion of the Empire seems certain. That goal may be far off, but it should never be lost sight of, and nothing should be neglected which will help to make its attainment easier."

CANADA AND THE WEST INDIES.

5

We hope that the West Indies will soon be bestirring themselves in the matter of a reciprocal trade arrangement with Canada, and that the Secretary of State for the Colonies' will—if he has not done so already—intimate to the Dominion Ministers the readiness of those Colonies (Jamaica and Grenada excepted) to open up negotiations with this end in view. Meanwhile, Sir William Grey Wilson, the Governor of the Bahamas, who has been paying a visit to Ottawa, has, it is reported, been advocating the political union with Canada of "the Bahamas and the other Colonies in the West Indies," which would, he proposed, be given the status of a province sending members to the Ottawa Parliament. As far as the Bahamas are concerned, Sir William Grey-Wilson's brief was, no doubt, the resolution passed by the House of Assembly of the Bahamas earlier in the present year, on the occasion of the holiday visit of a prominent managing director of a Canadian Life Insurance Company, in which they favoured an enquiry by His Excellency as to the terms on which the Dominion of Canada would admit those Islands into the confederation. For the other West Indian Colonies, however, he held no such brief, and we cannot help thinking that his suggestion, which seems to us premature, and, if we may be pardoned for adding it, unwise, will be resented in most of our West Indian Colonies. We are not aware that there is any wish in the West Indies for federation with Canada at the present time. Indeed, in many of the Islands any such suggestion would be met by determined opposition. Again, in Canada there is certainly no feeling among thinking people in favour of making the West Indies a province of the Dominion, even if it were possible under the British North America Act of 1867. An Ottawa despatch,

which appears in our contemporary the "Montreal Daily Witness," airily states that "an organic union, such as the Bahamas are asking, could be brought about by simply transferring the appointive (*sic*) power from London to Ottawa, in regard to the Legislative Council of the Islands, commercial union being, of course, an integral part of the arrangement." If Canada were to appoint the members of the Legislature it is to be assumed that she would also have the power of appointment to the civil service. Would a Canadian be preferable to an Imperial civil service? Another most serious obstacle would be the question of representation. The population of Canada is 7,100,000; that of the West Indies is over 1,500,000. Representation at Ottawa is, we believe, arranged on a numerical basis. Would Canada accord to the West Indies one-fifth of the seats in the Dominion Parliament? The thing is unthinkable. Sir William Grey-Wilson is reported to have stated that "the franchise qualifications would be set at a high standard, so as to obviate the difficulties connected with the negro vote." This suggestion is so un-British that we sincerely hope that Sir William has been incorrectly reported. What the West Indies want is a commercial arrangement with Canada—a reciprocal trade agreement on the lines of that recommended by the Royal Commission on Trade between Canada and the West Indies. The population of Canada is increasing by leaps and bounds, and the outlook for closer trade between the Dominion and the West Indies is full of promise, assuming that the refiners' privilege of importing foreign sugar on the terms of the British preferential tariff is withdrawn. It would certainly be a grave mistake to drag the red herring of "annexation," as some of our friends have called it, across the track. The attitude of Mr. R. L. Borden, Minister at Ottawa, is known to be favourable towards reciprocal trade within the Empire. The Hon. G. E. Foster, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, may be said to be the father of the movement for closer trade between Canada and the West Indies. Let us keep to that for the present at any rate, and try by all means in our power to get that matter through, and to prevent the Report of the Royal Commission being pigeon-holed.

DISCUSSION AT THE WEST INDIAN CLUB.

MARCH 10TH, 1909.

During this discussion, in which prominent members of the West Indian Community took part, it was generally admitted that some plan of union was necessary, if not urgent, by reason of the smallness of each market, and the impossibility of securing for each a voice of any weight in matters affecting its vital interests.

The formation of a league, similar to that which was called into existence to deal with the Sugar Bounties, was recommended—and the title suggested was the “United West Indies League”—to promote unification and to start and maintain some plan of advocacy towards the desired end. It was deemed necessary that such a body should be appointed in the Colonies, which would become the backbone of a “United West Indies.”

In view of the difficulties which had to be met when forming the South African Union, it was considered that there were no obstacles to the scheme in the West Indies, which could not be similarly and successfully overcome, but the movement towards a union must come from “within.”

The following paper was submitted to the Royal Commissioners on Trade Relations between Canada and the West Indies by the Hon. D. S. de FREITAS of Grenada, on March 1st, 1910.

DELIBERATIVE CONVENTION.

The British West Indian Islands and Demerara should combine for the purpose of discussing questions and promoting objects of interest.

While I do not pretend to say that the trend of the West Indian mind is strongly towards federation, I think it may be asserted that in recent years a consciousness of kinship has been growing from strength to strength among the British West Indian Islands. Anything in the nature of concerted action must be informed by senti-

ment to possess vitality and stability. In my opinion a reciprocal sentiment, born of many causes, does exist among these Islands. But to be fruitful it must be sentiment not without organization, and a sentiment that will be sustained by common advantage and common interest. There can be no question that by concerted action the British West Indies will achieve results greatly to their common advantage.

