

NEW SERIES.

No. 1.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

March 21st, 1898.

THE CIRCULAR.

Having regard to the re-organization of the Committee, it has been thought desirable to commence a new series of the West India Committee Circular. The Secretary will be pleased to receive any suggestions Members may care to forward, with a view to making the Circular as complete as possible. A Circular will, as a rule be issued once a month, but when events of sufficient importance occur to justify such a step being taken, a Circular will be posted to Subscribers every fortnight.

Members are particularly requested to notify to the Secretary any change of their address.

SIR HENRY BLAKE'S LECTURE ON JAMAICA.

On March 4th last Sir Henry Blake, G.C.M.G., delivered a most interesting address on "Jamaica" before a special general meeting of the London Chamber of Commerce, an account of which Members will have noticed in the London newspapers of March 5th last.

His Excellency dealt with the importance of the Port of Kingston, especially in connection with the proposed Panama or Nicaragua Canal. The Sugar Bounties had, he said, depressed the sugar industry of the island and, if continued, would deprive the labouring population of work and wages. The Fruit industry was a most important one and Sir Henry advocated the establishment of efficient Steam communication both with the Mother country and with the United States. The remarks of his Excellency upon the capabilities and resources of Jamaica were much appreciated by the large audience present, among whom were Sir A. K. Rollit, M.P., President of the Chamber, Sir H. Dering, Sir Charles and Lady Walpole, and Sir Frederick Young.

THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE AND THE ANTI-BOUNTY LEAGUE.

The Special Appeal for support, issued on January 8th last, has been most readily responded to by the Colonies, firms and others interested in the West Indies. Barbados alone has contributed a sum of £300; £130 have already been received from British Guiana, and further amounts have been promised, including a substantial sum from Trinidad.

The West India Committee is now in a position, after amply providing for its own requirements for the present year, to render such substantial aid to the Funds of the Anti-Bounty League, that the League may now be considered to be on a sound financial basis.

RECIPROCITY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The negotiations for a reciprocity treaty with the United States, which were a short time ago believed to be nearly complete, have, it is feared, taken an unfavourable turn. Mr. Sydney Olivier of the Colonial Office has gone to Washington, and it is hoped that at no distant date, some definite information about this matter may be forthcoming, but the prospects of a satisfactory result of the negotiations are not promising.

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

The Colonial Office have not yet received a reply from the India Office as to their willingness to give up the back passage, but they are pressing the matter urgently, and should a reply not be received within a few days, Mr. Chamberlain will take up the question of the number of Coolies to be allowed for the coming season.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ANTI-BOUNTY CAMPAIGN.

Members will have already received information of the inauguration of the Anti-Bounty League at the Cannon Street Hotel before Christmas. Many thousands of leaflets have been issued, and a pamphlet entitled "The Truth about the Foreign Sugar Bounties" by Mr. Mayson M. Beeton, the Secretary of the League, has been published by Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall & Co.

The question of bounties has been largely ventilated in the Press, and with the exception of extreme party organs it may fairly be claimed that the majority are becoming alive to the disastrous effects to the British Colonies and British industries of a continuation of the Policy of Apathy and Indifference which has hitherto been pursued by British Governments. The principles enunciated in Mr. Chamberlain's speech of January 18th last with regard to England's duty to her Colonies were received with unanimous approval by Public Opinion, and the immense majorities by which the "Grants in aid" were carried on the 14th inst., clearly show that he has equally behind him the support of Parliamentary opinion for his policy of Initiative and Resolution, but it is useless to disguise the fact that a great deal still remains to be done to educate the Public mind as to the real meaning and effect of the abolition of bounties whether by countervailing duties or a penal clause in an international Convention.

Mr. CARRINGTON'S PAPER.

Mr. George Carrington read a Paper on "Our West Indian Colonies," at a Meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, presided over by Sir Henry Norman, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., C.I.E., on March 8th.

The Meeting was most successful and Mr. Carrington's Paper was most warmly received and favourably commented on by the Press. Sir Henry Norman took the opportunity of reiterating the conclusions which he had already, as Chairman of the West India Royal Commission enunciated, that no policy short of countervailing the bounties can restore prosperity to the British West Indies.

SUGAR BEET IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The Paper read by Colonel Milward, M.P., on March 1st, at a Meeting of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, which was attended by several Members of Parliament, called Public attention to the fact that it is only owing to the existence of the Bounties that the inauguration of a sugar beet

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industry in the United Kingdom is rendered impossible. The Government, however, has decided to undertake the analyses of the experiments which are to be made on a larger scale than heretofore, to demonstrate possibilities of growing the sugar beet in our Islands.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND THE ANTI-BOUNTY LEAGUE.

The efforts of the Anti-Bounty League are being warmly seconded by a number of Members of Parliament, who have shown their keen interest in the matter by attending numerous Committee Meetings of the League, and taking part in the discussions of the Committee as to the best line of policy and tactics to be pursued. Letters promising sympathy and support to the Cause have been received from both sides of the House, and a Parliamentary Committee has been formed, which is in constant touch with the Secretary and Committee of the League.

CONFERENCE AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

It was largely owing to the efforts of our friends in the House that the Conference between the League and Members of Parliament on March 10th last was so numerously attended. Lord Stanmore, Mr. Nevile Lubbock and Mr. Tate addressed the Members on behalf of the League, and their remarks created a deep impression on the Members present.

THE ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

Mr. Nevile Lubbock followed up his successful efforts at the Parliamentary Conference by an equally successful address to the Delegates of the Associated Chambers of Commerce on March 15th, when the following resolution (which was previously passed at the London Chamber) was proposed by Mr. Nevile Lubbock, seconded by Mr. Glyn (of Greenock), and carried by 51 votes to 32 :—

"That, in the opinion of this Meeting, Foreign State Bounties which 'protect' Foreign-grown and Foreign-refined Sugar in British markets to the prejudice of British Home and Colonial Industries are a violation of the true principles of Free Trade, and that their abolition is called for in the true interests of British commerce."

THE SOCIETY OF ARTS.

On the afternoon of the same day, Mr. Nevile Lubbock read an interesting paper on "The West Indies and Sugar Bounties," before the Society of Arts, and was much complimented on his treatment of the subject by Sir Albert K. Rollit, M.P., who occupied the chair. These papers are now in the hands of the printers and will, it is hoped, be shortly ready for circulation.

THE ACTING COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Acting Committee of the Anti-Bounty League is held every day, except Wednesday, at the Office of the West India Committee, while on Wednesday, a meeting is generally held at the League's own Office at Broad Sanctuary Chambers, Westminster, for the convenience of Members of Parliament desirous of attending.

In conclusion it may be stated that every effort is being made to successfully carry out the object for which the Anti-Bounty League was formed, viz. :—"The abolition or neutralization of the bounties which are pressing so heavily on important home industries and have already brought, as the recent report of the West India Royal Commission has shown, many British Colonies to the verge of ruin."

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Imports to 12th March, 128,883, against 115,393 in 1897, and 182,901 in 1896.

Deliveries 140,449, against 144,449 and 160,314.

Stock 78,143, against 104,272 and 130,852.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow) 9s. od. against 9s. 1½d. in 1897 and 12s. 5½d. in 1896.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

DEMERRARA.—(Per favour of Messrs. Jno. McConnell & Co.). 9th March.—“Heavy rains have fallen generally since last message.” 18th March.—(Per favour of Messrs. Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co.). “Heavy rains continue, finer weather much needed.” BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). 9th March.—“Very dry, rain wanted.” TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of Messrs. W. F. Burnley & Co., Ltd.). 9th March.—“Weather middling.”

ALGERNON ASPINALL,

Secretary.

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WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

April 4th, 1898.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE ACCOUNTS.

At a meeting of the Acting Committee, held on March 30th, Mr. Curtis, on behalf of the Treasurers, presented a statement of accounts made up to December 20th last, which was duly passed. In future the accounts will be balanced to the end of the year, and submitted to a general meeting of the Committee. Members desirous of seeing the balance-sheet can now do so at this office.

RECIPROCITY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The prospects of the negotiations for a reciprocity treaty with the United States arriving at a satisfactory termination are now brighter. Information has come to hand to the effect that some reciprocity may, after all, be arrived at, though it seems doubtful whether the reduction in the United States will amount to as much as 20 per cent.

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

The number of coolies to be allowed for the coming season is 2,400 for British Guiana and 1,200 for Trinidad.

It is understood that the India Office has consented to a compromise by which only one-half of the back passage money will be guaranteed in the case of future male coolie immigrants, and two-thirds in the case of women.

ANTIGUA.

The *Times* Jamaica correspondent states that at the opening of the Local Council of Antigua on March 22nd, the Governor announced that the Imperial Government would only grant financial aid on condition that the Constitution be changed to that of a Crown Colony. A resolution in favour of this proposal was passed by a vote of 20 to three.

According to a later telegram, dated March 23rd, a Bill giving effect to this resolution of the Council of Antigua had passed through all its stages.

THE RUM SURTAX.

A deputation of the representatives of English, Scotch and Irish distillers had an interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the Treasury, on March 31st, to protest against the report of the West India Commission, which suggested that the differential duty of 4d. per gallon on spirits should be removed. Sir Michael Hicks Beach was accompanied by Mr. G. H. Murray, C.B., chairman of the Inland Revenue Board. The deputation was introduced by Mr. W. G. Nicholson, M.P., and Mr. Samuel Young, M.P., was also in attendance.

Mr. Lothian Nicholson, in stating the case for the English distillers, said the report of the West India Commission branded with the name of bounty a system under which the Government received upwards of £100,000 a year. It attacked the principles which governed the differential duty, and drew an analogy

between an Excise lock and the Employers' Liability Bill. It also proposed alterations which would involve the annihilation of the distilling industry in this country. The removal of the differential duty of 3d. per gallon would entail the stoppage of every grain distillery in the United Kingdom within a very short space of time. The West India Association of Liverpool said they wanted equality with the home distillers, but only for the Colonies of Great Britain. They did not want any change in the differential duty on foreign spirit made either on the Continent or in foreign colonies.

Mr. Robert Glen (chairman of the Central Association of Scotch Malt Distillers) said they represented about 130 distilleries in Scotland, and the industry was of great advantage to the country generally, and agriculturists in particular. The abolition of the differential duty would lead to the importation of an enormous quantity of cheap foreign spirit, which had already become a competitive element of a very undesirable kind.

Mr. John Jameson, on behalf of the Irish distillers, said that of late foreigners had been improving their plant, and were every year making spirits at a cheaper and lower price, whilst in this country for the last 50 years they had been going on on the same lines. This was owing to the Excise restrictions, for they could not adopt the forms which were adopted abroad. The 4d. per gallon did not adequately represent the difference of their respective positions as regarded foreign and home trade. From the time they paid their licence of ten guineas to become distillers to the time they cleared a cask and sent it away for consumption, every step they took had to be taken under the surveillance of and in accordance with Excise regulations and restrictions. These restrictions no doubt were very hard to appraise at their actual value, still, they did cost something, and they also caused a good deal of delay and trouble; and the 4d. duty was inadequate to meet the disabilities under which they laboured as compared with the foreigners.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reply, said,—I felt it only right, after the memorial had been sent to me by those concerned in your business, to receive you to-day, in order to hear a complete statement of your case as against the proposals of the Royal Commission on the West Indies. I may say, expressing, of course, my own opinion, that I was surprised that a Royal Commission should have come to the conclusion which made a recommendation upon a matter which obviously affected the home trade as well as the West Indies without hearing any representative of the home trade on the subject. But whatever their reasons may have been for that course, I think possibly it may have been in a certain degree influenced by the fact that the Royal Commission themselves do not appear to have attached very much importance to the question from the West Indian point of view. You have called attention to the argument of the Royal Commission comparing this extra duty of 4d. per gallon on foreign and colonial spirits with the principles of the Employers' Liability Acts and other legislation of the kind. There again, I am afraid, I think you are justified in objecting to the comparison made by the Royal Commissioners. The two matters seem to me to stand on an entirely different footing. This allowance to the home trade of 4d. has been made, as you have pointed out, for many years; it has had the sanction of high economical authority among my predecessors, and has practically become a recognised part of the law under which you have carried on your business and adapted your premises for that purpose. To my mind—and I think in this I may say that I have the agreement of the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Chamberlain)—it would require a much stronger argument than that which the Royal Commissioners have adduced to justify such a change in the respective conditions of the home and foreign trade as might be made by the abolition of this extra 4d. (Hear, hear.) The Commissioners themselves observe that they do not wish to attach very much importance to this question of the extra duty on rum in connexion with the inquiry into the state of the West Indies. They say: "The removal of it will not save the sugar industry, nor even materially improve its condition; but it is felt as a hardship, and its levy seems to us to be unsound in principle." As you have observed, that is not a very strong recommendation in favour of the change which they suggest. On the other hand, certainly, it seems to me that if it were removed the great advantage of its

removal would accrue, not to the West Indies, but to the producers of foreign cheap spirits—(hear, hear)—and so far as I know, however great may be your attachment to free trade, that is not a class of producers whose industry we are very desirous to encourage. I confess, myself, that it appears to me, however great may be the needs of the West Indies, those needs can be met in better ways than by the abolition of this duty. (Hear, hear.) I think that one or two colonies actually at the present moment themselves impose export duty on rum of considerably higher amount than the 4d. per gallon, and therefore they would have no particular claim as against the mother country in that respect. But, however that may be, I have no doubt that in the measure which may be proposed for the necessary assistance to the West Indies the matter will be fully considered, and, as I have said to you, though I cannot express any final conclusion on the subject, I see, at any rate, a great difficulty of interfering with what has been the law so long with regard to your trade, and it seems to me that it would be a wiser policy to attempt to meet the necessities of the West Indies in some other way. (Hear, hear.)

THE ANTI-BOUNTY CAMPAIGN.

In spite of the importance of affairs in the Far East and America, which have so much occupied public attention of late, evidence is not wanting to show that progress is being made in the Anti-Bounty Movement, and that an increased number of Members of Parliament are becoming interested in the matter.

THE SUGAR CONFERENCE.

No date has as yet been officially announced for the meeting of the Conference at Brussels to discuss the question of the Sugar Bounties, and it is now thought unlikely that it will meet till after the French elections which take place on May 8th. In the House of Commons on March 29th, in reply to a question asked by Mr. Thorburn, M.P., Mr. Curzon said that Her Majesty's Government had accepted the invitation of the Belgian Government to send representatives to the proposed Conference. It was believed that replies accepting invitations had been sent by other foreign Governments, but they had not yet been informed as to who those Powers were. On March 31st, Mr. Curzon, answering a question put to him by Colonel Milward, said that papers would shortly be laid before Parliament containing all that had passed between the British and Belgian Governments concerning the Conference.

The *Journal des Fabricants de Sucre*, commenting on the proposed Conference, states that the newspapers have published a note received from Brussels on March 22nd, to the effect that France, Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands have accepted invitations to a Conference, and that the acceptance of Spain and Italy is considered probable. A telegram from Brussels to the *Neue Freie Presse*, of Vienna, states: "The Sugar Conference will meet here on May 17th; the Government has to-day sent invitations to the Powers."

ANTI-BOUNTY LITERATURE.

Boxes containing copies of Mr. Beeton's pamphlet: "The Truth about the Foreign Sugar Bounties—The Case for Abolition" and other literature connected with the Anti-Bounty Campaign, will shortly be despatched to Jamaica, Demerara, Barbados, Trinidad and the Leeward Islands.

SUGAR BEET CULTIVATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

In the House of Commons on March 31st, Mr. Milward asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the Board of Agriculture had any information based on previous experiments that sugar beet could be grown in this country of a quality suited to the production of sugar; and whether, in accordance with the request of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, the Board of Agriculture would take cognisance and publish the results of the four or five hundred experiments which were taking place this year in England, Scotland, and Ireland in the growth of sugar beet.

Mr. Long said the Board of Agriculture had for some years been disposed to think that sugar beet might be cultivated with advantage in certain districts and in seasons in which the climate and other conditions were especially favourable for its growth, provided always that the prices which could be obtained for the produce were satisfactory. He had indicated to the Central Chamber of Agriculture that the Board would be glad to co-operate with them in the preparation of a thoroughly satisfactory form of record for use in cases where sugar beet was experimentally grown, and later on to consider whether they could assist in bringing the facts under the notice of agriculturists generally. The Board also had it in mind to prepare and publish information regarding the investigations made and experience acquired on this subject during the past thirty years.

PROPOSED COLONIAL EXHIBITION IN LONDON.

A proposal is on foot to hold a "Greater Britain" Exhibition in the year 1899 at Earl's Court, London, where the popular Victorian Era Exhibition was held last year. A Committee of Advice has already been formed, and Mr. G. C. Levey, the Secretary of that body, has consented to attend a special meeting of the West India Committee on Wednesday, April 6th, for the purpose of informing Members of the idea and scope of the proposed Exhibition.

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to March 26th, 1898, 155,946, against 141,788 in 1897, and 207,444 in 1896.

DELIVERIES 151,931, against 184,661, and 183,111.

STOCKS 80,786, against 90,455, and 132,598.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88% (Czarnikow) 9s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. against 9s. in 1897, and 12s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.—12s. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in 1896.

BEET SOWINGS.

The *Journal des Fabricants de Sucre* states that it appears probable that the Beet Sowings in Germany, France, Austria, Hungary, and Belgium will not be larger than last year, but in Russia an increase is expected. According to Mr. Czarkinow's circular, "owing to the high values of Cereals contracts for Roots are at full prices and it is uncertain whether France and Austria will sow full up, whilst Russia sows more, and Germany expects no deficiency."

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). March 23rd—"Fine rains generally throughout the Island." DEMERARA.—(Per favour of Messrs. John McConnell & Co.). March 24th—"Weather favourable for cultivation in Berbice, wet weather continues elsewhere." TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of Messrs. William F. Burnley & Co., Limited). March 24th—"Weather middling." March 29th.—(Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Limited).—"Weather showery and unsettled." April 1st, 1898.—"Heavy rains, cultivation suffering."

ALGERNON ASPINALL,

Secretary.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

May 2nd, 1898.

THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

At a recent meeting, the question of forming branches of this Committee in the West Indies was discussed, and met with unanimous approval, it being considered most desirable to bring the Colonies into closer touch with the London Committee.

SUGAR BOUNTIES PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTATION.

On Thursday, April 28th, a numerous deputation of Members of Parliament, organised by the Parliamentary Committee of the Anti-Bounty League, waited upon Mr. Balfour at the Foreign Office, "to urge the necessity, in view of past experience, of granting to the British Plenipotentiaries at the forthcoming International Conference at Brussels on Sugar Bounties, such powers as will enable them to bring pressure to bear in support of those countries which are willing to abolish the bounty system."

This Memorial was signed by 180 Members of Parliament, and is noteworthy as being the largest which has ever been addressed to a Minister of the Crown in connection with a single industry.