Without attempting to formulate anything in the nature of a complete scheme, it may be suggested in outline that the proposed combination should take the form of a central authority, comprising representatives from Demerara and the British West Indian Islands, to be chosen probably from the members of their respective legislatures, and to deal with such common subjects and questions as :—

- (a) Steam Communication, Shipping and Freight Charges.
 - (b) Trade and Commerce.
 - (c) Postal and Telegraph Service.
 - (d) Quarantine.
 - (e) Marine and Fire Insurance.
 - (f) The establishment of a single system of Commercial Jurisprudence.
 - (g) The establishment of a uniform and simple system of registration of properties and of securities on properties.
 - (h) Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes.
 - (i) Bankruptcy and Insolvency.
- &c., &c., &c.

Any policy or decision stamped with the concurrence of Demerara and of the British West Indies will carry weight and call for clear recognition. There is no intention that the proposed combination should detract from the individual life and force of any of the members of it ; still less is it contemplated to abridge their control of their local affairs and legislation and their liberties in respect of self-taxation. To begin with, the central authority should fulfil the functions of a deliberative convention, using their efforts to strengthen the influence and unify the interest of the various Islands and to promote the common welfare. At this stage I am decidedly of opinion that they should be invested with neither executive nor

legislative powers. In course of time it is to be hoped there will spring up within and among the several Islands a larger spirit leading them to the formation of a real union. It should be the grand ambition of the central authority to breathe this larger hope in the British West Indies.

D. S. DE FREITAS.

UNIFICATION.

Blue Book Cd. 5369 of 1910 contains the following paragraphs in the Instructions to and in the Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Relations between Canada and the West Indies, which was appointed to obtain facts and report as to the steps which can and should be taken in order to secure, encourage and develop mutual trading facilities.

The members of the Commission were :

The RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH,
P.C., K.T.

The HONOURABLE WILLIAM STEVENS FIELDING (CANADA).

The HONOURABLE WILLIAM PATERSON (CANADA).

SIR JOHN POYNDR DICKSON-POYNDR, BART.
D.S.O., M.P.

SIR DANIEL MORRIS, K.C.M.G.

HUBERT RUSSELL COWELL, ESQ., B.A., Secretary.

ROBERT H. MCCARTHY, ESQ., C.M.G., Expert Adviser.

N.B.—The Hon. W. S. Fielding was unable to visit the West Indies.

They should consider, having regard to the views which have been expressed by the Canadian Government, how far, in framing any reciprocal trade arrangement between Canada and the British West Indies, it may be either possible or desirable to deal with the British West Indies collectively, and whether it may not be well, while framing an arrangement applicable to all, to make the application permissive in the case of the individual Colonies, so that those Colonies which may be willing to accept the proposals at once may do so, and the others may have the option of adhering at a later date.

While thus having regard to the interests and the inclinations of the separate West Indian Colonies, so that they may receive every consideration consistent with due regard to the interest of Canada, the Commissioners should bear in mind that any recommendations which they can make in the direction of a uniform system of customs duties for the British West Indies will be for the benefit of those Colonies, and tend to facilitate the objects of the inquiry.

The Canadian Government, in view of the difficulties foreseen in the conclusion of separate reciprocity agreements with the several West Indian Colonies, proposed that the whole subject should be further considered by a conference organised by Imperial authority in the form of a Royal Commission or otherwise. The report of the Committee of the Privy Council of Canada on the subject is printed as an appendix to the Commission in which His Majesty King Edward was pleased to appoint us to inquire into the questions that had arisen.

The desirability of a uniform tariff for the West Indies has been suggested, and it is certain that if such a tariff could be established to the satisfaction of all the Colonies it would be a great improvement on the present state of affairs. Apart altogether from the immediate subject of preference, the establishing of such a uniform tariff would simplify the commercial relations of the West Indian Colonies with other countries, and would have a unifying effect, which in the circumstances of these Colonies is most desirable. But we realise that for the reasons already stated, and for other reasons, there is little probability of the various Colonies being able at present to agree upon the details of a uniform tariff.

If the problem of preference could only be considered along these lines we should fear that the barriers in the way of its solution were too serious to be overcome. But we are of opinion that a method may be found which will avoid the obstacles to which we have referred, and leave to the respective Colonies all reasonable freedom in the arrangement of their financial affairs.

What appears to be necessary, however, is not a uniformity of tariff for the West Indies, however desirable that may be; not even a uniformity as to method of creating the preference—whether by increase or diminution of duties—but that a uniform minimum

amount of preference should be established, and that so long as that minimum is recognised and provided for, each of the Colonies should be left free, so far as any agreement with Canada is concerned, to impose whatever duties may be deemed necessary for the purposes of the Colony.

The Canadian Government in their Privy Council Report already referred to pointed out the difficulty of Canada entering into a preferential agreement with one Colony only, and the desirability of having the arrangement, if made, include, if not all, a group of the Colonies.

We are hopeful that several of the larger Colonies will be disposed to enter into any scheme of reciprocity which may result from this Report. We therefore suggest a form of agreement which might be entered into between Canada and any or all of the Colonies. This form of agreement is printed in Appendix I. to this Report. Some of the Colonies no doubt would wish time for further consideration. With a view to allowing such time, and to encourage all the Colonies to participate in the proposed arrangement, we would recommend that if an agreement be made between Canada and three or more of the larger sugar-growing Colonies, the other Colonies which are not prepared immediately to become parties to the arrangement should, nevertheless, be permitted for a reasonable time to share in the concessions granted by Canada to the Colonies accepting the agreement. This privilege might, we think, be allowed to continue for a period of three years. We should hope that during that period all the West Indian Colonies would find it to their interest to become parties to the agreement, but if, after such full opportunity for consideration of the scheme, they should conclude that adherence to the agreement would not be beneficial to them, they could not reasonably complain if the Canadian concessions were then withdrawn from them, and confined to the Colonies which are prepared to grant to Canada reciprocal concessions.

It will be noted that the provisions of the agreement leave it open to any Colony to extend to any other part of the British Empire the same terms as are granted to Canada and the United Kingdom.

We have carefully considered the proposals made to us in Canada and in the West Indies, and have drawn up in Schedule A. attached

to Appendix I., a list of the articles on which, in our opinion, the West Indian Colonies might agree to extend preferential terms to Canada.

We do not intend this list to be final or comprehensive. We recommend that the Governments of the West Indian Colonies, if they are prepared, as we trust they will be, to conclude a general agreement with the Dominion Government somewhat on these lines, should appoint representatives to discuss this list with representatives of the Dominion Government and decide questions of detail regarding the several items.

It should, of course, be understood that, while such a conference would have power to modify the list in detail, the list finally agreed upon ought to be accepted or rejected in its entirety by any Colony desiring to enter into a reciprocal arrangement with Canada. It would be in the highest degree undesirable and perhaps even impossible to leave discretion to any single Colony to require a special modification of the list.

At a conference of this character it would also be possible to agree upon a uniform code of regulations for securing that only goods entitled to the preference should be admitted under the reduced rate of duty, and generally to secure a greater uniformity of practice in customs matters than exists at present in the West Indies.

On the 22nd November, 1911, a scheme for the Federation of certain of the West Indian Colonies was read by the Honourable C. Gideon Murray, Administrator of St. Vincent. The following special despatch by Reuter's Telegram Company was sent to the Colonies, and indicates the outlines of the scheme, which, together with the discussion, would seem to be fully explanatory.

LONDON, NOV. 22ND.—The Hon. C. GIDEON MURRAY, Administrator of St. Vincent, read a paper to-day before the West India Committee on the federation of certain of the West Indian Colonies, comprising Barbados, British Guiana, Trinidad and the Windward and Leeward Islands. Sir Owen Phillips, M.P., presided.

The scheme outlined by Mr. Murray expressly excluded Jamaica and the Bahamas on the ground that these Colonies have always been accustomed to act independently of other British West Indian

possessions. It, however, made provision for their inclusion in the proposed federation or union, if and when they so desire it.

Mr. Murray laid special stress on the necessity of preserving the present constitutions of the Colonies which it is sought to bring under a central government, and also of preserving the control of the various existing governments, over purely local affairs as well as taxation. He also insisted on the importance of having any definite movement in favour of political federation springing voluntarily from the West Indian Colonies ; and he stated in the clearest possible manner that the scheme he proposed to lay before the meeting had received no official imprimatur either from the Colonial Office or from the West India Committee of London.

OUTLINE OF THE SCHEME.—The following are the chief features of the scheme ; and they were presented in the form of a Draft Bill which had been put into shape, at Mr. Murray's request, by His Honour Mr. Walter S. Shaw, Chief Justice of St. Vincent :—

(1) The appointment of a Federal Council for the West Indies mainly elected by and from the members of the various local legislatures of the Colonies to be federated.

(2) This council to be so constituted as to place the unofficial members in the majority.

(3) The appointment of a High Commissioner for the West Indies, who should be "ex-officio" the President of the Federal Council—and for the present also the Governor of Trinidad.

(4) The appointment of a Secretary for West Indian Affairs, as well as a Legal Adviser responsible to the High Commissioner.

(5) The Federal Council to meet in session for the transaction of business at least once every year.

(6) The Federal Council to have supreme powers of legislation in certain important matters of common interest to the federated Colonies.

THE EXPENDITURE OF THE COLONIES.—(7) The Federal Council, however, should not have authority to legislate in any matter affecting the revenue or expenditure of the several Colonies, unless those Colonies had so authorised either in the first instance or subsequently.

(8) The abolition of the governorships of the Windward and Leeward Islands.

(9) That provision be made for the entrance into the proposed federation of any British West Indian Colony not included in the original Act.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE SALARIES AND EXPENSES SUGGESTED BY Mr. MURRAY.

The High Commissioner shall receive a salary of £6,000 and a travelling and entertaining allowance of £2,000.

The Secretary shall receive a salary of £800. There shall annually also be paid for the office expenses of the High Commissioner such sum, not exceeding £1,600, as the Council may provide.

The Legal Adviser shall receive for his services in that capacity and for other expenses a salary of £600.

The salaries payable under this Act to Federal Officers, the amounts provided by the Council for office expenses, and the necessary expenditure connected with the business of the Council shall be paid by the several Colonies in the proportion which the revenue of each Colony shall bear to the revenue of the whole of the Colonies during the preceding financial year.