The Memorialists laid stress on the fact that it is not England which is inviting the bounty-giving Powers to abolish bounties, but the large majority of bounty-giving Powers themselves who are inviting England's co-operation, and demanding a guarantee that in the event of their abolishing bounties themselves they shall not have to compete with bounty-fed sugar from any Power or Powers which may continue to give bounties.

It is satisfactory to note that Mr. Balfour, in his speech, stated that every means which the Government could employ to bring the deliberations of the Conference to a successful issue, would be used, and that he was "at one with the deputation" in the earnest wish that something might be done to restore the sugar industry of the world to a healthy and natural condition.

A full report of this important deputation is now in the press and will shortly be obtainable.

THE SUGAR CONFERENCE.

It is now stated that the International Sugar Conference will meet at Brussels on June 7th next. The *National Zeitung* learns that Councillor Kuhn, of the Imperial Treasury Department, will be appointed to represent the German Government, but no announcement has yet been made as to who the British representatives will be.

THE NEW CANADIAN TARIFF.

The announcement made by the Honble. W. S. Fielding, Minister of Finance in the Dominion House of Commons, at Ottawa, on April 6th, that in the new Preferential Tariff, which is to come into force on August 1st next, a reduction of 25 per cent. would be made in favour of West India sugar, is causing some apprehension to sugar producers in the British West Indies, lest it should lead to the United States Market being closed to West Indian Products.

This concession of duty cannot possibly benefit the West Indies to the extent that might at first be supposed, as the Dominion of Canada cannot possibly take more than, at the outside figure, one-half of the sugar produced in the British West Indies in the year, and, moreover, whilst the reduction of the duty in Canada will, after August 1st next, amount to 17.875 cents per 100 lbs on 96 deg. crystals, the present countervailing duty imposed by the United States Government on bounty-fed beet sugars amounts to 27 cents per 100 lbs., consequently, West Indian Sugar will still have an advantage in the United States Markets of 9 125 cents per 100 lbs.

THE GERMAN AND BELGIAN TREATIES OF COMMERCE.

In the House of Commons on April 26th, Mr. Balfour stated that a suggestion had been made by the German and Belgian Governments to the effect that the existing Treaties of Commerce with Great Britain should be temporarily prolonged, in order to afford more time for the negotiation of new treaties to replace those terminating at the end of July, 1898, but that Her Majesty's Government, while expressing their willingness to make temporary arrangements for most favoured nation treatment in regard to the United Kingdom, with power to the British Colonies to accede, had replied that they could not, in any circumstances, consent to the renewal of Articles 7 and 15 of the existing treaties, under which German and Belgian goods respectively were entitled in the British Colonies to the same treatment as British goods.

THE RUM SURTAX.

In the House of Commons on April 25th last, in answer to Mr. W. F. Lawrence, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said: "Imported spirits, other than liqueurs and perfumed spirits, pay a duty of 10s. 10d. per proof gallon, while spirits distilled here pay 10s. 6d. The surtax of 4d. a gallon is imposed on Colonial spirits to countervail the Excise disability under which British distillers carry on their manufacture. With regard to the calculations on which the Surtax is based, I would refer the hon. member to the 28th Report of the Board of Inland Revenue published in 1885. Since the date of the calculation which is there given, some of the items have changed, but I am advised that the effect of these changes would not, on the whole, justify a reduction of the amount of the Surtax. The duty on home-made chicory is charged while the chicory is in the raw state. Chicory imported in the raw state pays one-eighth of a penny per lb. more than home-made chicory, to compensate for the Revenue restrictions under which the home grower is placed. If chicory is imported roasted or ground, it is charged at a higher rate because of the loss of moisture."

On April 19th last, the following letter was addressed by the West India Committee to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"Sir,—We venture to call your attention to the grave injustice to which Rum producers in the British West India Colonies are at present subject, owing to the imposition of a Surtax of 4d. per gallon on Colonial Spirits imported into the United Kingdom.

"As you are aware, Sir, the Excise restrictions in the West India Colonies are in every way as strict as those in the United Kingdom, yet, while Home Manufactured Spirits are subject to a duty of 10s. 6d. per gallon, the Customs duty on Colonial Spirits amounts to 10s. 10d.

"Her Majesty's Commissioners, appointed to inquire into the conditions and prospects of the West India Colonies, laid especial stress upon the injustice of this extra duty of 4d., which they declared to be unsound in principle, and a hardship to the Colonies.

"From the tone of the speech delivered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to a deputation of representatives of English, Scotch, and Irish Distillers, who waited upon him on March 31st last, we are led to

believe that he has no intention at present of removing this extra duty, we would, therefore, respectfully request you to receive, at as early a date as convenient to you, a small deputation from the West India Committee, who are anxious to have the grievance under which they have so long suffered, remedied.

" We have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement of the history of the Rum Surtax Question.

" I have, etc.,

" (Signed) N. LUBBOCK."

To this letter, the following reply has been received:—

" Downing Street, 26 April, 1898.

" Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, in which you request him to receive a deputation upon the question of the Surtax levied upon Colonial Spirits.

" The question is one which more properly concerns the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as it involves other than Colonial interests. Mr. Chamberlain is accordingly of opinion that no good purpose would be served by his receiving a deputation, and he therefore regrets that he cannot comply with your wishes in the matter, and must refer you to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

" I am, etc.,

" (Signed) C. P. LUCAS."

PEASANT PROPRIETORS.

In the House of Commons on April 29th, Mr. Chamberlain, in answer to Mr. Englelew (the Member for Kildare, N.), stated that he was considering the best means of encouraging the settlement of the labouring population of the West Indian Colonies on small plots of land as peasant proprietors, and that in one case, that of St. Vincent, the House had already voted a sum of money to assist in that object.

THE "GREATER BRITAIN" EXHIBITION.

Mr G. C. Levey, C.M.G. (Secretary of the Advisory Committee) and Mr. Hart (a Director of the London Exhibitions, Ltd., the promoters of the proposed "Greater Britain" Exhibition) attended a specially convened meeting of the West India Committee on April 6th last, and explained to them the scope and object of the Exhibition, which is to be held in London in 1899.

Mr Hart stated that the Directors were prepared to offer to the British West India Colonies a space quite as large as was occupied by them at the Colonial Exhibition at South Kensington in 1886, and that the charge for such space would be 2s. per square foot of floor.

Copies of the Prospectus and Minutes of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee of the proposed Exhibition have been forwarded to the Colonies for consideration.

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to April 23rd, 1898, 206,173 tons, against 180,676 in 1897, and 257,925 in 1896.

DELIVERIES 205,068 tons, against 225,290, and 230,699.

STOCKS 77,889 tons, against 88,444, and 135,491.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

2,434,951 tons, against 2,647,761 in 1897, and 2,186,472 in 1896.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow), 9s. 5½d. to 9s. 6d., against 8s. 9d. in 1897, and 12s. 6¾d. in 1896.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

May 27th, 1898.

RESIGNATION OF THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN.

At a largely attended meeting of the Acting Committee, held on Thursday, May 26th, Mr. Neville Lubbock in the chair, Mr. Quintin Hogg resigned the office of deputy-chairman of the West India Committee. While still retaining his interest in the welfare of the West India Colonies, Mr. Hogg thought that he should not continue to hold his official position in the Committee owing to the severance of his connection with estates in those Colonies. Upon the motion of Mr. Edward G. Barr seconded by Mr. A. Morier Lee and Mr. W. P. B. Shephard a hearty vote was passed thanking Mr. Hogg for his long continued and valuable services to the Committee.

THE SUGAR CONFERENCE.

It is believed that the names of the British Delegates will shortly be published in the daily Press.

SUGAR BOUNTIES CORRESPONDENCE.

From the correspondence relating to the Sugar Bounties, which was recently presented to Parliament, it will be seen that Mr. Balfour in his reply to the deputation of Members of Parliament which waited on him on April 28th last, was expressing more than verbal sympathy when he assured the deputation that the Government intended to "use every means we can employ to bring the deliberations of the Conference to a successful issue."

The correspondence opens with Mr. Chamberlain's letter to the Foreign Office of December 15th, 1897, of which the following are the most important paragraphs:—

4. Measures, as the Prime Minister is aware, are under consideration, which may in time alleviate, though they will not remedy, the most pressing difficulties; but no time should, in Mr. Chamberlain's opinion, be lost in attempting, by international negotiations, to put an end to the Bounty system, which has had such disastrous results.

In the words of the Commissioners (Report, p. 69):—

"The best immediate remedy for the state of things which we have shown to exist would be the abandonment of the Bounty system by continental nations," and again (p. 9), "We have no hesitation in saying that the abolition of the bounty system is an object at which your Majesty's Government should aim."

5. It is hoped that foreign Governments, or some of them, may welcome a reasonable plea for abandoning a system under which, out of the pockets of the taxpayers, the British public has been provided with abnormally cheap sugar, with the result that some of the British Colonies have been deplorably injured, and that an artificial and unsound competition has been stimulated between bounty-giving countries.

6. Mr. Chamberlain would suggest that, after such informal preliminaries as may be considered necessary, invitations to a Conference should be sent with as little delay as possible, that Paris should be proposed as the place of the Conference, and that while the invitations should contain no menace of any kind, it should be intimated in a friendly manner to the foreign Powers concerned that Her Majesty's Government have no intention of allowing the West Indian sugar industry to be ruined by the operation of hostile Bounties, and that in one form or another the Imperial Parliament on its meeting in February next will be asked to give assistance to the Colonies.

The proposals thus formulated met with Lord Salisbury's entire approval; and, with the concurrence of the Board of Trade, the Foreign Office addressed a circular letter to Her Majesty's representatives in France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Belgium, Holland and Denmark, requesting them to ascertain confidentially whether the Governments to which they were respectively accredited would be prepared to take part in such a conference, and if so, to suggest Paris as a convenient place for the meeting of the delegates. The replies to this circular letter showed that the Belgium Government had anticipated matters by suggesting a conference at Brussels. Sir F. Lascelles wrote from Berlin pointing out that the furthering of the project of the conference "now lies with Belgium, who a short time ago inquired of the German Government whether it would send delegates" and adding that after consultation with the Austrian Government "a favourable answer is said to have been given by Germany" and further that "both Germany and Austria are willing to abolish the sugar bounties.

It appears that the original idea was to limit the Brussels conference to France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium and Denmark—the principal sugar exporting countries, however, Great Britain and Russia were eventually invited to join, and in his letter to Lord Salisbury of January 9th, 1898, Baron Whettnall stated that if it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to oppose the system of export bounties, which are injurious to the colonial industry, Belgium would willingly take the lead in proposing to the other Governments that Great Britain should participate in the Congress, in spite of the principle according to which only those countries who exported beet-root sugar were to be invited. Three weeks later, replying to a letter from Lord Salisbury asking for more definite information concerning the purpose of the conference, Baron Whettnall stated that the essential object would be "the question of the abolition of export bounties. Not only may the discussion bear upon export bounties, but it would even appear desirable to widen the scope of the deliberations so as to include the examination of the points which may appear to have a bearing on the main question."—Lord Salisbury's formal acceptance of the Belgian invitation is dated March 8th, 1898.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.

In the House of Commons on May 24th, General Laurie (Pembroke) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he was aware that the West Indian planters engaged in cultivating sugar would require to commence their preparations for the new crop in July next; and whether it was probable that he would be able to announce his intentions with regard to the assistance proposed to be given to the West Indies in time to allow the cultivators to make their plans for the coming season.

Mr. Chamberlain (Birmingham, W.).—The negotiations at Washington are not completed, and until the result is known it is impossible to make any statement; but I have no reason to believe that any proposals which Her Majesty's Government may be able to make for the advantage of the West Indies generally will materially affect the preparations for the new sugar crop in July next.

Mr. Chamberlain's reply seems to indicate that the policy of the Government in regard to the West Indies is still very undefined, and no estimate can be formed with any certainty as to what form it may ultimately take. The fact that the Government have adopted the suggestion conveyed to Lord Salisbury by the Anti-Bounty League that Mr. Nevile Lubbock and Mr. George Martineau should accompany the British Delegates to the Brussels Conference as expert advisers is a satisfactory indication that the Government are in earnest in their wish to assist in the abolition of bounties.

THE NEW CANADIAN TARIFF.

The following letter was, on April 26th last, addressed by the West Indian Committee to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of the New Canadian Tariff, to which reference was made in the last circular :—

" Sir,—The recent action of the Canadian Legislature in offering a reduction of 25 per cent. of the amount of duty charged upon West Indian Sugar as compared with that charged upon Sugar coming from other parts of the world, together with the articles in the press, implying that it is in contemplation to bring about some reciprocity between Canada and the West Indies, is causing my Committee some alarm, which I am assured will be shared by our West India Colonies.

" On the face of it, a reduction of 25 per cent. of the duty on West Indian Sugar, which is not to be shared by any other country, appears to be a large concession on the part of the Government of Canada, and one of which, to outsiders, may appear to be of considerable benefit to our West India Colonies.

" But I wish to point out to you, Sir, that this concession of duty cannot possibly benefit the West Indies in the manner which might be supposed, for two reasons: 1st,—That the Dominion of Canada cannot take more than, at the outside figure, one half of the Sugar produced in the West Indies. Hence it is obvious to those who are acquainted practically with the operation of duties on products, that the apparent concession on the part of Canada can be of little practical effect in improving the position of the Sugar Industry in the West Indies if it involves any risk of losing a market for the balance of production.

" The second reason is that whilst the reduction of the duty in Canada will, after August 1st next, be 17·875 cents per 100 lbs. on 96° Crystals, the present countervailing duty imposed by the United States on bounty-fed Beet Sugars amounts to 27 cents per 100 lbs. Consequently West Indian Sugar will still have an advantage in the United States markets of 9·125 cents per 100 lbs. so long as Canada admits Beet Sugar without surcharge.

" My Committee feel it their duty to call your attention to this, whilst, at the same time, they fully recognize the good feeling and the wise intention of the Canadian Government in attempting in this manner to draw closer the bonds of commercial unity between the several portions of the Empire.

" As you, Sir, are well aware, the Bounties granted by the various European Powers have practically closed the British Markets to British Colonial Sugar, and it is only due to the fact that the Market of the United States has been freely opened to our West Indian Colonies that the production of Sugar in those Colonies has been maintained.

" Any action which would close the United States Market to our West Indian Colonies would, almost at once, bring about the abandonment of the Sugar Industry in the West Indies, with the deplorable result which the Report of the recent Royal Commission has described.

" Any reciprocity between the West Indies and the United States, Canada would as part of the Empire, at once derive the benefit of, but if the West Indies grant to Canadian products, advantages which are not to be shared by the United States, the result would probably be disastrous to the British West Indies.

" If Bounties were abolished and British markets freely opened, as all Free Traders must hold that they should be, these objections would naturally at once disappear.

" But so long as the British Parliament allows Foreign Governments to shut out British Colonial Sugar from British Markets, so long are the West Indies dependent entirely upon the United States for the sale of their products, and the loss of the United States Markets must, whilst the present conditions continue to exist, be fatal to our West Indian Colonies. I can only hope that the apprehension of injuring our position in the United States Market may prove groundless.

" I have, etc.,

" (Signed) N. LUBBOCK, *Chairman.*"

To the above letter a reply has been received (dated May 16th) to the effect that "the views contained therein will receive Mr. Chamberlain's careful attention."

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

On May 6th instant the following letter was addressed by the West India Committee to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

" Sir,—We have on previous occasions addressed you on the subject of coolie immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad. We venture to thank you, Sir, for the arrangements which you have been pleased to approve for the continuance of immigration for the present season.

" We beg, however, to inform you from our experience and knowledge of the scarcity of labour on estates that the number of coolies allowed, viz., 2,400 for British Guiana, and 1,200 for Trinidad, will be quite insufficient to enable the estates to reap their crops and produce their usual quantity of sugar, the production of which is of such great importance to the welfare of the Colonies.

" At present, Sir, the number of indentured immigrants is yearly decreasing, and if cultivation is to be kept up to its present standard, it is of the utmost importance that the number of indentured immigrants should be increased, or at any rate maintained.

" We therefore respectfully urge upon you, Sir, the desirability of authorizing the increase of the number of coolies already ordered so that the Sugar cultivation may not be in risk of further abandonment.

" Should you be pleased to authorize extra shipments of coolies for this season, the financial arrangements would continue the the same as those now existing between the Planters and the Government, and we need hardly point out to you, Sir, that the introduction of additional labourers would be most beneficial to the public revenue, and the general interest of the Colony.

" We would further represent to you, Sir, that as the question is an urgent one, owing to the fact of the near approach of the emigration season in India, we would hope to be favoured with your decision as soon as it may be convenient to you to favour us with the same.

" I have, etc.,
" (Signed) N. LUBBOCK, *Chairman.*"

To this letter the following reply has been received :—

DOWNING STREET,
10th May, 1898.

" Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, on the subject of the supply of Coolie immigrants for British Guiana and Trinidad for the present season, and to inform you that he regrets that he does not see his way to authorize the introduction of a larger number this year than 2,400 for British Guiana, and 1,200 for Trinidad, those numbers having been fixed after the fullest consideration of all circumstances of the case.

" I am, Sir, etc.,

" (Signed) C. P. LUCAS."

A further letter on this subject has since been addressed by the Committee to Mr. Chamberlain, calling his attention to the fact that the cost of introducing a larger number of Coolies, viz., 3,560 instead of 2,400 as at present allowed, would amount to \$29,000 only, to the General revenue, and \$58,000 to the Planters, and that the scarcity of labour must lead to the abandonment of Estates, and this letter has been duly acknowledged, Mr. Chamberlain stating that he has nothing to add to his letter of May 10th.

THE RIOTS IN MONTSERRAT.

The Committee regrets to hear from private advices that the recent riots in Montserrat were of a far more serious character than might be supposed from the meagre accounts in the newspapers.

THE RUM SURTAX.

The question of the Surtax on Rum is still engaging the active attention of the Committee and a letter on the subject was on May 4th instant addressed to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as follows :—

" Sir,—On April 19th last we addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, calling his attention to the grave injustice to which Rum producers in the British West India Colonies are at present subject, owing to the imposition of a Surtax of 4d. per gallon on Colonial Spirits imported into the United Kingdom, the duty on home-made Spirits being 10s. 6d. per gallon, and the Customs duty on Colonial Spirits being 10s. 10d. per gallon, and begging him to receive a deputation upon this question from the West India Committee.

" To this letter a reply has been received from the Secretary of State, to the effect that this question more properly concerns you, Sir, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, interests other than Colonial being involved, and that in consequence no good purpose would be served by his receiving a deputation, and that he must refer us to you.

" We would respectfully point out to you, Sir, that the excise restrictions in the West India Colonies are in every way as stringent as those imposed at home, to compensate for the disadvantages of which this Surtax of 4d. has been imposed, and moreover, the excise restrictions in the West India Colonies being actually imposed by the British Government through the Colonial Office, and not, as in the case of other Colonies, by the Colonial Government, we feel justified in appealing to the British Government for the redress of this grievance.