Provided that so long as the High Commissioner shall also be Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, the Colony of Trinidad and Tobago shall contribute the sum of £2,500 towards such total expenses, and in such case such contribution of £2,500 shall be deducted in the first instance from the total expenses prior to calculating the proportions to be paid by the several Federated Colonies in the manner aforesaid.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. R. RUTHERFORD said: "On behalf of the West India Committee, I wish to endorse Sir Owen Philipps' words of welcome to Mr. Murray. We are much pleased to see him here to-day, and I

can assure him that we have watched with pleasure his administration of the Island of St. Vincent.

“We have all, I am sure, listened to Mr. Murray’s paper with much interest, and are indebted to him for the thought and care with which he has prepared and placed his views before us. I was glad that he made it quite clear that neither the Colonial Office nor the West India Committee in any way originated, or are in any way committed to his views, and that the scheme propounded in his able paper is in no way associated with his official position, for I am strongly of opinion that any scheme for federation ought not to come from an official source—it ought to emanate from the people, as was the case in Australia; and I was glad to hear from Mr. Murray that he agreed with this view. I lay stress on this point, as Barbados had a very bitter experience in 1876, when Sir John Pope Hennessy endeavoured to carry a scheme of confederation against the will of the people.

“From Mr. Murray’s interesting survey of the various attempts which have been made during the history of the West Indies to combine the component elements into various groups under one government, it is quite clear that those attempts have had no permanent result.

“If we examine the facts in regard to the West Indian Colonies, we shall find that the existing conditions are not so unreasonable as might be supposed, taking into consideration their individual importance, together with the distances which separate them. The Islands, although small compared with other countries, are not so small as they appear on the map. Jamaica, over 1,000 miles away from the others, has a population of 850,000, British Guiana 300,000, Trinidad 300,000, and Barbados of over 177,000. British Guiana is separated from Trinidad by 365 miles, and Trinidad is over 200 miles from Barbados.

“Mr. Murray has eliminated Jamaica from his scheme, so it is not necessary to consider the position of that Island. With regard to that portion which he described as the South-Eastern West Indian group, including British Guiana, I was glad to hear that Mr. Murray does not suggest that any alteration should be made in the forms of the constitutions of the Legislatures of the different Islands. I am

quite sure that Barbados, with its popularly elected House of Assembly and nominated Legislative Council, which, next to the British House of Commons and the House of Assembly of Bermuda, is the most ancient legislative body in the King's dominions, would strongly resent any interference.

“I feel doubtful whether any material advantage is to be derived from having a High Commissioner, as proposed by Mr. Murray, the cost of such an officer, with the attendant administration, would be out of all proportion to his utility.

“Then, with regard to the proposal that the Federal Council should hold sessions once a year, where would these be held, and on what basis is the number of members for each Colony to be appointed? It must be remembered that, in the West Indies, there does not exist a large leisured class, such as we have in this country. The best men in all these Colonies are just the men who have the most to do, and are most tied to the Colonies in which they live. It is also to be remembered that the reaping of the sugar crops in British Guiana, Trinidad and Barbados is not carried on at the same period, and the best men could be ill spared at such time. I remember hearing Sir David Barbour, who was a member of the Royal Commission which visited the West Indies in 1897, say: ‘One of the questions which came before the Royal Commission was that of the federation of the West Indies. It was said by some that all the Islands could with advantage be placed under one Governor, or one Governor-General. He (Sir David Barbour) could not see how it was possible to confederate the West Indies and place them under one Governor. Such a Governor would have to be under the Colonial Office. Matters would be referred to this Governor-General, but he would not have the final voice; the question would have to be submitted to the Colonial Office, just as now was the case in Indian affairs (the final voice in the case of India being that of the Secretary of State for India). He did not see how the Governor-General could be given a satisfactory Council, either Legislative or Executive. It would not be possible to get the best men to go for a long period from their own Island.’

“Something in the nature of federation might be done by the gradual assimilation of the laws of the different Colonies, and by

the assembling from time to time of delegates from all the Colonies to confer together upon subjects of general interest, as has already been done in connection with quarantine, reciprocity with Canada, the question of the Royal Mail contract, and the agricultural conferences; and the West Indies have spoken with united voice more than once, notably on the sugar bounty question. But with regard to the larger measure of federation, I would say to Mr. Murray: 'When things are well, leave well alone.'

Mr. J. RIPPON said: "The exhaustive paper read by Mr. Murray will without doubt serve the purpose of further developing thought on the subject of the unification of the West Indies, and beyond referring to the use of words which do not have quite the proper meaning, I would like to state that it was the general opinion they should be avoided, as their use has, in other cases known to us, led to, what is most desirable to avoid, debateable ground. The word 'unification' was consequently accepted as being the most suited to the object in view, and the 'United West Indies' was the shortest title one could think of, which was selected.

"If we leave the historical part of Mr. Murray's paper as being known to students, and come to the future which we desire to deal with, we find that the proposed scheme is for the federation of certain of the West Indian Colonies, and a reason for dividing what I would say are better defined as the Eastern West Indies and the Western West Indies, as the Colonies under discussion east and west of Tortola are north and south of a parallel of latitude through this most western or eastern Island; but designations such as these seem somewhat cumbersome. Mr. Murray has kindly referred to a pamphlet written on the subject of the future of the West Indies by me, in the form of four letters in the 'Colonial Office Journal,' and with your permission I would like briefly to explain its object, viz:—to avoid all details and establish the desire for unification in a manner which could not offend the most sensitive man, after which the rest would be the work of the General Council.