"We would therefore venture to ask that, as an act of justice, in the case of those Colonies whose excise regulations are imposed and approved by the Minister of State for the Colonies, Spirits, the produce of those Colonies, should be admitted to the United Kingdom at a duty of 10s. 6d. per proof gallon.

"I have, etc.,

(Signed) "N. LURROCK, *Chairman.*"

A "preliminary" acknowledgment of this letter has since been received.

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to May 21st, 1898, 263,722 tons, against 240,303 in 1897, and 308,792 in 1896.

DELIVERIES 270,559 tons, against 278,632, and 293,010.

STOCKS 80,212 tons, against 94,729 and 124,035.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

2,207,219 tons, against 2,413,781 in 1897, and 2,046,019 in 1896.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow), 9s. 9d. against 8s. 9½d. in 1897, and 11s. 0½d. in 1896.

SUGAR PROSPECTS.

In Germany there has been some delay in the completion of Beet sowings in consequence of the continued wet weather. In many parts it is thought that resowing will have to be resorted to and in other parts it seems likely that the acreage of Beet may be reduced.

Latterly the weather has improved in France, and the temperature is milder. Cultivation is, however, backward. Similar climatic conditions appear to exist in the other Beet-producing countries except in Russia, where the weather has been more favourable. The mildness of the winter is expected to lead to increased ravages of insects this year.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). May 4th.—"Good Reaping weather." May 18th.—"Some rain would be acceptable."—DEMERARA.—(Per favour of Messrs. John McConnell & Co., Messrs. Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co., and the New Colonial Company, Limited). May 2nd.—"Weather again wet and unfavourable." May 5th.—"Weather still too heavy for cultivation, but we have had a few fine days lately." May 11th.—"Finer weather since last message." May 25th.—"Weather showery and unsettled."—TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of Messrs. W. F. Burnley & Co., Limited). May 7th.—"Weather favourable." May 12th.—"Weather favourable."—May 26th.—"Weather favourable."

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

Telegrams:
"CARIB," LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

June 27th, 1898.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of the Acting Committee, held on Thursday, June 23rd, Mr. Spencer H. Curtis in the Chair, upon the motion of Mr. Curtis, seconded by Mr. E. L. Marshall, Mr. Henry K. Davson was unanimously elected Deputy-Chairman of the West India Committee.

Members are informed that the telegraphic and cable address, "*Carib*," London, has been adopted by the West India Committee, and registered at the General Post Office.

THE BRUSSELS SUGAR CONFERENCE.

The official announcement that Sir Horace Plunkett, G.C.M.G., British Minister at Brussels, Sir Henry Bergne, K.C.M.G., of the Foreign Office, Lord Ampthill, Mr. Chamberlain's private secretary, and Mr. Ozanne, of the India Office, had been appointed Delegates with Mr. B. F. Alston, of the Foreign Office, as Secretary, was made too late for inclusion in last circular.

It was considered unfortunate that Mr. Nevile Lubbock and Mr. Martineau, though appointed expert advisers, had not been permitted to be actually present at the sittings of the Conference, as, from articles which have appeared in the Press, it seems that the Foreign Delegates are themselves in many cases experts, and the British Delegates must, therefore, have been at a considerable disadvantage and, consequently, on June 15th, the following letter on the subject was addressed by the Anti-Bounty League to Lord Salisbury:—

"MY LORD,

"I am desired by my Committee respectfully to suggest for your consideration the desirability of modifying the limitations under which Messrs. Nevile Lubbock and George Martineau were appointed and are at present acting as 'expert advisers' to the British Delegates at the International Sugar Bounties Conference at Brussels and permitting them to attend the meetings of the Conference in person.

"I am to point out that this privilege is now enjoyed by the 'expert advisers' accredited by all the other Powers represented at the Conferences, and moreover that certain representatives of the French, Russian, and Austrian Governments are personally largely interested in the beet sugar industry.

"My Committee therefore is asking, not that special concessions may be made in the interests of the British expert advisers, but that the special disabilities under which they at present labour may be removed. It ventures to think that the removal of these disabilities will tend greatly both to facilitate the task of the official British Delegates, and to forward the progress of the deliberations of the Conference as a whole. Trusting that the proposal which is hereby respectfully submitted will meet with your approval,

"I have the honour, &c., &c., (Signed) MARYSON M. BEETON, Secretary."

A reply has been received dated June 23rd, stating that Messrs. Nevile Lubbock and George Martineau have since been admitted to the sittings of the Technical Commission and the full sittings of the Conference.

The Conference held its first sitting in the Foreign Office at Brussels on June 7th. Baron Lambertmont, Minister of State and Secretary-General to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, welcomed the delegates in the name of M de Favereau, the Foreign Minister. After an introductory address delivered by M. de Smet de Nayer, the Belgian Premier and Minister of Finance, the Conference elected its officers, M. de Smet de Nayer being chosen President and Count Alvensleben the German Minister, Vice-President, with M.M. Brunet and Janssens as Secretaries.

On JUNE 11TH, a discussion took place as to when any decision that might be arrived at should come into force, several delegations expressed opinion that the measures to be taken should not in any case be applied before the season 1899-1900, but this question was deferred to a later sitting, and Senator Scéline (France) gave an account of the sugar industry in France, and the conclusions drawn from his statements were that while the French Government was quite ready to abandon direct bounties, it felt that it was bound to make reservations as to the internal regulations in France regarding the excise law.

On JUNE 14th, measures were discussed which it might be necessary to make for ensuring the execution of the arrangements arrived at, the Conference having especially in view the eventual attitude of the various participating powers to those countries which would remain outside the arrangements in question (a matter of great importance, being connected with the existence of treaties of commerce). A prolonged debate on this subject took place, the Conference finally deciding to postpone the discussion in order to give an opportunity for a preliminary exchange of views. The Conference afterwards appointed a Committee composed of one member of each delegation to report on certain questions in the programme submitted to it of an especially technical character.

On JUNE 18TH, the senior Russian delegate read a paper giving a record and describing the bases of the Sugar Laws in force in Russia, the main objects of which, he explained, were to assure the stability of the price of sugar on the home market. On the suggestion of the President, the Conference afterwards went into Committee, and discussed the practical definition of the Bounties, the abolition of which was aimed at. It is understood that the proceedings in Committee will not be included in the Official Report.

RECIPROCITY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The negotiations for a reciprocity treaty with the United States are said to be still proceeding though the prospects of their arriving at a satisfactory termination appear to be less promising than they were a few weeks ago.

THE RUM SURTAX.

In the House of Commons on Monday, June 13th, Mr. Price (Member for Norfolk, E.) moved the following new clause to the Finance Bill:—

“The duties of Customs payable upon rum imported from the British Crown Colonies shall be reduced from 10s. 10d. to 10s. 6d. per gallon.”

In support of his resolution Mr. Price made the following speech:—

“It will be seen that I have restricted in a great measure the clause which stands in my name, as, chiefly, I wish to narrow the subject in dispute. The Crown Colonies occupy a very different position to foreign, and our great self-governing Colonies, in connection with this surtax. When it was first imposed it was imposed because there were said to be taxes connected with the taxation of this country which would not apply in the case of Crown Colonies. But, whatever the facts of the case may have been

then, the facts as regards the case of the Crown Colonies are not so now. At the present time there are, in the Crown Colonies distinct Excise regulations which I am informed, and believe, have increased considerably the expenses of the rum trade and distillery, quite as much as is experienced over here by the distillers by the Excise regulations enforced in this country. It is true the new Excise regulations come into existence and increase the expenditure over here; but it is equally true that over there new ordinances come into force, which also increase the expenditure; and, in addition to that, the argument is used by the distillers over here that there are trade circumstances, which also affect the business, in addition to the excise regulations. But there are trade circumstances, certainly, which also affect the trade of rum in the West Indies, and they consist of a freight which they have to pay, and the very large evaporation which takes place in the spirit while on its way here. I believe, however, in point of fact, the inequality which is supposed to exist, and which it is supposed to remedy, by this extra surtax, this extra 4d. on the gallon, is no longer in existence; and it does seem an extraordinary thing that when we are giving money to the West Indian Government, in order to relieve their poverty, during the present session, we should be charging a surtax on the main element of produce, which they possess, and which must certainly take away a large portion of the dole which we give to them. And the right honourable Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, takes the view that any relief which can be given should be done by way of drawback. But the West Indian Government is not sufficiently well off to make any drawback, or make any arrangement for taxation, and I feel that the time has come when this surtax of the Crown Colonies, at all events, should be considered by the right honourable Gentleman. I do not extend the clause of the surcharge to the self-governing Colonies of this Empire, and to foreign countries, because we are not to know what the Excise regulations are which prevail in those parts, or how they affect them; but we are in a position to know what the Excise regulations are in the Crown Colonies, because there are ordinances which emanate from here, and it may be that, as we have placed counter-vailing disadvantages on the Colonies, from time to time, and although we have done that, we have not reduced the surtax of 4d. on the gallon, which is felt to be such a grievance over there. Fourpence does not at the first sight seem to be a very heavy matter, but the right honourable Gentleman is not, perhaps, aware of the cost price of rum before it has paid duty. I am informed that the price of rum, before it has paid duty, is from 9d. to 1s. a gallon; if that is the case, if 9d. is the ordinary price for rum, the surtax of 4d. is an extremely high rate of duty to pay for that article, so much so that I am informed, under the present conditions, it cannot be used for the purposes of methylation. This tax is felt to be a very hard tax by the Crown Colonies, and they firmly believe that the removal of it will only mean a very small sum; and I think the right honourable Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he accepts my clause, will confer a very great benefit upon the Crown Colonies, and one which will be greatly appreciated."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer: "The honourable Member proposes to upset all the fixed rules by which we have for years past regulated our customs, and institute a preferential duty in favour, not of all our Colonies, but of the Crown Colonies alone. It is very remarkable, for the sake of a Surtax upon Rum. I confess I cannot attach the importance the honourable Gentleman does to this matter, from the point of view of the West Indian Colonies. This matter was alluded to in the Report of the Commission which inquired into the state of the West Indies. They adduced some articles in favour of it which appeared to me to be utterly baseless, and they recommended that this Surtax should be remitted, but they say in making the recommendation they attach no real importance whatever to the matter, and they said they did not believe it would make any appreciable difference to the Colony. Upon the recommendation being made public, the distillers of the United Kingdom took alarm, and they inundated me with memorials and waited on me in deputation, and they established the fact that this Surtax of 4d. which had been in existence was a reasonable difference between the customs and excise duties in this

country, and that to get rid of it on behalf of other countries, foreign countries and our Colonies generally, would be an interference with Free Trade, which would inflict upon them considerable harm. That is one side of the matter. It is treated as a small matter by the West Indian Commission upon the other. And the fact also remains that not one of the Colonies asked for the reduction of this Surtax, but imposed an extra export duty upon rum. I cannot agree that this Surtax can be regarded as excessive, and I think we should be treating the case of the West Indies better if we adopted some other way. Any offence to our own distillers ought to be discouraged, and the proposal of the honourable Member in the way it is moved raises the whole question of differential duties in the whole of the Colonies, and I do not think it is one which the Government can accept."

Mr. W. F. Lawrence (Liverpool, Abercromby):—"The right honourable Gentleman who has just spoken, has followed very much the same line of argument as that which he adopted when the distillers came before him a short time ago. He pointed out in his speech that the arguments of the West Indian Commission were obviously bad, but I think it would have been far better had the right honourable Gentleman shown in what way they were faulty. It is much to be regretted by those interested in the West Indian Colonies that more attention is not paid to the arguments adduced by the Commission in support of the proposition now before the House. It has been mentioned by the Commissioners in their report for a long time past, and it is a matter very much regretted by those who are interested in the West Indian Colonies that it has not been acted upon. I assure the House that the Colonies will view with great disappointment the way this proposition has been disposed of. The right honourable Gentleman has made a statement to the effect that the West Indian Colonies already pay export duties upon Rum. There is, as a matter of fact, only one instance which supports that statement, and that is the Island of Trinidad. That is the only instance upon which the right honourable Gentleman can rely. I have had some experience of Jamaica and I know something of the working of the estates in that country. I can instance two estates where the 4d. surcharge represents in the one case 10 per cent., and in the other 7 per cent. of the gross profits. I submit that no farmer in England would consider the reduction of excise to the extent of 7 per cent. or 10 per cent. of his profits a matter of no consideration. And I think if I appeal to the right honourable Gentleman that he will appreciate such an undertaking if it is brought before him in that way. The land is worked under difficulties, and the right honourable Gentleman will admit that a farmer has a right to complain. The surcharge, as a matter of fact, was based upon a condition of things which exists no longer, and I consider there is a strong *prima facie* case for the consideration of this matter.

The clause was negatived.

THE RECENT RIOT AT MONTSERRAT.

On June 9th a question was asked in the House of Commons by Mr. W. F. Lawrence concerning the recent riot at Montserrat. In reply,

Mr Chamberlain said: "The disturbance referred to in the question of the hon. Member arose out of the seizure of an illicit still and proceedings for the arrest of the distillers. The arrest was resisted by a crowd armed with stones and sticks, who severely injured the Commissioner, Mr. Baynes, and the Inspector-General of Police. Bluejackets were landed the following day. They were not, according to the reports received, stoned; their arrival restored order. Four of the rioters were shot, none fatally, and at present no recent information as to the condition of the labourers in Antigua, or of any dearth of provisions owing to a bad season. I am unable to say when I shall be in a position to make any further statement of proposed measures of relief.

(5)

ST. KITTS.

A meeting of members of the West India Committee interested in St. Kitts met on June 22nd, to consider the following telegram which was received from St. Kitts on June 18th, by the Anti-Bounty League, and handed by that body to the West India Committee:—"Great public meeting held protesting against increased taxation, telegram sent Mr. Chamberlain, League's help earnestly solicited" The matter was brought before the Acting Committee on June 23rd, and it was resolved that Mr. E. L. Marshall, Mr. A. M. Lec and the Secretary be authorised to draft and forward a letter, the outlines of which were approved by the meeting, to the Secretary of State on the subject, strongly supporting the protest forwarded by the Colony. It is felt that any increased taxation must lead to disastrous results and the abandonment of estates, which for a long period have been carried on with the utmost difficulty, and in most cases with a serious loss, in confident expectation of a definite announcement as to the promised Imperial relief (which, judging from Mr. Chamberlain's reply to the Montserrat Question, does not seem to be yet forthcoming) and of permanent benefit from the negotiations with the United States and from the Conference now sitting at Brussels.

DOMINICA.

The West India Committee have received information as to the view taken in Dominica of the proposal made by the Secretary of State that the Crown should exercise control of the finances (in a way that would not involve the abolition of the elective element), prior to granting to that Island the promised Imperial aid. The proposal was discussed in the Legislative Assembly and rejected by 8 votes to 6. The Assembly was subsequently dissolved. The Committee will be glad to receive any further information regarding this matter.

EXPORTS.

	Sugar. Tons.	Rum. Puns.	Coffee. lbs.	Cocoa lbs.	Asphalte. Tons.	Gold. oz.	Co'nuts.	Molasses Puns.
BRITISH GUIANA, Jan. 1st to June 8th, 1898—	38,001	8,616	..	27,234	..	41,350	0	..
1897—	34,639	9,865	..	23,768	..	45,688	960	..
TRINIDAD 1898—	35,000	785	5,440	14,357,520	40,692	..	5,962,944	..
1897—	39,500	767	14,700	14,480,980	53,123	..	3,805,477	..
BARBADOS.. .. . 1898—	33,587	..	..	..	..	..	..	24,441
1897—	36,473	..	..	..	..	..	..	27,960

Shipments of Cocoa from GRENADA from Oct. 1st, 1897, to June 9th, 1898, amount to 49,746 bags and 30 half bags. During the corresponding period last year the amounts were 50,412 bags and 26 half bags.

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to June 18th, 1898, 326,610 tons, against 294,514 in 1897 and 357,360 in 1896.
 DELIVERIES 328,460 tons against 332,321 and 330,421.
 PRESENT STOCK 85,211 tons against 95,251 and 126,192.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

1,875,853 tons against 2,112,157 in 1897 and 1,856,436 in 1896.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88% (Czarnikow), 9s. 6½d. against 8s. 6¾d. to 8s. 7½d. in 1897 and 10s. 1½d. in 1896.

SUGAR PROSPECTS.

(Mr. Czarnikow).—In France the sowings are expected to turn out a little less than estimated, owing to bad weather. In Germany the official area is now given as 426,641 instead of 423,785 hectares as estimated.

COCOA.

(Mr. Czarnikow).—About 6,462 bags were offered at the public sales on Tuesday. The demand on the whole was not so good, and the tone generally was dull, only about 3,000 bags finding buyers at previous rates to a slight decline. Grenada was 6d. to 1s. lower, while Trinidad met with little demand, and only a small quantity sold at barely previous rates; Guayaquil, however, was fairly firm.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARRADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). June 1st.—“Very dry, rain wanted.” June 15th.—“Much wanted, crops suffering.” June 18th.—“Some light partial showers, appearances of rain.”

DE—(Per favour of Messrs. John McConnell & Co., Messrs. Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co., and the New Colonial Company, Limited). June 1st.—“Weather showery and unsettled.” June 5th.—“Weather showery and unsettled.” June 16th.—“Rainy weather for last few days.” June 17th.—“Heavy rains continue, cultivation in some districts beginning to suffer.”

TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of Messrs. W. F. Burnley & Co., Ltd.). June 2nd.—“Weather favourable.” (Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Ltd.). June 16th.—“Weather showery and favourable for cultivation.” June 17th.—“Weather favourable.”

The Secretary will be pleased to post copies of Weather Telegrams on their arrival to Members desirous of receiving them.

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL, *Secretary.*

THE SUGAR CONFERENCE.

POSTSCRIPT.

The Sugar Conference adjourned on Saturday, June 25th, in order to enable Belgium to negotiate directly with Russia as to the modification of the existing arrangements with its Fabricants, and in the meantime, for a modification of its law of 1884. As soon as these negotiations are complete the Conference is to be again summoned.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

Telegrams :
"CARIB," LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

July 25th, 1898.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

The formation of corresponding branches of the Committee in the West Indies is progressing. At a Meeting of the Barbados Agricultural Society on June 24th last, on the motion of Prof. d'Albuquerque, a committee of that Society, consisting of Prof. d'Albuquerque, Mr. Foster Alleyne, Messrs. Cottle, Clarke, and W. D. Shepherd, was appointed to join with a similar committee of the Commercial Body to devise means of putting and maintaining those Societies on a footing with the London Committee. The question is still under consideration in Trinidad, and it is hoped that some satisfactory arrangement may shortly be arrived at.

GRANTS-IN-AID TO THE WEST INDIES.

The discussion in Parliament of the Supplementary Estimate for the relief of the West Indies will, it is believed, take place early in August. It is understood that the proposed Grants-in-aid will amount to £300,000 to be distributed according to the recommendation of the Royal Commissioners and that the erection of central factories in Antigua and St. Kitts is also contemplated. It is satisfactory to note that an assurance has been given on the part of the Government that the papers relating to the Brussels Conference will be laid on the table of the House before the debate takes place.

CONFERENCE AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

On July 11th, a largely attended meeting of Members of Parliament and others interested in the sugar bounty question was held in the House of Commons, under the presidency of Mr. C. B. Ronshaw, M.P. There were also present Lord Stanmore, Sir Horace Tozer (Agent-General for Queensland), Mr. W. F. Lawrence, M.P., Colonel Milward, M.P., Sir Howard Vincent, M.P., Mr. McKillop, M.P., Mr. Charles Bill, M.P., Mr. R. G. Webster, M.P., Mr. Neville Lubbock, Mr. Beeton, the Secretary to the West India Committee, and others. The general opinion expressed was that little good would come out of the Brussels Conference, and that there was a strong probability that no further meeting would be held owing to the difficulties with France and Russia. Mr. Neville Lubbock corrected this impression, and said there was a prospect that the negotiations would come to a successful issue. Lord Stanmore read a resolution passed by the Anti-Bounty League, in which the league recorded its conviction that, whilst existing circumstances constituted a justification for the proposed grants in aid to the West Indian colonies, such grants not only did not afford a permanent remedy, but left both the home refining industry and the sugar-producing colonies entirely at the mercy of the financial policy of foreign Governments. It was resolved to impress upon the Government the danger and futility of any policy which seeks to counteract the effects of the bounty system except by their abolition or neutralization.

RECIPROCITY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

It is understood that the negotiations for a reciprocity treaty with the United States are now proceeding rather more favourably.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.
THE RUM SURTAX.

No reply having been received to the letter on the subject of the Rum Surtax addressed to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach by the West India Committee on May 4th, a further communication was sent to him on July 1st as follows :—

" SIR,

" I have the honour to remind you that on May 4th ult., we addressed a letter to you urging, as a matter of justice to the West Indian Colonies, that Her Majesty's Government would be pleased to propose to Parliament the abolition of the Surtax imposed upon Colonial Rum for the alleged protection of British Spirits. To the above letter we received on May 6th a preliminary acknowledgment, but your expected reply has not yet been received.

" We notice that the subject was discussed on the 12th instant in the House of Commons in connection with the present Finance Bill, and with regard to the statements you then made, I beg respectfully to inform you that (1) this matter is of very great importance to the West Indian Colonies, especially having regard to the depression, under which their staple industry is now suffering, for the following reasons :—(a) that West Indian Rum for methylation is at present excluded altogether from British Markets, as before it is admitted to the United Kingdom for methylation the duty of 4d. per gallon is exacted, while British Spirit for methylation is duty free; (b) were the Surtax abolished, a large quantity of Rum would be used for blending with other spirits, and the demand for Rum would thereby be largely increased. (2) the fact that the West Indian Royal Commissioners do attach importance to the question is shown by their admitting evidence upon this subject and by paragraph 102, page 16 of their report, which states : ' We do not wish to attach very much importance to this question of the extra duty on Rum in connection with the present inquiry. The removal of it will not save the sugar industry nor even materially improve its condition, but it is felt as a hardship, and its levy seems to us to be unsound in principle.' We would humbly submit that this statement cannot be interpreted to mean that the Commissioners in making their recommendation attach no real importance whatever to the matter, and that they did not believe it would make any appreciable difference to the Colony. We would further submit to you, Sir, that the removal of the Surtax from Rum coming from those Colonies whose excise regulations are practically imposed by the British Government would not 'upset all the fixed rules' (*sic*) which for years past have regulated Her Majesty's Customs.

" The position of the West India Colonies with regard to the Spirit Surtax question differs from that of most other spirit-producing Colonies inasmuch as, while the latter impose their own regulations, the excise restrictions in the West India Colonies are practically imposed by the British Government, and as those restrictions are in every way as stringent as those existing at Home, we claim to be as much entitled to the compensating 4d. per gallon as are the British Distillers.

" We respectfully venture to think that the view expressed by you that the British Distillers are opposed to the abolition of the Surtax on British Colonial Rum is a misapprehension, as we have reason to believe that the British Distillers would in no way object to the removal of the Surtax from Rum coming from those Colonies whose excise restrictions are controlled by the British Government, and even though they did object, we feel that we have every right to be placed on the same footing as the British Distillers, subject as we are to the same excise restrictions.

" With reference to your statement that not one of the Colonies asked for the reduction of this Surtax but imposed an export duty on Rum, we would remind you that the matter was brought before the Secretary of State for the Colonies by a resolution passed by the legislature of one of the principal Rum-producing Colonies—British Guiana—and forwarded in a despatch by the Governor to the Earl of Kimberley in 1881, and we emphatically deny that any of the Colonies impose an export duty on Rum; in the case of one island only—Trinidad—a levy is nominally made on Rum at the rate of 5s. per 100 gallons, but this is not a tax at all, but merely an assessment on the planters for their proportion of the cost of introducing coolies from India.

" We would therefore request that you would be pleased to reconsider this matter, and grant the concession to the British Rum-producing Colonies which they have so long requested.

" I have the honour to be, &c., (Signed) N. LUBBOCK, *Chairman*."

To the above letter an acknowledgement was received on July 4th, stating that a " reply shall be sent " but no such reply has as yet come to hand.

ST. KITTS.

In accordance with the resolution passed at the meeting of the Acting Committee on June 23rd, the following letter was forwarded to the Secretary of State on June 25th on the subject of the increased taxation in St. Kitts:—

" Sir,

" I have the honour to inform you that my Committee received on the 18th instant a cable message from one of the leading men in St. Kitts to the effect that a great public meeting had been held there protesting against the proposed increase in taxation. From our own knowledge, and from information received from St. Kitts, we would respectfully submit to you, Sir, that any increased taxation at the present time could not fail to produce most serious results, having regard to the depressed condition of the Sugar industry and all interests depending on it.

" We would respectfully call your attention to paragraph 465 of the Royal Commissioners' Report, which states that ' No appreciable addition to the revenue can be looked for from any further increase of taxation,' and my Committee desire in particular to urge that pending the present negotiations with the United States, with a view to reciprocity, heavier taxation of American imports, such as kerosine, universally in use by the poorer classes, would be injudicious, and further, that a tax levied upon water, a necessity of life to the labouring classes, would certainly lead to grave discontent, if not to worse results.

" Planters have for a long period been carrying on their Estates with the utmost difficulty, and in most cases with serious loss, in the confident expectation of a definite announcement of the promised Imperial Relief, and of permanent benefit from the negotiations with the United States, and from the Conference now sitting at Brussels, the season of the year has now come when a decision must be taken to carry on cultivation for another crop or to abandon; but relief from any of the above sources is still uncertain.

" If further burdens are to be imposed on the only industry of the Island, my Committee feel it their duty to point out that the abandonment of Estates which has already begun will be rapidly accelerated, with the certainty of increased distress amongst the labouring class through large reduction of employment. Beside the Planters and the Estates labourers, the proposed taxation will also press heavily upon the population in general, including merchants, tradesmen and shop-keepers, whose interests have already severely suffered in sympathy with the distress of the planting and labouring bodies.

" I am to submit to you, Sir, with deference, that until a definite announcement of relief from Imperial or other sources has been made, it would be in our opinion most unwise and harmful to add in any way to existing taxation. The absolute necessity of some assistance from outside to enable the Island to tide over its present difficulties is as urgent, or more urgent than ever.

" I have, etc. (Signed), E. L. MARSHALL, *Chairman, St. Kitts Sub-Committee.*"

To the above letter a reply has been received from the Under-Secretary of State to the effect that the subject is receiving Mr. Chamberlain's most careful attention.

Copies of the resolutions passed at the meeting held at Basseterre, on June 16th last, to protest against the increased taxation, and a copy of the petition forwarded to her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, have been received by this mail and can be seen at this office.

The matter will, we are assured, receive the closest consideration at the Colonial Office.

DOMINICA.

The situation in Dominica is now completely changed by the elections for the new House of Assembly. Of the seven elected Members, six were opposed to altering the constitution of the Island to that of a Crown Colony, while one favoured the scheme. Imperial assistance has now been accepted on the Imperial terms, and the Government Bill altering the constitution of the Colony has now passed all its stages.

MR. LUBBOCK AND THE SOCIETY OF ARTS.

The Silver Medal of the Society of Arts has been awarded to Mr. Neville Lubbock, for the Paper on "The West Indies and Sugar Bounties," read by him before that Body on March 15th last.

THE POONA EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

The following extracts from the annual report of the Government Experimental Farm at Poona (a copy of which can be seen at this office), relating to sugarcane experiments at Ma'njri will be of interest to members:—

P. 38. "7. The manures which the cultivators of the district ordinarily use are poudrette, cattle dung, fish manure from the Thāna coast, castor cake and Karanj (*Pongamia glabra*) cake. We tested last year in comparison with the foregoing and will continue to test several edible cakes which are now used for feeding cattle in India or are largely exported. These cakes can be bought in Poona at a considerably cheaper rate per ton than the castor cake and Karanj cake now so extensively employed as manure. Dr. Leather's analysis shows that the edible cakes contain much higher percentage of nitrogen (the most valuable constituent of manures) than the manure cakes, and our comparative tests indicate that these edible cakes can with economy and success be employed as manure. It has been suggested that the use of edible cake as manure is surely a wasteful practice. My answer to that is, that it is a much more wasteful practice to feed milch cattle and work cattle on farms with cake and other concentrated food and permit the solid excrement to be burnt as fuel, and allow the urine to drain away somehow. If edible cakes are used directly as manure, something is returned to the land which will help to maintain fertility; neither the solid nor liquid excrement of highly fed milch cattle and work cattle of towns is used as manure to any appreciable extent."

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to July 16th, 1898, 378,632 tons, against 343,531 in 1897 and 487,521 in 1896.

DELIVERIES: 363,671 tons, against 388,891 and 396,800.

PRESENT STOCKS: 86,281 tons against 87,698 and 148,974.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

1,593,269 tons against 1,781,660 and 1,610,092.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow) 9s. 3d. against 8s. 3d. and 9s. 3d.

SUGAR PROSPECTS.

GERMANY.—The state of the beet fields has doubtless improved of late and the backwardness as compared with last year, is beginning to diminish. FRANCE.—The weather has been cool and rainy, lacking the summery warmth and sunshine as is necessary for the development of the beets which are still backward. From BELGIUM and HOLLAND accounts are similar to those from France. In RUSSIA more damage has been done by the weather and insects this year than usual.

COCOA.

(Messrs. C. M. and C. Woodhouse).—There has been a very quiet market during the past fortnight, and only small supplies have been brought to auction. Prices, however, have been well maintained for the limited supply of Trinidad, and no quotable change has occurred in the value of Grenada and other descriptions of West India except Jamaica, which is rather cheaper. Foreign kinds have as a rule been neglected, but some transactions in African have taken place at steady rates. Sales are as follows, viz.:—Trinidad.—600 bags, at 72s. to 74s. for low middling to midling, 75s. to 76s. for good middling, 78s. to 80s. for superior.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). June 28th, "Fine rains generally throughout the Island." July 5th, "Rain much wanted, crops suffering." July 11th, "Fine rains generally throughout the Island." July 19th, "Weather all that can be desired."

DEMERARA.—(Per favour of Messrs. John McConnell & Co., Messrs. Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co., and the New Colonial Company, Limited). June 27th, "Weather unsettled." July 7th, "Heavy rains, cultivation suffering." July 7th (later), "Heavy rains but now finer." July 11th, "Heavy rains, cultivation suffering." July 13th, "Fine weather since last message, generally acceptable." July 16th, "Weather favourable for cultivation."

TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of Messrs. W. F. Burnley & Co., Ltd., and the New Colonial Company, Ltd.). July 4th, "Weather showery and favourable for cultivation."

The Secretary will be pleased to post copies of weather telegrams on their arrival to members desirous of receiving them.

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

No. 7.

Telegrams :
"CARIB," LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.,

August 23rd, 1898.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

Owing to the Holidays, no Circular will be issued and no Meetings held during the month of September.

THE GOVERNMENT'S SCHEME OF RELIEF.

On the introduction of a supplementary estimate for £41,500, on Tuesday, August 2nd last, Mr. Chamberlain made his long promised statement in the House of Commons, as to the measures of relief for the West India Colonies. The Government's proposals, which were adopted by the House (Mr. Labouchere's motion to reduce the vote being rejected by 178 votes to 40), may be summarised as follows:—

1. The settlement of labourers as peasant proprietors (especially on the Crown Lands of St. Vincent).

2. The substitution of alternative industries for the Sugar industry as far as possible. Such industries to be encouraged by:—

(a) Establishment of a special public department, under the direction of Dr. Morris, to deal with all questions of economic plants, and botanic stations in all the islands. (To cost £4,500 this year, and £17,500 in future years, if the experiment shows a prospect of success, until the Colonies are once again placed in a self-supporting condition.

(b) Improved steamer communication, to include direct communication with Canada, a line of fruit-carrying steamers between the Islands and New York, improved communication between Jamaica and London, and a fortnightly service of steamers between the Islands. (To cost £5,000 this year, and £20,000 in future years.) *

3. If possible, Reciprocity with the United States, and improved terms for trade with Canada. The Government, recognising (as was pointed out to them in the West India Committee's letter of April 26th last—Circular No. 4—) that the full preference of 25 per cent. granted to West Indian produce does not give West Indian Sugar a sufficient advantage to induce Planters to send their sugar to Canada rather than to the United States, the United States still giving a greater advantage owing to their countervailing duties than Canada does under the reciprocity arrangement, are now in communication with the Government of Canada to see whether it is possible to secure further advantage.

4. A Government guarantee of 3% limited to 10 years on £750,000 to be raised privately for the formation of Central Sugar Factories in Antigua, St. Kitts and Barbados. (For the furtherance of the Central Factories a sum of £10,000 was voted for the present year, to be used to pay 3% upon such portion of the capital as may be expended, and which will become due before the works become profitable.)

* With reference to this proposal the following important resolution was, on August 4th last, unanimously adopted by the Council of the BRITISH EMPIRE LEAGUE:—"That the Council of the British Empire League view with much satisfaction Mr. Chamberlain's proposal to establish direct steam communication between the West India Islands and Canada, and also between Jamaica and this Country, these important measures having been brought under the consideration of the Council by one of its members—Mr. Neville Lubbock."

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S SPEECH.

The remarks which Mr. Chamberlain made in his speech in introducing the supplementary estimate above referred to, with regard to the effect on the British and United States sugar markets of the immediate abolition of Bounties, seem to have been based upon some misapprehension.

It would seem to be quite correct to argue that in the event of Bounties being abolished prices in New York and London would revert to the same level. There is no reason to suppose that the New York market would fall to the extent of the countervailing duties. So far as the Beet growers now in receipt of a Bounty are concerned, their position in the New York market would be absolutely unchanged by the abolition of Bounties. Take the case of the German producer: at the present moment he receives from the German Government a Bounty of 25s. per ton. This 25s. per ton he hands over to the United States Government when his sugar arrives in New York. In the event of the Bounty being abolished, and the countervailing duty being also abolished, the price in New York would remain obviously what it is now, with the result to the beetroot-grower that he would be in exactly the same position as he is at present.

On the other hand, in the case of the London market, inasmuch as the beet-grower, who now receives the London price plus 25s. from the German Government, would no longer receive 25s. from the German Government, he would naturally require an advance of 25s. in the London market to place him in the same position as he is in at present.

It seems, therefore, obvious that the abolition of the Bounties would not reduce the price in New York by 25s. but would raise the price in London by 25s. This would, of course, be of no advantage to the beetroot sugar producer, but it would be an advantage of 25s. per ton to the cane sugar producer.

It may further be noticed that in his speech, Mr. Chamberlain quoted the London price as £1 per ton below the price then current.

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

Several communications on the subject of Coolie immigration have been received during the past fortnight. Mr. Edward C. Luard writes from Demerara that the gravity of the labour question is being daily forced upon his attention. "As matters stand at present it is impossible for proprietors to spend money on any improvements whatever, saving and except such only as may be absolutely necessary in the form of maintenance merely to keep their factories running. I question if proprietors realize how near they are to the abandonment of their Estates, in the event of Immigration being stopped altogether by the English Government or even partially curtailed."

As at present arranged, a meeting of the Committee will be held at 3 o'clock on Thursday, August 25th, to consider this important question. It is to be hoped that the Government fully recognize the importance of sanctioning an efficient supply of Coolies for next year, as it must not be forgotten that in the near future a very large number of Coolies will become free from their indenture, and this cannot fail to have a serious effect on the labour supply; the average number of immigrants allowed for the last three years being under 2,500 a season, while for the two years prior to that date the numbers were 7,114 and 5,932 respectively.

RECIPROCITY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. Chamberlain in his speech on August 2nd, referring to the reciprocity negotiations with the United States said: "These have been going on until they came to a temporary postponement because of the adjournment of Congress. We hoped in commencing these negotiations that the United States might see fit to give us the same terms we had in 1892, when they gave us a reduction of 20 per cent. of the duty on sugar, equal to £1 10s. per ton, in return for our 1892 tariff, which was a certain reduction on articles imported into the West Indies of common consumption and of common production in the United States. They have refused to give us the terms they gave us in 1892, and it is still uncertain whether they will give us any terms at all. At present they offer us a reduction of 9 per cent. in return for the concessions, which amount to a reduction in our duties of nearly equal amount, and

in the case of our smaller colonies, it would be impossible to accept. These terms might possibly be accepted in our larger colonies, British Guiana, Trinidad, and perhaps Barbados, and although it is never possible to say anything positive on the subject, I am inclined to hold that we may come to a satisfactory settlement, in which case I should anticipate that to the sugar grown in these great colonies we may secure a further and additional advantage in the United States of something like 10s. per ton, but I am unable at the present moment to absolutely count upon that, and I can only put it forward at the present moment as a hopeful speculation."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER AND THE RUM SURTAX.

The following reply has been received to the letter addressed to Sir Michael Hicks Beach, M.P., the Chancellor of the Exchequer on July 1st, last (see Circular No. 6), on the subject of the Rum Surtax.

"Treasury Chambers,

"Whitehall, S.W.,

"The Chairman of the West India Committee.

"5th August, 1898.

"Sir,

"I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reply to your letter of the 1st ultimo urging the abolition of the surtax of 4d a gallon on Colonial Rum imported into the United Kingdom.

"I am to say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer can add little to the statements already made by him in his reply on the 31st of March last to a deputation of Distillers of the United Kingdom, and on the 13th of June in the House of Commons in Committee on the Finance Bill.

"Since the Report of the Royal Commission was issued, he has given his most careful consideration, in conjunction with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the financial difficulties of the West Indies and the best means of relieving those difficulties. A scheme for this purpose has been drawn up, approved by Her Majesty's Government, and agreed to by the House of Commons.