"The use of the word 'federation' was avoided because *foedus* means a treaty, an alliance, *i.e.*, a confederation or union of several sovereign states under one central authority, and I have kept to unification as a useful business arrangement between the Colonies

and to the settlement of such questions as are shown in the pamphlet, as a whole, without interfering with local self-government as it stands. This seemed to be the most suitable, if not the only subject for discussion.

“In the pamphlet, representation is first dealt with and admittance to Imperial Conferences was, after examining the question from three standpoints, viz., area, population and trade, thought to be justified, if the trade of the whole of the West Indies, which reflected the activity of the country and the degree of its influence, were accepted as a basis.

“Now, if we divide the East from the West, this basis seems to lose its full value, and would seem to reduce the bargaining power with other countries, which is one of the chief reasons for unification.

“I would like to deal now with the question of contiguity. The means of railway, telegraphic—of course all telegraphic services are included in this term—and steamship communications, if they are suited to modern requirements, minimise or eliminate the effect of distances, whether by land or sea, and while it is true that, where communications are non-existent, out of date or defective, ideas may not progress or remain ‘local,’ it should be the endeavour to remove such disabilities, and I would fear any division which might reduce effort in this direction in the West Indies.

“The question of unification was treated in the first letter of 22nd June, 1908, and in order to give effect to a union, the necessity of a Central Council to accept such power from the several executive and legislative bodies in the West Indies, as they could not make use of for themselves, was suggested, and the few subjects, kindly stated in Mr. Murray’s paper, were mentioned as an example only.

“In the second letter—as the subject seemed to be attracting attention, and after studying other forms of government—the Australian Commonwealth Act was cited as being similar in part to that required for the West Indies, but in the pamphlet it was laid down that no re-modelling of the forms of government, which did not preserve to the West Indies their present constitutional rights unimpaired, could be considered, and there seems to be no reason

to touch them. The third letter deals with methods employed, and compares the difficulties met with when bringing into life the South African Union with those likely to be found in the West Indies, and the fourth letter practically sums up the whole.

“The simple lines adopted to create the Commonwealth of Australia and the South African Union, it is suggested, might usefully be followed, and a small band of persons, each expert in his own domain, formed to sift, classify and condense facts, etc., and prepare a report for consideration at a convention to be held in London of delegates elected by each separate legislature in the West Indies. The delegates would then, without difficulty, make a short United West Indies Consolidation Act, briefly showing in the preamble its objects, the Colonies to be included or subsequently joining, and further clauses giving power to appoint a Governor-General or some other chief of the General Council—not with dual functions—the number of the members of the General Council for each Colony and their qualification, terms, and such like matters, as well as all the subjects over which power to deal with would be given to the members of the General Council by their Legislatures.

“I venture to think that this would be a short and simple Act, and would soon be passed when the ‘voice from within’—and I know of no other—makes itself heard, as was done in other similar cases, when the need of unity has been found desirable by the overseas parts of the Empire.”

The EARL OF DUNDONALD :—“I have listened with great interest to this address, which gives one food for thought. I certainly think that there are subjects on which the West Indies should take common action. But I do not think that we should add to the expenses of administration, which the West Indies have at present to pay. We must remember that a vast number of the inhabitants of the West Indies receive very little pay, and cannot afford heavier taxation. But there is one question which has not been touched upon, and that is combination for defence. Now, if you look at the position of Trinidad—Trinidad is placed not so very far from the Panama Canal, and contains very important oilfields. The piece of water between the mainland and Trinidad, the Gulf of Paria, forms a sheltered bay, in which practically all the warships of the

world could congregate, and as oil fuel becomes more extensively burnt, so will the importance of Trinidad increase, and in time of war we must defend Trinidad, and to do so we must have men to protect Trinidad, and where are they to be found? They must be found in all the Islands, and we must have a system of militia, which should not only be available for the purpose of Trinidad and the other Islands in case of war, but should also be available for any Empire purpose. My remarks are only very general, and it would take me a week to thoroughly master and give a critical opinion of the lecture in all its interesting details."

Mr. WALLWYN P. B. SHEPHEARD said that he rose for the sole purpose of supplying what he regarded as two important omissions in the historical portion of the paper they had had the pleasure of hearing. He must ask those present to go back to the reign of Charles the First, in which the King by Royal Charter erected the whole of the Caribbee Islands--excepting Trinidad and Tobago, Barbudos (Barbuda) and Fonseca--into a province on the model of the Palatinate of Durham. The original charter, to be seen at the Record Office, expressly declared that the laws were to be made 'de et cum consilio assensu et approbatione liberarum tenentium ejusdem Provinciae vel majoris partis eorumdem' and that the King, his heirs and successors, at no time to come should impose any custom or tax whatsoever upon the inhabitants, lands, goods or merchandise of that province whatsoever. This charter effected not a mere federation, but an absolute consolidation of the West Indies with a Commonwealth.