"It was decided not to include in the proposed measures of relief any attempt to deal directly with the question of the surtax, for the following reasons: The Commissioners do not, in their Report, treat the matter as urgent, or refer to it in their formal recommendations. They sum up their conclusions on the subject as follows:—"We do not wish to attach very much importance to this question of the extra duty on Rum in connection with the present enquiry. The removal of it will not save the Sugar industry, nor even materially improve its condition; but it is felt as a hardship, and its levy seems to us to be unsound in principle." It must be remembered, in reading these words, that in the first part of the quotation, the Commissioners speak with full authority, having heard all possible evidence as to the effect of the surtax on the Colonies, while the concluding words—"its levy seems to us to be unsound in principle"—amount to little more than an expression of opinion, based on admittedly imperfect evidence, on a wide question, with which the Commission, to use their own words, felt "considerable hesitation in dealing." The opinion, moreover, is based on arguments which the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot admit as valid. The Commissioners urge that they cannot find any good reason for imposing an extra charge on imported Spirit which would not equally justify an Import Duty on foreign goods, in order to countervail the disadvantages to which British industries are subjected by the liability to pay compensation to injured workmen, the limitation of the hours of labour, or the special regulations affecting the working of British ships. I am to point out that, in the case of the Distillers, the product of a special industry, carried on by a very limited number of persons, has been selected as a means of raising part of the Revenue required for the Public Service, and the State, having determined to tax the consumers of Alcohol, finds that the best way of doing so is to levy the tax in the first instance on the producers. For this purpose and for purely fiscal reasons, provision is made that the industry shall only be carried on by duly licensed persons, and under very strict regulations, which add materially to the cost of production. None of these conditions apply to the other instances of restrictive legislation referred to by the Commissioners. It appears therefore to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that no parallel such as that indicated by the Commissioners can properly be drawn between the two cases.

"The opinion of the Commissioners, though not, as shown, either a strong one in itself, or strongly urged by them, was, however, carefully considered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the result that

it became evident to him that it was not advisable to move in the direction they indicate. It is clear that the arguments on which the Commissioners base their opinion would apply to the Surtax on Foreign Spirits, as well as to that on Colonial Rum. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is not aware that anyone in this country would desire to abolish the surtax on Foreign Spirits—while the Distillers of the United Kingdom, having asked for an opportunity of stating their case, urged strongly that its removal would be injurious to their interests, and would unfairly disturb the relations between the Duties on Home and Foreign Spirit respectively. Without entering at length into their arguments, it is at least clear that the surtax is only one item in the system by which those relations have been adjusted, and could not be dealt with apart from the re-consideration of other difficult and complicated points that bear also upon the subject.

"The complete abolition of the surtax being therefore inadvisable, your Committee have asked for its partial removal in favour of Rum coming from the West Indies. But this proposal is open to two special objections. The present uniform surtax on all imported Spirits was deliberately adopted in 1881, after discussion in Parliament, and its alteration would amount to a return to a system of differential Duties in favour of the Colonies: A change far too great to be made on account of a matter of comparatively very small importance. Moreover, apart from this question of principle, the concession could not be confined to West Indian Rum, but would necessarily extend to other classes of Spirit which could not for practical purposes be distinguished from it, with the probable result that the producers of West Indian Rum would be in no better position than they are at present.

"But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though not prepared to alter the Surtax, recognised that it may operate in some measure to the disadvantage of the West Indian Colonies. He therefore agreed that the assistance to be given by the Imperial Government should be on a more liberal scale than that recommended by the Commission, in order that the Colonies might be enabled to deal with the difficulty themselves. Once placed on a sounder financial basis, they should be in a position to free their exports from any fiscal burdens and even, if they choose, to make allowances on the export of Rum similar to those which are made in the United Kingdom on the export of British Spirits in consideration of the Excise restrictions under which they are produced, or in such other ways as may seem to them appropriate to place the export of Rum on a more satisfactory footing.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer hopes that the above explanation will make clear to you his position on the general question of the Surtax.

"He does not propose to deal at length with the special points raised in your letter. Such questions as the precise amount of expense to which producers of Rum are subjected by Colonial regulations, or the extent to which the removal of the surtax would increase the use of Rum for methylation or blending with other Spirits, are open to considerable difference of opinion, and could not be settled without careful scrutiny by experts. As the retention of the Surtax has, on broad grounds of general policy, been decided on, it does not seem to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that any practical end would be served by a detailed discussion of particular arguments for its abolition.

"With regard to the question of Export Duties on Rum levied by the Colonial Governments, I am to point out that the report of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech from which you quote is not accurate. If you refer to Hansard of the 13th of June, you will see that his words were—"At least one of the Colonies asking for the reduction of this surtax imposes an Export Duty upon Rum." This is strictly correct, for, according to the last edition of the Statistical Abstract for the Colonies, the following Colonies levy an Export Duty on Rum, in addition to an Export Duty on either Sugar or Molasses, or both,—St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Dominica and Trinidad. The Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot reconcile these facts with your contention that none of the Colonies imposes an Export Duty on Rum, nor can he admit your argument that a Duty like that levied in Trinidad, to which you specially refer, is "not really a tax at all, but merely an assessment upon the Planters for their proportion of the cost of introducing Coolies from India." That may have been the original motive of the Tax: but the Duty appears to him to be none the less a genuine Export Duty, for it would have to be paid by every Exporter alike, whether he employed Coolies or not.

"I am, etc.,

"(Signed) L. A. GUILLEMARD."

THE TAXATION QUESTION.

The following proposals for the reduction of taxation for the year ending March 31st next have been transmitted to the Colonies by the Secretary of State:—

The export duties on Sugar, Molasses and Rum in St. Kitts Nevis, Dominica and St. Vincent to be remitted. The Land Taxes in Antigua, St. Kitts Nevis and Montserrat not to exceed 1/- per acre for cultivated and 6d. per acre for uncultivated land. In St. Kitts Nevis the Wheel Tax to be enforced subject to certain exemptions, but the Kerosene duty raised to 2/-, the present rate in Antigua. The Income and Trade Tax proposals for St. Kitts will be further considered.

The Hon. Edward G. Todd, in a letter to the Secretary dated July 19th, 1898, writes: "On behalf of the inhabitants generally, I have to thank the West India Committee for the prompt and effective action taken to represent to the Colonial Office the injustice which the Local Government is endeavouring to inflict upon the Presidency."

BRITISH GUIANA PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION.

Mr. R. G. Duncan has been re-elected chairman of this body. Messrs. Howell-Jones, A. Mackay, and Guy Wyatt, Members of the Council, with Mr. A. Summerson, Secretary and Treasurer.

BARBADOS CORRESPONDING COMMITTEE.

Members have heard with great satisfaction that arrangements have now been completed for the formation of a representative sub-committee in Barbados to correspond and keep in touch with the West India Committee. The sub-committee selected consists of the following gentlemen: Mr. Alistair Cameron, Mr. T. W. Wilkinson, Professor D'Albuquerque and Mr. Forster Alleyne, appointed by the Barbados Agricultural Society, and Mr. J. Gardiner Austin, Mr. W. O. Collymore and Mr. Robert Challenor, appointed by the Committee of Commerce. Mr. Forster M. Alleyne has consented to act as Honorary Secretary to the Sub-Committee, and has already communicated to the Chairman two most interesting letters, which were read at a Meeting held on August 18th instant.

BARBADOS.

At the request of the West India Committee, Mr. W. F. Lawrence, M.P., kindly asked a question in the House of Commons on August 8th, concerning the shocking attempt that was made on the life of The Honourable A. J. Pile, C.M.G., Speaker of the House of Assembly in Barbados on July 22nd last. Mr. Chamberlain, in reply, said:—

"The Governor of Barbados has reported that Mr. Pile has been shot and seriously wounded; at the date of the despatch his assailant had not been discovered. On July 1st—not in open day, but about 11 p.m.—a number of villagers made a raid on a potato field, and at first offered some resistance to the police, but were soon dispersed, and several of the ringleaders arrested. I have not heard of any case of attempted highway robbery on estate managers. The Government have no reason to suppose that the island is in an unsettled state, and they do not propose to reconsider their decision as to the early removal of the troops to St. Lucia."

Mr. Forster Alleyne writes (August 4th) that up to the time of the departure of the Mail the doctors had been unable to locate the bullet and that Mr. Pile was lying in a most critical condition. A postscript adds that on August 5th Mr. Pile passed a better night and that the doctors held out some hope of recovery.

At a meeting of the Committee held on Thursday, August 18th, the following resolution of sympathy was unanimously passed:—

"That this Committee have heard with sincere regret of the dastardly attempt that has been made on the life of the Honourable A. J. Pile, C.M.G., and that the Secretary be instructed to convey to Mrs. Pile and the Honourable Gentleman's family their deep sympathy and hopes for his speedy recovery."

FRENCH SUGAR BOUNTIES.

The *St. James' Gazette* states that in conformity with the law of April 7th, 1897, the Council of Ministers has decided that the following bounties shall be granted to French native and Colonial sugars declared for export after September 1st next: first category per 100 kilogs refined 2.42 fr.; second category per 100 kilogs refined 2.77 fr.; third category per 100 kilogs refined 3.11 fr. A decree to this effect was submitted for the President's signature. It is hoped that this reduction of the bounties may act as a stimulant to the Brussels negotiations.

EXPORTS.

	Sugar. Tons.	Rum. Puns.	Coffee. lbs.	Cocoa lbs.	Asphalte. Tons.	Gold. oz.	Co'note. Pons.	Molasses Pons.
BRITISH GUIANA, Jan. 1st to Aug. 3rd, 1898—	50,512	12,491	..	45,135	..	57,924	15,000	1,498
1897—	45,807	11,557	..	42,300	..	65,528	950	6,672
TRINIDAD 1898—	50,445	834	9,760	16,608,660	57,935	..	6,578,824	9,687
1897—	52,081	932½	15,180	16,566,090	75,371	..	5,020,837	4,048
BARBADOS 1898—	48,164	..	..	..	..	..	..	30,200
1897—	54,242	..	..	..	..	..	..	37,046

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to August 13th, 1898: 433,589 tons, against 383,649 in 1897 and 508,786 in 1896.

DELIVERIES: 437,492 tons, against 446,236 and 448,120.

PRESENT STOCKS: 87,407 tons, against 70,462 and 163,919.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

1,330,544 tons, against 1,511,616 and 1,424,140.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow) 9s. 3¼d. against 8s. 9d. in 1897, and 9s. 7¼d. to 9s. 8¼d. in 1896.

SUGAR PROSPECTS.

In FRANCE.—Beet cultivation is backward as compared with last year. Moderate results are expected. In AUSTRIA cultivation is equally backward. In GERMANY an average good crop is expected.

COCOA.

(Messrs. Wilson, Smithett & Cos. Circular).—No change can be reported in the general position of the market; a dullish appearance was imparted to the auctions by the extreme prices required by importers, in many cases above recent market rates; and on the other hand the absence of export demand, and the sultry weather for manufacturing: but the business, which has for the most part transpired privately, is of fair extent, and prices are fully maintained. On Tuesday the 3,585 bags catalogued met with little demand, many of the chief buyers being absent from the market; but the moderate proportion which changed hands realised full rates. The demand from the Continent continues limited, much attention being drawn to the quite recent falling-off in deliveries in Germany and in Holland, but rumours of considerable requirements by Spain have enhanced cost and freight prices, which consequently show an increased disparity with spot values.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). July 26th: "Some rain would be acceptable." August 9th: "A few light showers have fallen, but more rain would be acceptable." August 18th: "Weather very favourable." DEMERARA.—(Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Limited.) Aug 10th: "Weather too dry. A few light showers have fallen, but more rain would be acceptable." TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Ltd.) Aug. 17th: "Heavy rains beneficial to cultivation." ANTIGUA.—(Per favour of Messrs. Boddington & Co.) July 28th: "Rains general throughout the Island."

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

Telegrams :
"CARIB," LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,
LONDON, E.C.,

October 3rd, 1898.

THE DISASTROUS HURRICANE IN THE WEST INDIES.

Mr. FORSTER M. ALLEYNE, Hon. Secretary of the Barbados branch of the West India Committee, writing on September 16th, gives a graphic description of the ravages of the Hurricane which swept over part of the West Indies on September 10th last.

BARBADOS.

"On Saturday, September 10th, we were visited by a tremendous hurricane, the worst we have had since 1831. The blow began about 6.30 p.m. and lasted till about 1.0 a.m. The violence of the wind is estimated at 65 miles per hour at the maximum, and even for a few minutes reached 75. Torrents of rain fell during that night and again on the Monday morning. The devastation is immense. There is hardly an estate in the Island which has not sustained injury. The general form of the damage is the blowing down of Watermills, and the roofs of Cattle, or Mule Pens, of which hardly any may be said to be remaining intact, but numerous examples exist of boiling houses and dwelling houses unroofed, mills turned over and stock destroyed. The destruction of trees is enormous; and smaller shipping in the Bay has suffered terribly. The Gaol, the Lunatic Asylum, the Swing Bridge, and the Wharves have all been injured.

"But the pressing point is the housing and feeding of the homeless population. It is impossible at this moment to get accurate information as to different parts of the Island. The Telephone system is completely destroyed, and it will take three months to repair it. It is computed, however, that of the 90,000 small wooden houses numbered at the last census, fully one-third have been blown down, the majority beyond hope of reconstruction. The Planters have done their best to give the poor people who have lost their homes temporary shelter in the stanchion rooms and boiling houses, and much food and clothing has also been distributed.

"The number of Chimneys and boiling houses blown down is comparatively few, the majority of injury has been done to water mills, cattle pens, mule pens, houses and stock, all of which must be in existence whether central factories exist or not. Besides this there is the grave uncertainty as regards the crop. The canes were blown flat by the hurricane, and opinions differ how far they will recover. It is certain that those which are broken, or which have been submerged for a long time by the floods will do no good, but it is impossible to say what effect a continuance of favourable weather might have upon those which are only bent. We hear that the injury done to St. Vincent is very great.

"The number of deaths reported to the police up to the present are 83, and as to the injured the police authorities have no reliable information so far, but say that without doubt they may be reckoned in hundreds."

ST. LUCIA.

In St. Lucia the effects of the hurricane were very severe, nearly all the prosperous Cocoa plantations have sustained permanent injury, and the crops are ruined. The damage to roads, bridges, railways, and labourers' dwellings on the Sugar Estates is very considerable. Previous experience shows that the sugar crop is affected by a hurricane to the extent of 20 or 25 per cent., which means the loss of many thousands of pounds and the inability of the planters to give employment, which is the most satisfactory way of affording relief to the labourers.

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter received by the mail from a gentleman in St. Vincent and dated September 15th, 1898, shows that the Island St. Vincent was the worst sufferer from the appalling catastrophe.

"It is my painful duty," it runs, "to inform you that one of the most disastrous hurricanes ever experienced passed over this Island on Sunday last., I may say that it is indescribable, the whole Island

gives one the appearance of a prairie after a fire. Every Estate's Building is unroofed and many completely fiat with chimneys down, the cultivation is ruined, and all Cocoa and Spice Trees destroyed, the only thing left is the Arrowroot in the ground but there is no set of works to make it.

"Kingstown is a perfect wreck and so are all outlying Towns, the reports from the country are not complete, but the loss of life must be heavy as many persons must have been carried away by the rivers, there is also the loss of the Sailors who went down with their vessels, the 'May Queen' and 'Carib' being the only two of the local fleet that came on shore, the 'Waterwitch,' the 'Sylvia' and 'Falcon' foundered up in the quarry, Clarence was lost with his vessel which capsized in deep water, the 'Rising Tide' and 'Ocean King' were blown off and must have capsized, as the latter drifted bottom-up to St. Lucia. There are three large vessels on the Windward coast. The 'Loanda,' 1568 tons; the 'Lapland,' 649 tons, and the 'Grace Lynward,' 625 tons, which I suppose you are already aware of by our cable to Lloyd's.

"The Colonaric Estates seem to have suffered most, there is not a wall standing I am told. Mr. Hillocks was killed and his family all injured more or less, and a Miss Darrant who lived with them also killed, so that we have not only to mourn the loss of poor Hillocks but I have been deprived of the most useful man I could have had in such an emergency. Everyone, as you can imagine, is thoroughly demoralized, and as the country people come in in droves the Government are overtaxed in providing for them as breadstuffs are scarce and not a single 'bread' or other fruit tree is standing. The different town authorities have been unable to cope with the number of bodies requiring the usual mode of burial, so are just sewing them up and depositing them in trenches.

"Stability does not seem to have ranked for much where the wind hit a place, for instance the Butcher's Stalls and Public Library are down and some small houses of wood lower down still standing. Redemption House, Liberty Lodge House and Montrose Mansion are down except the wall parts, the beautiful little Cottage at the entrance to the garden is completely wrecked. 'Maryfield,' 'Coxheath,' 'Montebello' and all residences at the Fort are in small pieces on the ground. The house I am in is badly damaged, all front and part of roof blown away, kitchen, bath, carriage house and stable demolished, my wife and five children with our servants, had all to lie out in 'Stoney Piece' in all the weather, the children do not seem to have suffered but I am much afraid of my wife's health. I am sure if a relief party had not come in the evening and taken my family to the Anglican Rectory where they have been since, very serious would have been the consequence.

"Our Town property has suffered much: 'Rees' big Guano Store is unroofed, the Wharf torn up, large lighter demolished, small ones broken up, Moses' boats all gone but two; our offices not so seriously, Mr. Fergusson's room blown in. Husband's Lot, one side gone, Lots 13 and 14 badly damaged, Roof of No. 9 part off; but Waterloo House very slightly damaged. The 'Carib' we have dismantled and got the ballast out and hope to get off. The 'May Queen' bilged and will have to be hauled up.

"The Estates' reports can scarcely be relied upon at present, as everyone's nerves are over strung. I shall, if possible, visit each one immediately after the mail goes (provided we get through with Lloyd's work), but I shall give you now all the information to hand up to the time of writing in as few words as possible as I can assure the loss to you is so appalling that it upsets me to write it.

"Drying Houses, Mill Sheds, Megass House roofs, Mule Pens, three-fourths of the stable, the Gable end of Distillery roof are all blown down, the covering of Mill House, Still Shed, Arrowroot Wheel and Spout blown away, Manager's and Overseer's Houses all damaged, Canes all levelled and stripped of all 'tops,' Canal filled up with earth and trees, all outhouses at Greathouse blown away, and the Liquor Loft and Curing House stripped. Megass House, Copper Hole, and Still shed are entirely destroyed, Negro Yard wrecked, Cane cultivation badly blown down, Cocoa cultivation almost destroyed, and the Manager's House badly wrecked.

"The Cane cultivation for 1899 is entirely ruined, and the Cocon and Nutmeg trees destroyed."

Upon the receipt of the news of the disaster, a Committee Meeting was at once summoned, and since then the West India Committee have been indefatigable in their endeavours for the relief of the sufferers. On Sept. 21st the following telegrams were despatched to St. Vincent and Barbados respectively :—

To PORTER—ST. VINCENT—Confer with other sufferers as to the amount of damage done to estates buildings stock and crops. Telegraph gross amount of estate damage done as well as to wharf and incidental town property with the object of approaching Imperial Government for a Hurricane Loan send full detail by Mail under respective headings.