"But the charter, skilfully as it was drawn by the lawyers of the period, probably of Lincoln's Inn, does not appear to have effected its purpose, because during the interregnum we find Barbados by itself defending its constitution. The landing parties of the Parliamentary Fleet under Sir George Ayscue were resisted by island levies raised for the King by the Council and General Assembly. Hostilities commenced, but each side was minded to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, and Articles of Rendition were assented to by the Parliamentary General and despatched to the Long Parliament, then acting as the executive and 'de facto' sovereign power of the realm, by whom on the 18th August, 1652,

as appears by the journal of the Commons, they were approved. These Articles provided for the maintenance of the old laws and the right of self-taxation.

“Thus, I must differ from the unqualified assertion of our lecturer that ‘it is rash to attempt to draw from past events conclusions as to the probable sequence of future history,’ because I find in historic documents of the past a steady continuity of the principle of the right of self-taxation held by this country at the present day as irrevocable.

“Therefore, whatever constitutional changes may be contemplated, those promoting them will have to reckon with this cardinal principle of the right of self-taxation.”

Mr. MACDONALD: “I am a native of the Island of St. Vincent, and it has given me great pleasure to see our Administrator taking up this subject. If there is one thing that is important, it is that the West Indies should have a representative on the Imperial Conference, which meets now every four years. I think there should be a representative of the Islands as a whole there. A small island like Newfoundland is represented, while a large group like the West Indies is unrepresented.”

Mr. GEORGE CARRINGTON: “I congratulate Mr. Murray, and have no doubt we all feel that he has spoken in a very able manner. As Mr. Rutherford has said, the last Governor to touch upon this subject burnt his fingers, and we Barbadians helped to burn them. One point in this subject is that the West Indies are full of missing links (laughter). I agree that we should certainly have one of His Majesty’s ships for at least two months of the year in the West Indies. In one thing I think all Barbadians will bear me out, and that is that the headquarters for this High Commissioner should be in Barbados (laughter). Mr. Murray has pointed out how practically all the conferences for uniting the West Indies have taken place at Barbados, and there is a geographical reason. Again, the Governor of Barbados, with his strong legislature to look after affairs, has nothing to do, and would have time for such work! One point about Mr. Murray’s scheme is that it does so little in touching, for instance, the customs, excise, etc., but those are just the matters where federation would be of great use. At the present time we are drifting away

from this country to other markets, such as Canada, and our salvation must come from Canada, and we wish many of us to be bound more closely to Canada, and it seems to me that the only object of federation would be that we should put ourselves in a position to talk of a proposed combine with Canada. In that way we should secure markets at any rate for sugar producers in the West Indies. I feel that there is very little to be gained by federation for any other object than gaining better markets."

Mr. JACKMAN: "It is quite refreshing to find a Governor of a West Indian Colony taking the time for a paper like this. One remark is suggested. On Mr. Murray's own showing, the West Indian Colonies have acted within the last ten years no less than three times in harmony. On these three occasions their action brought about what they required. The very points dealt with on these occasions would have been dealt with by Mr. Murray's council, so we find that on three occasions these points have already been dealt with and settled. I am perfectly confident that this question of relations with Canada is going to be dealt with by the West Indies in a similar way and also settled."

Sir OWEN PHILIPPS: "I beg now to propose a vote of thanks to the lecturer. I knew when I heard Mr. Murray had been invited to deliver this lecture that there would be differences of opinion, but I feel that this is a matter that wants to be considered throughout the West Indies, and I hope everyone throughout the Islands will have an opportunity of reading this paper in detail, and studying the proposed Bill, and I believe this is a subject that when the people on the spot realise what the proposal is, if they do not accept it as it stands, they will ultimately put forward an alternative proposal, and, therefore, we are deeply indebted to Mr. Murray for having given so much care and attention to this matter. I believe that they will be able to carry out this scheme without any extra expense to the West Indies, and if it ensures a *Dreadnought* spending two months every year in the West Indies, then I think that alone would ensure a favourable reception for some scheme on these lines, when people have time to consider it. I have much pleasure in proposing the vote of thanks."

The motion having been agreed to unanimously, Mr. GIDEON

MURRAY said : " I did not come to this meeting to-day with any idea in my head that my scheme would or could prove acceptable, especially upon the short notice that you have had of its contents. It seems to me, from the criticisms, none of which have been quite favourable, some of which have been quite adverse, there is one glimmer of light. It has been admitted—and it might not have been—that there are subjects of common interest in the West Indies to-day. It was also admitted by two speakers that, as there were subjects of common interest, it was a question of the machinery to control those questions and to bring them into line. I do not advance this scheme as in any way an unchangeable one, but merely put forward a scheme for the federation of certain of the Colonies, in the belief that some permanent machinery for dealing with the questions is necessary. Mr. Rutherford stated that ' when things are well, leave well alone.' Now, I do know that in the West Indies there is a divided opinion as to whether things are well, and it was for that reason that I dared to read a paper on this extremely thorny subject to-day. One point I cannot refrain from replying to, and that is with regard to the leisured classes in the West Indies, and the difficulty they would have in attending a meeting of the Federal Council or any other council. I absolutely agree that if I had produced this scheme ten or even five years ago, there would have been extreme difficulty in obtaining the services of that class, but during the last few years I am glad to be able to say that the West Indian Colonies have advanced to a considerable degree in prosperity. Now, what is the result? That planters and others would have greater time at their disposal to look after West Indian affairs which affect them generally. We all know that up to the present the planters and managers have passed through a most difficult period for the last 20 to 40 years, but I do believe that those really bad times are past, and that that class which would sit on the council would have more time at their disposal to devote to West Indian affairs. Mr. Jackman pointed out that in the West Indies three conferences had taken place, which would disprove my case, but I venture to assert that those very conferences prove my case. I do not want you to think that I have come here to force federation on the West Indies—that is far from my wish. I can

assure you that it is very far from my intention to go back to the West Indies and to burn my fingers. I have merely come to the conclusion that there are objects of common interest in the West Indies. Again, will Canada act with a body of persons who have never acted together before?