To CHAIRMAN OF COMMERCIAL HALL—BARBADOS—Please confer with West India Committee, Commercial and Agricultural bodies and cable gross figures under each head of damage done to estates buildings butts stock and crops with the view of approaching the Home Government for an Imperial Hurricane Loan send further details by Mail.

From Barbados a reply has been received by telegram that the information will be forwarded at the first opportunity after the official returns are completed, and that a grant would be preferred to a loan.

A DEPUTATION TO THE LORD MAYOR

Subsequent to the meeting a deputation of the Committee, consisting of Mr. Nevile Lubbock, Mr. Henry Dawson and Mr. R. Rutherford, waited on the Lord Mayor with a view to praying him to inaugurate a Mansion House Fund for the relief of the sufferers. From him they learnt that the Colonial Office had already made a similar request. The Lord Mayor readily gave his consent, and as members will have become aware, the fund was duly started on Sept. 17th and now amounts to £22,000.

SUGGESTED EMIGRATION FROM BARBADOS AND ST. VINCENT.

On Sept. 27th a letter was forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggesting that the practicability of Emigration from Barbados and St. Vincent to Trinidad and British Guiana should be considered as a measure of relief to the existing distress in the two former Colonies. A reply has been received from Mr. Chamberlain thanking the Committee for this suggestion, and stating that the Governors of the Colonies interested are being consulted by telegraph upon the subject.

A DEPUTATION TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE

On September 30th a meeting of the Committee was held, and views were exchanged as to the detailed accounts of the disaster which had been received by the mail, and at three o'clock a deputation of the West India Committee waited on Lord Selborne at the Colonial Office to lay before him the information which they had received by the recent mail as to the damage done by the late hurricane in the Islands of Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia. Mr. Lubbock, in introducing the Deputation, laid stress on the fact that the detailed information now received fully bore out previous reports as to the terrible nature of the calamity and the extent of the damage, and he intimated that Imperial aid on a large scale would probably be required. Other speakers followed representing the various Islands, and Lord Selborne, in reply, expressed sympathy with the distress of the Colonies, and assured the deputation that the crisis was receiving and would continue to receive the full attention of her Majesty's Government, and that he would report their observations to the Secretary of State.

AN APPEAL TO THE CLERGY.

The Committee have further issued an appeal to the Archbishops, Bishops and other heads of religious bodies in Great Britain requesting them to consider the possibility of advising their clergy to devote an offertory in their churches to be added to the Mansion House Fund for the relief of the sufferers.

THE LATE HONBLE. A. J. PILE, C.M.G.

News of the death of the Honble. A. J. Pile, C.M.G., Speaker of the Barbados House of Assembly, was received in London on September 3rd last with profound regret and sympathy. The deceased gentleman took a deep interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of the West Indies, and, by his death, Barbados has lost a citizen of great worth and high character.

THE BARBADOS SUGAR CONFERENCE.

As already announced in the newspapers, the West Indian Sugar Conference met at Barbados on September 3rd last, and the following most important resolutions were passed :—

Resolved—

“ That this meeting of Delegates from British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua, whilst fully recognising the efforts of the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies to afford relief to the West Indian Colonies suffering from the serious depression of Sugar Industry, regret that so far the attempts to arrange reciprocal relations between the United States and the West Indies, as well as to obtain the abolition of the bounty system have met with no success. This meeting would strongly urge upon the British Government that nothing short of the speedy rehabilitation of the sugar industry can restore prosperity to the West Indies and British Guiana, and they respectfully demand as British subjects, the right to compete in the Home markets at the natural cost of production, with sugar imported from foreign countries and urgently call upon Her Majesty's Government as the only effective remedy to take such steps as will either prevent the importation of all sugar on which export bounties are given or annul by countervailing duty all the advantages derived from such export bounties.”

Resolved—

“ That as regards Barbados and Antigua the Delegates from these Colonies take the opportunity afforded at this meeting to express their gratitude to Mr CHAMBERLAIN for proposing to devote a considerable sum towards the establishment of Central Factories in those islands. They are confident that the establishment of Factories under the most modern methods will tend toward the more profitable production of sugar, and consequently towards the general prosperity of these islands; provided always that improved methods of manufacture are not counteracted by Bounties by foreign nations, against the injustice of which the delegates will never cease to protest ”

It is proposed to reprint the full report of proceedings which has been received by this mail, for distribution among members of the Committee.

THE BRUSSELS CONFERENCE.

A telegram has been received by the *Indépendance Belge* from Berlin to the following effect :—“ I hear on excellent authority that there no longer exists any hope of the Powers coming to an agreement upon the Sugar Question. They are clearly divided into three groups, the first consisting of Germany, Austria, Belgium and Holland; the second of France and Russia, and the third of England. The Belgian Government has scrutinized the Conference papers to see if there are no means of taking up the Question again. The result of this scrutiny has been negative. Each of the three groups adheres to its point, and the points of view differ to such an extent that it is no good any longer dreaming of reform.”

TRINIDAD CORRESPONDING COMMITTEE.

The Secretary has pleasure in announcing that at a General Meeting of the Trinidad Agricultural Society held on July 12th last, a resolution moved by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Cipriani was carried appointing the Vice-president (The Hon. G. Townsend Fenwick) and the Secretary (Mr. Edgar Tripp) a Committee to correspond with the West India Committee to represent the views of the Society in all matters connected with the agricultural industries of the colony of Trinidad.

Mr. Tripp has courteously forwarded to the Committee bound copies of the proceedings of his Society for 1896 and 1897, and these and the minutes of each meeting will in future be at the disposal of members in this office.

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

On September 10th last a despatch was received from the Secretary of State to the effect that the contract for carrying Coolies for British Guiana and Trinidad was still under consideration, and that when the matter was settled, a further communication would be addressed to the Committee.

THE RUM SURTAX.

On August 24th ulto. the following letter was addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the subject of the Rum Surtax, which continues to engage the active attention of the Committee :—

SIR,—On April 19th last we addressed a letter to you calling your attention to the grave injustice to which Rum producers in the British West India Colonies are subject, owing to the imposition of a surtax of 4d. per gallon on Colonial spirits imported into the United Kingdom, and requesting you to receive a small deputation from the West India Committee on the subject.

On April 26th you were pleased to reply that "the question is one which more properly concerns the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as it involves other than Colonial interests," and that in your opinion no good purpose would be served by your receiving a deputation, that you regretted your inability to comply with our wishes in the matter, and that you must refer us to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Accordingly on May 4th last we addressed a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling his attention to your communication above referred to, and earnestly praying him as an act of justice, in the case of those Colonies whose excise restrictions are imposed and approved by the Minister of State for the Colonies, that spirits, the produce of those Colonies, should be admitted to the United Kingdom at the same duty as that levied on spirits produced at home, i.e., 10s. per proof gallon.

To this letter we were not favoured with a reply. On July 1st last we again wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject.

On the 5th instant we received a reply (a copy of which I have the honour to transmit herewith) written by Mr. Guillemard by desire of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In this reply we would especially call your attention to the following paragraph—"But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though not prepared to alter the Surtax, recognised that it may operate in some measure to the disadvantage of the West Indian Colonies. He therefore agreed that the assistance to be given by the Imperial Government should be on a more liberal scale than that recommended by the Commission, in order that the Colonies might be enabled to deal with the difficulty themselves. Once placed on a sounder financial basis, they should be in a position to free their exports from any fiscal burdens and even, if they choose, to make allowances on the export of Rum similar to those which are made in the United Kingdom on the export of British Spirits in consideration of the Excise restrictions under which they are produced, or in such other ways as may seem to them appropriate to place the export of Rum on a more satisfactory footing,"—and would respectfully ask you to be pleased to inform us when the principal Rum producing and manufacturing Colonies in the West Indies, namely, Jamaica, British Guiana and Trinidad, may expect to receive such Imperial assistance as will enable them to deal with the difficulty themselves in the manner suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I have, etc., (Signed) N. LUBBOCK, *Chairman.*

To the above letter the following reply has been received.

DOWNING STREET,

30th August, 1898.

SIR,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, on the question of the surtax of 4d. per gallon on Colonial Spirits imported into the United Kingdom, and enquiring when the principal rum-producing Colonies in the West Indies may

expect to receive such Imperial assistance as will enable them to abolish their export duties and make a compensatory allowance on exported Spirits, and to inform you that the subject of your letter will receive attention, but that Mr. Chamberlain is not prepared to give you a specific answer at the present time.

I am, etc., (Signed) C. P. LUCAS.

EXPORTS.

	Sugar. Tons.	Rum. Puns.	Coffee. lbs.	Cocoa lbs.	Asphalt. Tons.	Gold. oz.	Coins.	Molasses Tons.
BRITISH GUIANA, Jan. 1st to Sept. 14th, 1898—	59,150	14,090	..	69,123	..	71,224	15,000	2,257
.. .. . Sept. 1st, 1897—	46,611	12,676	..	48,999	..	74,828	950	6,708
TRINIDAD Sept. 14th, 1898—	50,977	834	10,000	17,584,460	70,255	..	7,680,475	4,070
.. .. . 1897—	63,930	943	15,340	17,319,810	87,431	..	6,022,805	4,941

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to September 24th 1898: 522,241 tons against 456,897 in 1897, and 564,096 in 1896.

DELIVERIES: 522,776 tons against 519,996 in 1897 and 532,166 in 1896.

PRESENT STOCKS: 90,775 tons against 69,901 and 140,072.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

923,224 tons against 1,105,779 and 1,206,076

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow) 9s. 6d. against 8s. 6d. to 8s. 6½d. in 1897, and 8s. 10½d. to 8s. 11½d. in 1896.

SUGAR PROSPECTS.

IN FRANCE.—The *Sucriere Indigene* states, that the drought is as great as ever and is making the pulling of the Beet difficult, if not impossible. The density of the juice is of good quality but the weight is poor. Work has commenced in the Paris district where abundant rain fell on the 18th.

IN AUSTRIA.—The same crop as last year is expected. IN GERMANY.—As in France a deficit in the harvest is anticipated.

COCOA.

(Messrs. C. M. & C. Woodhouse).—There is no material change to report in this market during the past fortnight. At the public auctions only limited supplies were offered, and the demand was varied. Trinidad was slow of sale, but by private treaty a fair amount of business has been transacted at firm prices. Grenada was partly sold at about previous prices, but Jamaica was in strong demand at an advance of 1s. to 2s. per cwt. In Bahia moderate sales have been made at steady rates. Ceylon firm. Guayaquil has been generally quiet, but the sales made show no change in value. Transactions include the following, viz. :—

Trinidad.—1,050 bags at 76s. to 77s. for middling, 78s. to 81s. for good middling to superior.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). August 23rd: "Fine rains generally throughout the Island." September 6th: "Fine rains generally throughout the Island." September 9th: "Rains have continued since last cable."—On September 10th occurred the disastrous hurricane to which reference is made elsewhere.—September 21st: "Weather all that can be desired." DEMERARA.—(Per favour of Messrs. Jno. McConnel & Co.) August 29th: "Weather showery, and favourable for cultivation." September 8th: "A few light showers have fallen, but more rain is wanted." TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Ltd.) September 15th: "Heavy rains, beneficial to cultivation."

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

No. 9.

Telegrams :
"CARIB," LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,
LONDON, E.C.,

October 31st, 1898.

HOMEWARD PASSENGERS.

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company has consented to furnish the Committee with a list of homeward passengers from the West Indies on the arrival of each mail, commencing with the mail due on 21st December next. Such lists will be posted in this office for the inspection of Members.

THE HURRICANE.

It is now possible to give an estimate of the amount of damage incurred in Barbados and St. Vincent during the recent hurricane. Both estimates are however naturally incomplete, as in the case of Barbados it is impossible at present to gauge accurately the amount of damage done to the coming crop, the recuperative power of which depends so largely upon the weather during the next three months. It is to be hoped that this item may prove a small one as at present the climatic conditions are all that can be desired. In the case of St. Vincent the estimate given is according to mail advices far below the actual amount of damage incurred, moreover no precise returns have as yet been received as to the extent of the damage to the various public buildings and outlying villages.

BARBADOS.

In Barbados the damage as at present estimated amounts to £124,235, made up as follows :—

Labourers cottages destroyed 11,460, damaged 4,900	...
On these £21,000 has already been spent, and it is estimated that at least £20,000 more will be required	£41,000
Public Works and Buildings	25,000
Estate Buildings, Works and Stock	54,000
Schools	3,000
Wesleyan Chapels and Schools	1,235

No estimate has as yet been formed of the damage to roads which have suffered severely from landslips and floods, but the amount must be considerable. The damage to churches has been small and the return has not yet been sent in. In Barbados 109 lives were lost.

ST. VINCENT.

As regards St. Vincent, a telegram was received from that Island giving the following estimate of damage :—

Principal Proprietors' Estates, Buildings and Canals	£75,000
Huts	9,500
Stock and Produce	1,500
Crops and Provisions	45,000
Wharves	2,000
Town Property	6,500
	£139,500

A despatch from the Governor now estimates the loss sustained by different religious bodies through destruction of Churches, Chapels, Schools, &c. at £31,000, and House Property in Kingston at £14,000, and as no return of the damage to public buildings and outlying villages has as yet been received it would seem that the loss in St. Vincent alone must amount to more than a Quarter of a Million.

In St. Vincent 300 bodies have already been accounted for, but the loss of life must eventually total many more, as many must have been washed out to sea.

ST. LUCIA.

In St. Lucia the damage was caused principally by the heavy rainfall, which is estimated to have amounted to 19½ inches in twenty-four hours. The damage to Public Buildings, Roads, Bridges, etc. is estimated at about £7,000.

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

It is to be regretted that the Mansion House Fund has not made more rapid progress. It now amounts to £38,500, a figure which compares unfavourably with former Mansion House funds, such as that for Persecuted Jews in Russia, which amounted to no less than £108,000. A feeling seems to exist among the British public that the Government should and will undertake the duty of relieving distress by means of a grant such as is advocated by the *Daily Mail*, and this, no doubt, is causing many people who would otherwise subscribe, to hold aloof.

Mr. Chamberlain, in a letter sent to the Lord Mayor on October 27th, enclosing a handsome subscription to the fund and expressing his gratitude for the service his Lordship has rendered in bringing the matter before the public, states :—

“The full reports which I have received from the West India Governors since the opening of the fund, have, I regret to say, shown conclusively that the earlier accounts, far from being exaggerated, were, if anything, an understatement of the immense loss inflicted by the hurricane upon a people who have for many years past been struggling against misfortune and impoverishment.

“The sums of money which have already been subscribed are still, I fear, far less than what is pressingly required for the relief of destitution, and there is a wide field for the exercise of private benevolence in addition to anything which may be done by her Majesty's Government for the alleviation of present distress and for the permanent improvement of the condition of the islands.” This, it is hoped, may be taken as an indication that the Government are contemplating prompt measures of relief.

EMIGRATION FROM BARBADOS AND ST. VINCENT.

The suggestion put forward by the West India Committee that, as a measure of relief, agricultural labourers should be drafted from Barbados and St. Vincent to Trinidad and British Guiana, has been adopted by the Government. With commendable promptitude a deputation of the British Guiana Planters' Association waited upon the Governor on September 27th to discuss the question, and later in the day a meeting of the Association was held, and it was decided to take 1,000 labourers from Barbados and St. Vincent, free passage to British Guiana being provided by the Governments of Barbados and St. Vincent, or their relief Fund. In Trinidad similar arrangements are being made by the Agricultural Society and 2,000 labourers have been applied for.

THE APPEAL TO THE CLERGY.

The West India Committee's appeal to the Archbishops, Bishops and other heads of religious bodies has been most favourably received, and it is exceedingly gratifying that since the Circular of October 1st inst. was issued no less than 113 Churches and Chapels have contributed offertories of over £1 each, amounting in all to £833 10s. 2d. to the Mansion House Fund up to October 26th last.

THE WEST INDIAN CLUB CONCERT.

Under the auspices of the newly formed West Indian Club and the patronage of the Lord Mayor, a Grand Evening Concert, in aid of the Mansion House Fund, was held at the Queen's Hall on October 19th. The programme was an excellent one and contained the names of many well-known singers. It is much to the credit of Mr. Otto Rochs, the indefatigable Hon. Secretary of the Concert Committee, that in spite of the many difficulties he had to contend with, foremost among which were the absence of so many people from London who would otherwise have supported the Concert and the unavoidably short time available for the sale of tickets, the West Indian Club have been able to hand over £100 18s. to the Mansion House Fund.

THE LATE HONOURABLE A. J. PILE, C.M.G.

At a Committee Meeting held on October 7th inst., Mr. Nevile Lubbock in the Chair, it was unanimously resolved:—

“That the condolence and sympathy of the Committee be conveyed to Mrs. A. J. Pile on the loss she has sustained by the death of her husband, the Honourable A. J. Pile, C.M.G., for so many years Speaker of the House of Assembly in Barbados, and that the Secretary be requested to write to Mrs. Pile accordingly.”

THE BRUSSELS NEGOTIATIONS.

The news of the collapse of the Brussels negotiations which appeared in the *Independence Belye* lacks confirmation, and it is now understood that while Austria and Russia are negotiating together, the negotiations between Belgium and France are temporarily suspended, but will be resumed when the political atmosphere is clearer.

THE RUM CORRESPONDENCE.

A further communication was addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on October 21st as follows:—

“ Sir,

“ I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Guillemard's letter of August 5th last, written by your direction in reply to our's of July 1st last, urging the abolition of the surtax of 4d. a gallon on British Colonial Rum imported into the United Kingdom from those Colonies whose excise regulations are under the control of the Home Government.

We note with satisfaction, Sir, that you recognized that the Surtax might operate in some measure to the disadvantage of the West Indian Colonies, but with regard to your statement that you therefore agreed that the assistance to be given by the Imperial Government should be on a more liberal scale than that recommended by the Commission in order that the Colonies might be enabled to deal with the difficulty themselves is, we venture to think, made under a misapprehension, as not one of the measures of relief recently agreed to by the House of Commons applies to the three principal Rum Manufacturing and Exporting West Indian Colonies, viz. : British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad, and, moreover, all the money then voted was voted for specific purposes, all of which are entirely unconnected with Rum.

We maintain that this Surtax is a far more serious matter to the British West Indies than you Sir, or the Commissioners are aware of. It cannot in fairness be contended that Foreign Spirits or even Spirits from Colonies, which are not subject to the excise regulations imposed by the Home Government, can justly claim as we do the abolition of the Surtax.

Spirit producers in the British West Indies are subject in every way to as strict excise regulations imposed by the same authority as is the British distiller. In the West Indies, as in the United Kingdom, only duly licensed persons are allowed to produce spirits, and they under very strict regulations. That they add to the cost of production is a matter of opinion, but that they are as strict in the West Indies as in Great Britain there can be no doubt.