“I thank you for your kind expression of thanks, and wish to propose a vote of thanks to Sir Owen Philipps, chairman of a steamship company which has had close connections with the West Indies for over 100 years. Sir Owen has, since his assumption of the chairmanship, shown that he takes the very deepest interest in the West Indies.” The motion was cordially agreed to and the meeting came to a conclusion, those present adjourning to the West India Committee Rooms, where tea was served.

Subsequent to the meeting the following letter was received by the Secretary of the West India Committee, from Mr. C. Sandbach Parker :—

“DEAR SIR,—I refrained from speaking to-day on the subject of Mr. Murray’s excellent paper on ‘Federation of the West Indies’ owing to the lateness of the hour and the fact that there were many others who wished to speak. I think Mr. Murray has done good service to the West Indies in putting before us a concrete scheme.

“Though there is a good deal in it with which I am not in accord, I heartily agree with him that a case for endeavouring to concentrate those Colonies for political and commercial purposes into one unit within the British Empire (call it Dominion or what you like) is unanswerable.

“I do not think that any scheme would be complete without the inclusion of all the British West Indies. Jamaica should certainly be included, and even British Honduras.

“I venture to think that a single tariff system for all those Colonies should not present any insuperable difficulty, and would immensely strengthen the power of the West Indies in all commercial and political negotiations. It is, however, certain that the desire for closer union must emanate from the West Indies

themselves. Mr. Murray's scheme will, I hope, promote discussion and thought in those Colonies from which some good result may be obtained.

"To those who look to the future, it must be obvious that so long as the present system prevails much energy is expended on internal questions which might be better utilised in negotiating with other countries for the general benefit of the West Indies.

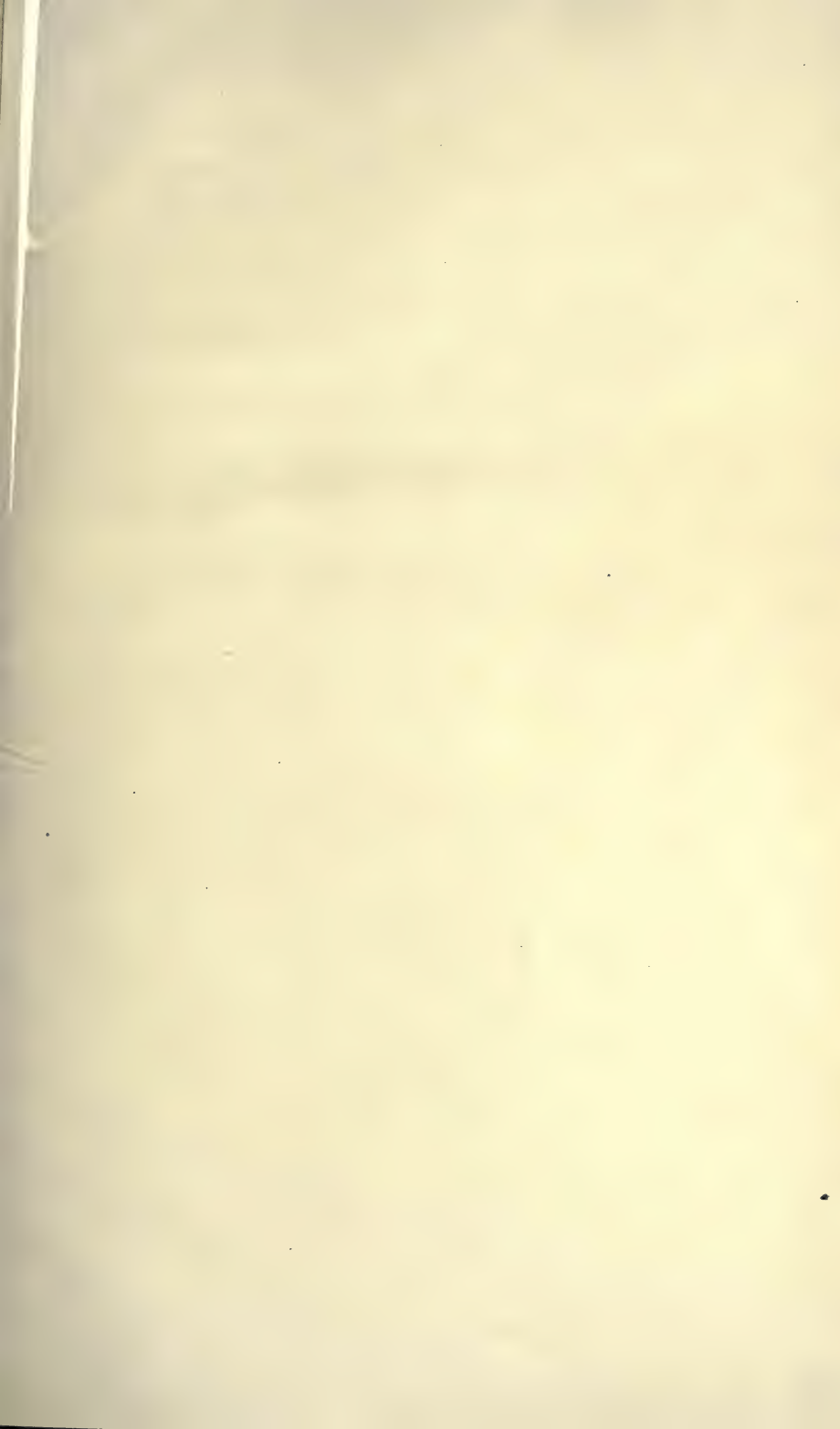
"I shall be much obliged if you will print this letter in your CIRCULAR with the report on the meeting.