We do not base our case entirely on the report of the Royal Commissioners. It is no part of our question to deal with the duty on Foreign Spirits. So long as it is a part of our Fiscal system to allow a countervailing duty to redress the supposed disadvantage of excise regulations, all we can urge is that inasmuch as we in the West Indies are subject to similar excise regulations imposed by the same authority as are the Home Distillers, we are entitled to a similar countervailing advantage. We can hardly suppose that Her Majesty's Government will argue that, whilst they enforce these regulations in the Crown Colonies, they will at the same time treat them as in the same position as Foreign Countries.

We cannot admit that this is any question of differential duties, we claim for our Crown Colonies simply the same duties as are charged in like circumstances upon Spirits produced at home. As we stated above, the question is one of far greater importance than you, Sir, or the Commissioners are aware. You state that such questions as to the precise amount of expense to which producers of Rum are subjected by Colonial regulations or the extent to which the removal of the Surtax would increase the use of Rum for Methylation or Blending with other Spirits are open to considerable differences of opinion and could not be settled without a careful scrutiny by experts. To such a scrutiny we would gladly submit these questions, though we cannot feel that there can be much doubt about them. The fact that West Indian Spirits cannot be used for Methylation is a most serious disadvantage, moreover, it is obvious that on Spirits intrinsically worth about 1/- per gallon, an extra duty of 4d. per gallon must be prohibitive for purposes of Methylation.

Coming to your remarks, Sir, concerning the export duty on Rum in the West Indies we would again remind you that as to this point you are entirely under a misapprehension, this duty is imposed on all Rum, Sugar and Molasses expressly in order that the planter may be compelled to contribute to the expenses of the Coolie system. This, Sir, is no argument on our part as you state, it is a simple question of fact as to which there can be no doubt. We would therefore earnestly beg you, Sir, to reconsider the matter.

(Signed) N. LUBBOCK.

CALCULATIONS ON WHICH THE SURTAX IS BASED.

Members will remember that in replying to a question in the House of Commons on April 25th last (see Circular No. 3), Sir Michael Hicks Beach referred Mr. W. F. Lawrence to the "28th Report of the Board of Inland Revenue" for the calculations on which the Surtax is based. These calculations are there set out as follows:—

	1866. AMOUNT CLAIMED BY		AMOUNT ALLOWED IN 1860.	1866 CONSIDERED ADMISSIBLE BY THIS DEPT. *	
	Scotch Distillers.	Eng Distillers.		For Uncoloured Spirits.	For Coloured Spirits.
1st. Compensation for duty on foreign grain ...	d. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	d. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	d. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	d. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	d. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$
2nd. Prohibition against brewing and distilling) at same time	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	1
3rd. Against distillers mixing wort in separate vessels while in process of fermentation ...	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 $\frac{1}{4}$
4th. Loss of duty on rectification and flavouring) spirits in separate premises	3	3	1	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
5th. Colouring matter in foreign spirits	2	2	2	nil	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
6th. Increased expense in making malt consequent on excise restrictions	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	nil	nil	nil
7th. Difference in mode of charging duty in favour of foreign spirits	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	nil	nil	nil
8th. Duty evaded upon foreign spirits, and by samples drawn in bond	0 $\frac{1}{4}$				
	9	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	6 $\frac{1}{2}$

By the Act of 1881 (44 & 45 Vict., c. 12) the Surtax of 5d. on Foreign Spirits was reduced to 4d. by Mr. Gladstone (in the same year the Surtax on Colonial Spirits was raised from 2d. to 4d.).

"This reduction was rendered practicable," says the report, "by a change in the method of testing the strength of coloured and sweetened spirits, whereby the true strength is determined on importation by distillation, instead of charging the duty as formerly upon the strength indicated by the hydrometer, irrespective of any obscuration arising from the presence of sweetening or other matter in such spirits.

"By ascertaining in this way the true strength, the danger of foreign spirit entering this country without paying the full duty has been almost entirely avoided."

THE IMPROVED STEAMSHIP SERVICES.

The *Barbados Official Gazette* contains preliminary notices for tenders for the new West Indian Steam services as recommended by the Royal Commission.

- (a) Fortnightly service between Trinidad, St. Kitt's and the intermediate Islands.
- (b) Fortnightly service between Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados and Canada.
- (c) Fortnightly fruit-service between St. Vincent, Dominica and the United States or Canada.
- (d) Fortnightly or tri-weekly fruit-service between Jamaica and England.

INDIA-RUBBER IN TRINIDAD.

In Trinidad the planting of India-rubber is assuming extensive proportions. The *Sugar Cane* is informed that Mr. Hart, Superintendent of the Botanical Department, who has some 60,000 or 70,000 young plants on hand, sold 15,000 of these on 25th August. He is engaged in the development of a process for the preparation of crude rubber, which is exceedingly simple and economical and which he considers will be a complete success.

EXPORTS.

	Sugar Tons.	Rum. Puns.	Coffee. lbs.	Cocoa. lbs.	Asphalte. Tons.	Gold. oz.	Co'nuts.	Molasses Puns.
BRITISH GUIANA, Jan. 1st to October 12th, 1898	63,897	14,230	—	48,999	—	79,801	15,000	2,284
" " " " 1897	49,225	12,874	—	80,437	—	89,126	950	7,129
TRINIDAD, " " " " 1898	51,648	834	10,180	17,887,570	74,070	—	9,178,600	4,423
" " " " 1897	53,500	943	15,340	17,995,900	94,500	—	6,919,601	5,066

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS to Oct. 22nd, 1898, 564,195 tons against 511,101 in 1897 and 680,957 in 1896.

DELIVERIES:—577,721 tons against 575,087 in 1897 and 594,178 in 1896.

PRESENT STOCKS:—77,784 tons against 69,074 and 144,767.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

707,390 tons against 972,592 tons in 1897 and 1,095,335 in 1896.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow) 9s. 7½d. to 9s. 8¼d. against 8s. 4½d. to 8s. 5½d. in 1897 and 9s. 1½d. in 1896.

BEET PROSPECTS.

In FRANCE.—After some rain the weather is now fine and the pulling of the Beet has been facilitated; great satisfaction is expressed at the quality of the Beet.

In AUSTRIA and GERMANY the weather has been remarkably cold compared with the western temperature, snow and even frost having occurred in various places, so that the weight of roots has not made the progress expected. There is not much harm done except perhaps in RUSSIA, but a cold wet autumn would affect the production.

Licht estimates the present beet crop at 4,560,000 tons against 4,775,578 tons in 1897 and 4,902,765 tons in 1896.

COCOA.

(Messrs. Wilson, Smithett & Co.'s Circular):—No auctions were held during the current week, and the recent inactivity continues unrelieved. The very moderate enquiry which has taken place privately was easily filled at the recent slight reduction in price, but in view of the general position, together with the present political unrest, importers manifest no anxiety to press sales, and consequently prices are about supported. The deliveries for home trade continue of satisfactory extent, and the stock still keeps below that of last year, when the deliveries both home and export were more nearly balanced. Transactions are limited, sales at the close amounting to 500 bags TRINIDAD, middling to good red at 77s. to 79s.; and 150 bags GUAYAQUIL, Caraquez at 79s. to 80s. per cwt.

RUM.

(Messrs. E. D. & F. Man).—There is a better demand for proof kinds than was anticipated, and some 1,320 Puns Demerara, *ce* "Kilmorack," have changed hands at full prices, viz: 1/- to 1/1½ per proof gallon, the bulk realising 1/0½. Jamaicas, on the other hand, are very flat, and business most difficult to effect, excepting for really fine descriptions; stocks showing a slight increase over last year, whereas in May last there was a deficit of 3,000 puncheons.

We append the Board of Trade returns to 30th September:—

	1896.	1897.	1898.
Landed	4,274,675	4,281,792	4,562,032 Galls. against
II C. and Export	3,938,718	3,066,739	" "
Stock—30th September ...	9,199,000	9,890,000	8,986,000

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Gaviller). October 5th: "Seasonable weather." October 6th: "The crop is expected to be about the average." October 17th: "Weather all that can be desired." DEMERARA.—(Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Limited). October 7th: "Fine with occasional light showers." (Messrs. Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co.). October 7th: "Weather dry." October 14th: "Weather showery and unsettled." October 19th: "Weather dry." TRINIDAD.—(Per favour of the New Colonial Company, Ltd). October 14th: "Weather favourable."

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

No. 10.

Telegrams:
CARIB. LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,
LONDON, E.C.,

November 28th 1898.

DINNER TO HIS EXCELLENCY SIR JAMES HAY, K.C.M.G.

Sir James S. Hay, Governor of Barbados, was entertained at dinner at the Whitehall rooms on Friday, November 25th last, by the West India Committee, on his arrival in England in order to confer with the Colonial Office as to the measures to be adopted for the relief of distress caused by the recent hurricane.

Mr. Neville Lubbock presided, having on his immediate right the guest of the evening, who was most warmly received, and on his left the Earl of Selborne, Under-Secretary of State to the Colonies, and there were also present, Mr. E. Wingfield, C.B., Mr. C. P. Lucas, General the Hon. Reginald Talbot, Sir Charles G. Walpole, Colonel Tolson, Colonel Trent Stoughton, Colonel Watson, Major Clement, Major Roper Parkington, Major Trollope, Captain Barton, The Hon. A. C. Ponsonby, and Messrs. A. R. Ackerley, G. E. D. Astwood, S. H. Battam, M. M. Beeton, Horace G. Bowen, John Boon, Edmund Boyle, E. R. Calthrop, A. Chapman, H. Coke, L. Couper, E. Bicker Courten, Spencer H. Curtis (Treasurer), A. T. Crawford, C. Czarnikow, H. K. Davson (Deputy Chairman), E. A. De Pass, H. H. Dobrie, W. P. Eversley, C. Washington Evcs, C.M.G., H. Franklin Smith, M. Garnett, W. Gillespie, C. Harmsworth, C. B. Harris, R. Harvey, H. Hutchinson, Herbert Jackson, P. Haughton James, Alfred L. Jones, C. Kinloch Cooke, E. Kynaston, H. Langridge, E. G. Lees, G. B. Mason, J. W. Previté, A. Robins, E. J. Sadler, W. P. B. Shephard, G. W. Stevens, Duncan Stewart, J. Rippon, R. Rutherford, T. Russell, F. H. Voules, Reginald Ward, T. J. Wilkinson and A. E. Aspinal (Secretary). An account of the speeches which followed having already appeared in the "Times," it is unnecessary to include them at length in the circular. Two months have now elapsed since the hurricane swept over the West Indies, and as a letter was received on November 10th last, stating that Mr. Chamberlain would, after conferring with Sir James Hay, come to a definite decision with regard to the action to be taken by the Government and would then communicate with the Committee, it was confidently anticipated that Lord Selborne would be in a position to make a detailed statement of the Government's intentions.

THE PROSPECTS OF IMPERIAL ASSISTANCE.

His Lordship, however, was only able to confirm the announcement which had already appeared in the Press to the effect that the Government admitted in principle the necessity of supplementing the amounts contributed by private charity through the Lord Mayor's fund, by a grant from the Imperial Exchequer. He added that Mr. Chamberlain and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were now considering the form and amount of the aid which the House of Commons would be asked to vote in relief.

In view of the urgency of the need for immediate assistance, the indefinite character of this pronouncement and the uncertainty in which it still leaves the distressed populations as to the measure of the aid which they may expect from Her Majesty's Government, no little disappointment was felt by the audience as a whole, and by some of the speakers somewhat warmly expressed. This feeling was further given expression to in some Press comments on the following day, and it is sincerely to be hoped that Her Majesty's Government will not, as some fear, postpone till the meeting of Parliament the definite announcement of the amount and form of the relief which is to be granted.

IMMIGRATION.

The urgent need of labour in Demerara and Trinidad is amply shown by the numbers of labourers those Colonies applied for when the Government announced their intention of adopting the West India Committee's suggestion to draft labourers from Barbados and St. Vincent as a measure of relief for those islands. It is much to be regretted that this emigration has not been more successful. Of 2,081 adults applied for by Demerara, at present only 51 have been received from St. Vincent and 97 from Barbados, though Mr. Summerson writes, November 9th, that another 100 were expected by the mail. Trinidad has fared still worse in this respect, having received only 36 of the 1755 labourers applied for.

Subsequent to a meeting of the Immigration Committee held on November 9rd, a letter was addressed to Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy elect of India, requesting his Lordship to receive a deputation on the important subject of emigration from India to the British West Indies. Lord Curzon replied that though he would have been glad to receive the views of the Committee at a personal interview, he regretted his inability to do so in view of the many engagements and the press of business which were occupying his time, and that he would greatly prefer therefore to receive in writing any representations which the Committee might desire to make, assuring them that the matter should engage his attention after his arrival in India.

A letter on the subject has accordingly been despatched to his Lordship after being duly submitted to the West India Associations of Glasgow and Liverpool, and approved at a meeting held on November 24th.

THE CLERGY AND THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

But little more assistance, can it is feared, be looked for from the Mansion House Fund, which progresses but slowly. The appeal to the Clergy continues to meet with support. Up to the publication of the last official list, 228 Churches and Chapels had contributed offertories to the Fund amounting to over £1,300, a most gratifying result of the Committee's efforts.

A PROTEST FROM JAMAICA.

At a large public meeting held at Falmouth, Jamaica, on September 24th last, two very important resolutions were passed; the first (which is too lengthy to quote in extenso in the circular) expresses surprise and disappointment at the apparent "callous indifference with which former resolutions have been received," pointing out to the Secretary of State that the "depressed and impoverished condition of this once most flourishing parish remains unchanged and that with present taxes (both direct and indirect) increased enormously; with a decreasing demand for labour on the sugar estates and pens; with unprecedentedly low prices for all our minor products, our position is most deplorable."

The resolution urges the Secretary of State to adopt some plan to ameliorate the condition of affairs, it then goes on to state "We beg respectfully to point out that while we hail with feelings of satisfaction the official utterances of the Right Honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the effect that Her Majesty's Government reserve the right to impose countervailing duties on 'bounty fed sugar,' we would urge upon that Government the advisability and necessity for adopting without any delay, the only remedial measure possible to relieve the urgent and most pressing needs of an industry once flourishing but now emasculated by artificial and unfair competition and on which the very existence of this portion of the island depends." The resolution then expresses loyalty to her Majesty Queen Victoria and concludes "We beg to point out that we are not asking for doles or alms, but firmly, constitutionally, and respectfully, we urge our claims for justice. We also beg to point out that while the imposition of countervailing duties is held by competent authorities to be in full accordance with the principles of free trade, the surtax of fourpence per gallon on our rums shipped to the United Kingdom points directly to protection of the interests of the British distillers as against those of this country."

INJUSTICE OF THE RUM SURTAX.

The second resolution is a strong protest against the injustice of the Rum Surtax, as follows:—
 "This meeting would strongly urge upon the Imperial Government the injustice of the Surtax imposed upon Colonial Rum for the protection of Imperial spirits. Having regard to the serious depression under which the staple industry of the West Indian Colonies has been, and is still suffering, this meeting would urge upon the Government the abolition of the tax of 4d. per gallon on rum. By this means a large quantity of rum would be used for blending with other spirits and the demand for rum would be largely increased."

In moving the latter resolution, Mr. Sewell gave some interesting figures to show the amount of money taken from them by the parental Government through the imposition of this Surtax. He read the following statement from the Board of Trade returns to the 31st of December of each year from 1893:—

Statement of Rum exported from Jamaica for the five years, 1893 to 1897, with amount paid in duty at 4d per gallon:—

Year.	Gallons Rum Exported.	Duty at 4d per Gall.		
		£	s.	d.
1893	1,550,000	£25,833	0	0
1894	1,250,000	20,833	0	0
1896	1,650,000	27,500	0	0
1896	1,600,000	26,666	0	0
1897	1,530,000	25,500	0	0
	7,580,000	£124,332	0	0
Average yearly duty paid for the 5 years		£25,266	0	0

Board of Trade returns—Stock landing and home consumption of all kinds to 31st December each year, expressed in proof gallons, according to Customs returns for the United Kingdom:—

Year.	Stock.	Landed.	Home Consumption.	Duty at 4d. per Gall. Surtax.		
				£	s.	d.
1893	8,092,636	5,942,132	3,764,396	62,739	18	8
1894	9,147,139	6,123,629	3,640,148	60,669	2	2
1895	9,363,075	5,866,471	4,070,643	67,844	1	0
1896	9,896,036	5,373,904	3,962,300	66,058	6	8
1897	9,863,970	4,937,516	4,050,560	67,643	13	4

That amount of money, said Mr. Sewell, had been kept by their parental government. They would hardly be convinced that England would create such an imposition upon them.

INDIA AND THE BOUNTIES.

The Bengal Chamber of Commerce has addressed an important letter to the Government drawing attention to the critical position of the Indian sugar industry in consequence of excessive and increasing importations of foreign bounty-fed sugars, in the hope that the Lieutenant-Governor will urge the Government of India to take steps for the protection of the industry. The letter refers to the action taken in deputing Mr. Ozanne as one of the British delegates to the Brussels conference, and to the abortive result of that conference so far as the relief of the Indian sugar industry was concerned. The letter adds that the committee are not aware whether any further negotiations by means of diplomatic correspondence, such as were suggested by the delegates of the French and Russian Governments at the conference, are in progress with a view to an arrangement being arrived at with these Powers. If this is not the case, the second suggestion of the British delegates would appear to be the only alternative to be acted upon in view of the determination of her Majesty's Government to protect the sugar industries of the Empire.

The Chamber has now been approached by representatives of the Indian industry, both European and native, with the request that the Government be urged to consider without loss of time the advisability of levying countervailing duties on all bounty-fed sugars imported into India. The committee state that in the district of Jessor a large number of refineries have been closed since the recent heavy imports of beet sugar and

the prevalence of low prices. The continuance of unrestricted importation of bounty-fed sugars will result in closing the remaining factories in that district. The Brussels Conference having failed in its object, and America having since imposed countervailing duties on beet sugar, India, as was pointed out to the British delegates at the conference, is daily becoming more flooded by subsidized sugars, to the gradual but steady extinction of her own industry.

THE ST. LUCIA EXPORT DUTIES.

The West India Committee are informed by the Colonial Office that Mr. Chamberlain has instructed the Governor-in-Chief of the Windward Islands that all the Immigration Export Duties now levied in the Island of St. Lucia may be remitted from the 1st January next.

RECIPROCITY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The Times has received a telegram from Washington through Reuter's Agency, to the effect that the negotiations for a reciprocity treaty between Great Britain and the United States relative to the West Indies are at a standstill, and that there is no present indication of their being concluded in the near future.

SOLDIERS AND SUGAR.