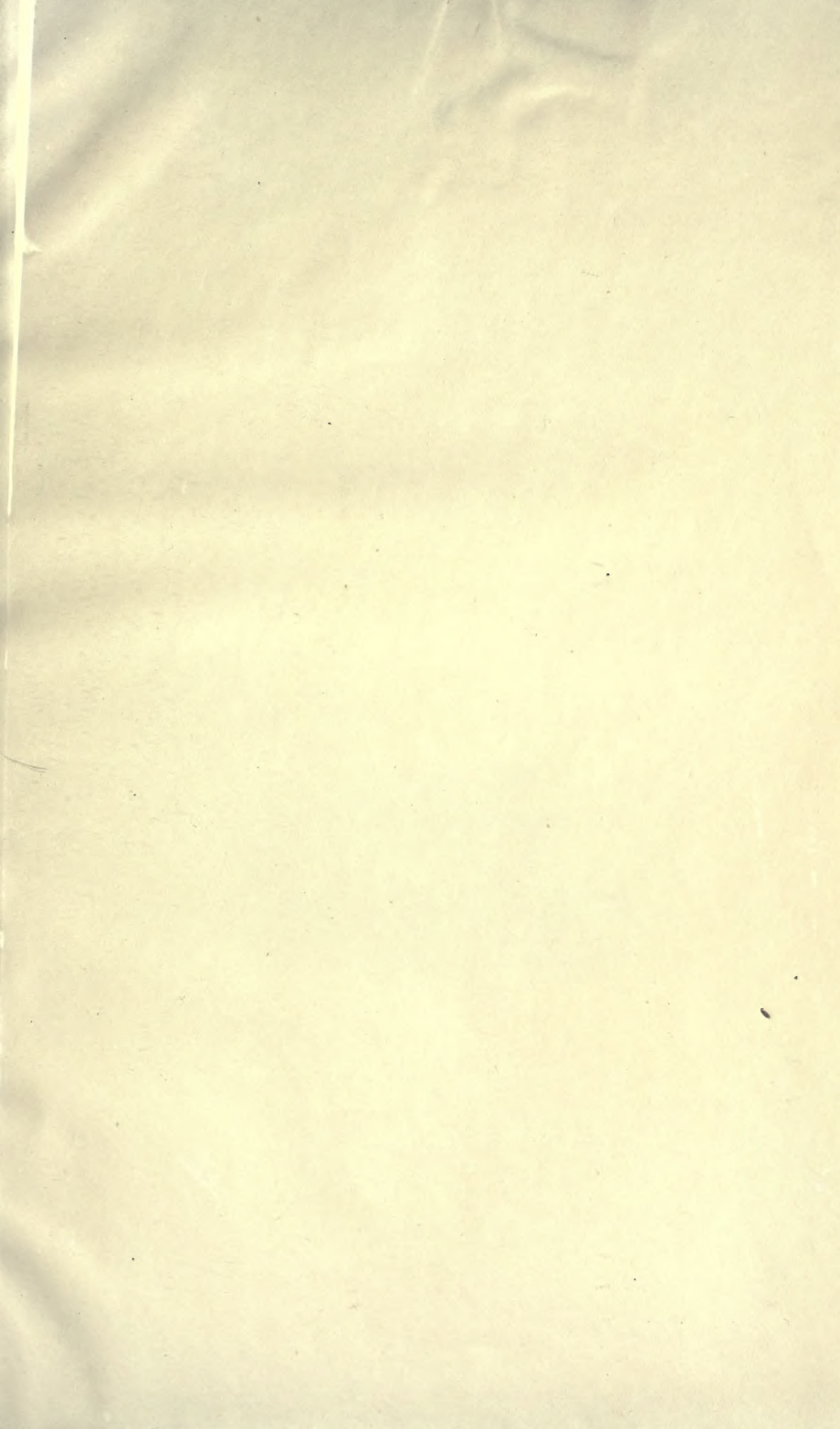
"Yours truly,

"C. SANDBACH PARKER,

"Demerara Buildings, St. Dunstan's Hill, November 22nd."







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