A very curious experiment has been made in the German Army as to the nutritive value of sugar. In each of the regiments selected for making the experiment, ten of the strongest men were selected and were daily given a certain number of pieces of sugar, this allowance mounting progressively till they received 12 pieces a day. It was proved that the weight of the men whose food was supplemented by the sugar increased in a greater proportion to that of ten other soldiers similarly chosen, but who were given no sugar. On the march a piece of sugar was found to appease hunger, allay thirst and fortify the soldier against fatigue and the effects of heat, making him stronger and more vigorous and healthy. Among the subjects of the experiment, no distaste for this kind of food was at any time noticed. The doctor who superintended the test was of opinion that sugar should form part of the reserve provisions carried by the men, or be included in the victualling of fortified positions, and that it could be employed to supplement and improve the daily rations, and also as a temporary aliment to fortify the men and strengthen them on the march.

HOME CONSUMPTION IN FRANCE.

M. M. Abeille in the *Bulletin des Halles* of November 9th last, strongly advocates similar experiments being made in the French Army, laying stress on the importance of the European Sugar producing Countries materially increasing their Home Consumption if the present rate of sugar production is to be maintained, having in view the vigorous campaign being carried on in England against the importation of bounty-fed beet sugar to the detriment of sugar from British Colonies, and the diminished exportation of European Sugar to America likely to result from the pacification of Cuba, whose sugar production will, under the impetus given to it by American Capital, probably assume its former dimensions of 1,000,000 tons in round figures.

In the same connexion, M. Abeille suggests that the use of sugar for feeding cattle might be considerably stimulated by allowing sugar so used to go duty free. This could be done without any loss to the Treasury by rendering sugar used for feeding cattle unfit for human food—by some process similar to the methylation of spirits—and still maintaining the duty on sugar used for human consumption. It is well known that sugar has a very fattening effect on certain beasts, and its use for this purpose would be much resorted to were it not for the practically prohibitive duty at present imposed.

THE NEW COLONIAL COMPANY'S FIRST REPORT.

The first annual report of the New Colonial Company, Limited, was issued on November 10th last, and shows a net profit of £11,252 10s. 2d. after payment of interest on Debenture Stock. Out of this £10,000

has been set aside, to be invested by the Trustees for the debenture-holders to the credit of a special reserve fund under the terms of a trust deed; £2,500 to a reserve fund for future improvements; £10,000 to a general reserve fund; and £10,413 interest in full to preference shareholders, leaving a balance £8,338 16s. 7d. carried forward to the next account.

SUGAR BEET EXPERIMENTS IN ENGLAND.

The Reports of the Experimental Growing of Sugar Beet in the United Kingdom continue to be uniformly satisfactory. The following is an extract from the report of Professor Gilchrist, Director of the Agricultural Department of Reading College, who at Colonel Milward's request, has been making some trials on the different varieties of Sugar Beet in the Reading District.

"Four varieties of seed were supplied by Mr. Sigmund Stein, Liverpool, these being *Klein* (Russian seed), *Brenstadt* (German seed), *Alderstadt* (German seed), and *Simon Legrand* (French seed). The soil is a sandy loam with gravel, and lays on a gravelly subsoil. A sample of soil from near the position where the sugar-beet roots were grown has been analyzed. This shows that it is not naturally a fertile soil; it is however in fair condition from previous manurings. It was well manured with farm-yard manure in the autumn of 1897, in preparation for the sugar-beet crop. It was also manured with farm-yard manure in the spring of 1897, for a pea crop in that year. The land was cropped with swedes in 1896 and mangels in 1896. The seed was sown on May 13th, 1898, each plot was one pole in area, and the roots were 2½ feet apart from each other each way. This is much wider than is customary in the growth of sugar-beet. The roots were removed from the land on October 11th. They have been analyzed by Mr. Sigmund Stein."

The following table shows the calculated results per acre:—

Variety.	Weight of roots per acre.		Percentage of Sugar in Roots.	Total amount of Sugar per acre in Roots.
	With tops. T. cwt. lbs.	Without tops. T. cwt. lbs.		
Klein	17 14 92	10 5 80	15.20	1 11 30
Brenstadt	15 11 48	10 2 96	15.10	1 10 72
Alderstadt	16 0 0	9 2 96	14.00	1 5 67
Simon Legrand	17 0 0	10 17 16	18.30	1 8 97

The percentage of sugar in the roots compares favourably with sugar-beet grown on the Continent. The last column in the above table gives the *total* amount of sugar produced per acre; some of this, however, could not be made use of by the manufacturer.

The roots when pulled and laid out (says Professor Gilchrist) in rows looked very well indeed. They all seemed to be of good quality and well grown. Had the rows been closer together and the plants nearer each other the weight of roots would have been much greater. From the results it would seem that there is no difficulty in growing sugar-beet of good quality in the Reading district.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES CROP.

The New South Wales crop reports are of a somewhat mixed character. The drought is, undoubtedly, severely felt in parts, and more centres will show a decreased yield than the reverse. Present indications, however, point to a yield exceeding last year's, leaving a comparatively small exportable surplus.

RUM.

MESSRS. E. D. & F. MAN.—The proof market, although very firm for the commoner kinds, is slightly easier for the finer descriptions. The sales amount to 180 Puns Demerara at 1/0½ to 1/1 per proof gallon, and the stock in first hands is again depleted. The "Harport" has arrived from Demerara with 550 puns, but samples are not yet ready for market. For Jamaica there is practically no demand and business is extremely difficult to effect.

(6)
COCOA.

Messrs. Wilson, Smithett & Co's Circular.—The course of the market is remarkably similar to that at the same time in last year, the early arrivals of new crop coming forward not being in sufficiently large supply to attract general buying, and with some pressure to sell both on the spot and forward; prices are however still 3s. to 5s. above those then current for "fair manufacturing" growths. A further reduction was then followed by a rapid advance towards and in the new year. As far as can be judged, supplies are likely to make the statistical position unfavourable to a similar upward movement on the present occasion. The heavy total of 6,755 bags catalogued on Tuesday, comprising a representative selection, failed to attract general competition, and the limited proportion which changed hands established a further decline of 1s. to 2s. per cwt., and in the case of some parcels of **GUAYAQUIL**, which were pressed for sale, a still greater reduction was accepted. Ceylon was represented by 603 bags, but with the exception of a few lots of smalls was bought in; privately a steady demand for fine bright, and up to 79s. is reported to have been paid. The arrivals of new crop **WEST INDIA** coming forward so far have kept the landings on a moderate scale, the stock in consequence continues to decrease, although not so rapidly as at the same time last year.

EXPORTS.

	Sugar. Tons.	Rum. Puns.	Coffee. lbs.	Cocoa lbs.	Asphalte. Tons.	Gold. oz.	Co'note.	Molasses Pups.
BRITISH GUIANA, Jan. 1st to November 9th, 1898	74,572	14,644	—	52,401	—	90,069	16,000	2,980
" " " " " " " "	1897	61,896	15,404	—	87,471	—	98,878	950
TRINIDAD.. " " " " " " " "	1898	51,943	834	10,430	18,840,590	85,814	—	10,764,197
" " " " " " " "	1897	53,828	956½	15,340	19,020,745	102,919	—	8,877,577

SUGAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMPORTS TO November 19th, 1898, 615,316 tons against 570,042 in 1897 and 684,612 in 1896.

DELIVERIES:—630,499 tons against 633,700 in 1897 and 653,638 in 1896.

PRESENT STOCKS:—76,127 tons against 69,402 and 139,298.

VISIBLE SUPPLIES.

1,349,625 tons against 1,531,372 tons in 1897 and 1,719,817 tons in 1896.

PRESENT PRICE OF BEET.

88 % (Czarnikow) 10s. 2d. to 10s. 1½d. against 8s. 10½d. to 8s. 11½d. in 1897 and 9s. 3d. in 1896

BET PROSPECTS.

In **FRANCE**.—A lower temperature would be desirable, however, the yield of sugar continues to be very satisfactory and the quantity will be greater than was anticipated. The deficit of production over last year should amount to 5 or 6 per cent. In **GERMANY**.—The weather is seasonable, but colder weather would be advantageous to the crops.

WEATHER TELEGRAMS.

BARBADOS.—(Per favour of Messrs. Wilkinson & Caviller). November 10th: "Fine rains generally throughout the island." November 15th: "Rains have continued since our last cable." **DEMERRARA.**—(Per favour of Messrs. Jno. McConnel & Co.) November 21st: "Weather showery (per favour of Messrs. Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co.)." November 2nd: "Partial Showers have fallen." November 14th: "Weather dry; some showers would be acceptable." **TRINIDAD.**—(Per favour of the New Colonial Co.) November 10th: "Rains beneficial to cultivation."

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

Subscribers of £1 1s. and upwards to the West India Committee are entitled to the Monthly Circular, Weather Telegrams, and other Publications for one year.

Telegrams:
"CARIB." LONDON.

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,
LONDON, E.C.,

December 23rd, 1898.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

Members are informed that the financial statement of the West India Committee for the year 1898 will be issued early in the New Year, and that the Annual General Meeting will be held in April next.

THE HURRICANE GRANT AND LOAN.

The hope expressed in the last circular that Her Majesty's Government would no longer postpone the definite announcement of the amount and nature of the Imperial assistance to be granted for the relief of the distress in Barbados and St. Vincent, the urgency of the need for which the West India Committee have never ceased to impress upon the Secretary of State since the disastrous hurricane devastated those islands in September last, has happily been fulfilled, and on December the 7th the Committee were able to communicate to the Press the following letter, which they received on that day from the Under Secretary of State:—"I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to inform you that Her Majesty's Government have decided to give the following assistance to the Islands of Barbados and St. Vincent, in view of the distress that has been caused by the recent hurricane:—

- (1) To the Government of Barbados, a free grant of £40,000, to cover certain expenses of relief, re-housing, and repairs of public works, into the details of which it is not necessary to enter.
- (2) To the Government of St. Vincent, a free grant of £25,000 for similar purposes.
- (3) In addition a loan to the Governments of the two Islands of £50,000 in each case, to be lent to the planters with a view to meeting the immediate difficulties caused by the storm.

The terms on which the money will be lent to the planters are as follows:—that no sum less than £50 shall be lent in any case; that the interest to be paid yearly from the date of borrowing shall be 3 per cent.; that the security for the money lent shall be a first mortgage on the estates, and that no money shall be lent on any other security whatever; that no principal shall be repaid for three years, and afterwards that 5 per cent. shall be repaid annually so that the whole sum shall be repaid in twenty-three years from the date of borrowing; that the money shall not be applied to replacing obsolete buildings and machinery, nor to paying off pre-existing liabilities on the estate; and that, as far as possible, planters shall combine for the purpose of utilising the money to the best advantage. These are the main, though possibly not the only conditions on which the money will be lent, and telegraphic instructions have been sent to the Colonies concerned to take in hand the necessary legislation. I am to add, by Mr. Chamberlain's desire, that as far as concerns Barbados he has been largely guided in the recommendations which he has made, and which have been accepted by Her Majesty's Government, by the advice of Sir James Hay.

THE ADEQUACY OF THE ASSISTANCE.

Assuming that the assistance thus afforded by Her Majesty's Government will prove sufficient for the requirements of the case (and that it will do even this seems open to question according to the comments in the West Indian Press), it must not be forgotten that the Grant and Loan cannot at the outside do more than put the Islands of Barbados and St. Vincent in the same position that they were in before the disastrous hurricane devastated them in September last accentuating the distress from which they were then suffering, and that it affords no solution to the West Indian problem, which can only be solved by the abolition or neutralization of the Foreign Sugar Bounties.

EMIGRATION FROM BARBADOS AND ST. VINCENT.

The Secretary of State has favoured the West India Committee with a copy of the correspondence relating to the introduction into British Guiana of Agricultural labourers from Barbados and St. Vincent, and this can now be seen at this office. Mr. A. Summerson writes from Demerara, on December 7th, that 97 more Barbadians had arrived by the Mail, making a total of 368 adult Barbadians, which with the 56 labourers from St. Vincent brings the total of Island emigrants to British Guiana to 424. As regards Trinidad Mr. G. Townsend Fenwick writes from that island that about 400 labourers have been recruited by Mr. Murryat from St. Vincent. From Barbados none were obtained. The total of those who have availed themselves of this measure of relief from the distress caused by the hurricane, therefore, amounts to 824. Mr. Murryat has now returned to Trinidad and his report is daily expected. Mr. Forster M. Alleyne writing from Barbados on December 8th, on this subject, attributes this unwillingness to emigrate to the extraordinary ties of affection and climate which keep the labourer so attached to Barbados.

BIRMINGHAM AND THE BOUNTIES.

An Important Meeting was held under the auspices of the Birmingham Trades Council, in the Temperance Hall of that City, on December 12th instant, to protest against the Foreign Sugar Bounties. It is significant that so staunch a Free Trader as Mr. W. J. Davis, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Unionist Congress, who presided over the Meeting, himself moved that the matter should not be allowed to rest with the mere carrying of the resolutions before the meeting, but that a deputation should be appointed to wait on the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and lay them before him, a motion which, seconded by Mr. George Pinson, was carried unanimously. Among those present on the platform were Councillor W. Middlechip (Midland Counties Trades Federation), Councillor R. C. Jarvis (Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of the Grocers' Federation), Messrs. H. Simpson (President Birmingham Trades Council), G. Pinson (Vice-President), Arthur Eades (Secretary). Mr. Neville Lubbock spoke on behalf of the Colonies, Mr. T. O. Easton as a refiner, and Mr. W. F. Lawrence, M.P., stated the case from the point of view of the British Agriculturist, having regard to the possibility (and certainty, were it not for the foreign bounties) of an extensive sugar beet industry in the United Kingdom. The following resolutions were then carried unanimously and with enthusiasm:—

"That this meeting strongly condemns the apathetic policy pursued by successive British Governments, in regard to the Bounties granted by Foreign States on the export of sugar, whereby our West Indian Colonies have been brought to the verge of ruin, and the once flourishing home refining industry within measurable distance of extinction, while preventing the development of Beetroot Sugar productions in Great Britain and Ireland."

"That in view of the fact that the Governments of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland and Sweden have officially declared at the recent Brussels Conference, their willingness to abolish their systems of Bounties, this Meeting calls on Her Majesty's Government to enter into a convention for the abolition of Bounties with the above Powers, guaranteeing to them and British producers alike equality of opportunity in the open markets of the British Empire, against the competition of such other bounty giving countries as may refuse to become parties to the convention, pending the adhesion of such countries to the said International Convention."

The Speakers made it quite clear that any rise in price which might arise from the abolition of bounties could only be slight and temporary, and the fact that the Meeting scouted the idea that they would object to paying an increased price for their sugar (were such a contingency to arise) provided that they could buy it at its natural price, is a strong indication of the opinion of the working men in this country on the subject.

THE ANTI-BOUNTY LEAGUE.

At a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the above League, held on December 20th, Lord Stanmore presiding, it was unanimously resolved to continue the existence of the League with a view to further action early in the New Year. Mr. Edwin Tate was elected Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Mayson M. Beeton was re-appointed Secretary. A letter was read from the Mackay Anti-Bounty League requesting that Queensland might be represented on the Committee, and Mr. Neames, Mr. Young and Mr. Howes were accordingly admitted to represent that colony.

LORD CURZON AND COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

The following letter on this subject was addressed to Lord Curzon of Kedleston on November 28th, 1898:—"MY LORD—In accordance with the request contained in your letter of November 8th instant, I have the honour to submit to your Lordship herewith the following representations on the subject of coolie emigration from India to the British West Indies.

"It is doubtless within your Lordship's knowledge that for many years past labour in British Guiana and Trinidad has been extensively assisted by coolies from India, that the whole system of this immigration has been conducted under the control of the Home and Indian Governments, and that the coolies are protected and cared for in every way.

"I have only to refer you to the report of Surgeon-Major D. W. D. Comins, who was specially commissioned by the Indian Government to visit British Guiana and Trinidad to report on the subject, in order to show how desirable it is that the immigration system should continue, as well in the interest of the coolies themselves and of the Indian Government, who are thus relieved of their surplus population, as of some of the West Indian colonies and British Guiana, who might but for this addition to their labour supply have to abandon the cultivation of sugar.

"This view of the case has long been recognized by the Home Government. Amongst the restrictions placed on the immigration hitherto, is one entitling the coolie immigrant to claim his back passage to India after ten years' residence. This back passage has not, as a rule, been claimed by more than about one-fourth of the coolies entitled to it, and it is the view taken by the Home Government of the possible cost to the Colony of complying with this obligation that has caused the West India Committee to address your Lordship. All the Reports and Blue Books dealing with the subject go to show that the coolie not only makes much money while he is in the Colony, but is able to, and does, save. Those who do not return to India buy property and cattle, and indeed, are now about the largest cattle holders in the Colony of British Guiana. They own landed property and become absorbed in the general population, becoming contented and happy citizens. It is this absorption and the number of those returning, that necessitates the continuation of the supply of labour from India. Owing to the late depression in the West Indies, and the fear that if sugar goes out of cultivation the Imperial Government will be called on to pay the cost of repatriation of Coolies, the Home Government have latterly restricted the numbers allowed. This restriction would be withdrawn if the Indian Government would consent to the abolition of the back passage in future contracts with the immigrants, the back passage being a condition imposed by the Indian Government and not stipulated for by the Coolies themselves. This would be no injury to the Coolies themselves, because, as is sufficiently well known, nearly all those who return to India are robbed of their savings on their arrival, and those who are not robbed have to pay heavily to recover their caste. Many of the Coolies who have returned have become so discontented with their own country, after the privileges they have enjoyed, that they have paid their own passage back to the West Indies, many actually returning to the Estates.

"Owing to frequent representations on the subject, the liability to payment of the back passage has been lately altered to the extent that the male coolies are now required to pay one-half of their back passage money, and female coolies one-third. But there is still the liability, and this we wish to see abolished, and it is on this special point that we desire your Lordship's assistance, which we feel confident will be given us after all the facts have been laid before you.

"We further hope that your Lordship will facilitate the Agents of the West Indian Governments selecting the recruits, as we cannot help believing that if local official assistance were given, a better class of emigrants might be obtained than that which has of recent years been recruited.

"Thanking you for so kindly consenting to receive the representations of my Committee upon this important matter, I have, etc., (Signed) "N. Lubbock, *Chairman.*"

To the above letter, Lord Curzon on December 3rd, sent the following reply:—"Sir—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ult., in which you favour me with the views of the West India Committee on the subject of coolie emigration from India to the British West Indies.

"Though I am unable at the present time to consider the representations now made, I will bear your letter in mind and see that the matter receives attention after my arrival in India, Yours faithfully, (Signed) Curzon of Kedleston."

AN ANTIGUA PETITION.

A petition signed by nearly 300 persons has been forwarded to the Secretary of State from Antigua, against a proposal of the Local Government to increase taxation on certain articles of consumption and on live stock, and praying, that the reduction of the land tax granted for this year may be continued.

THE IMPERIAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Dr. Morris, C.M.G., the Imperial Commissioner of Agriculture in the West Indies, in the course of an address recently delivered before the Agricultural Society of Trinidad, gave details concerning the organisation of the newly-formed Imperial Department of Agriculture. This Department, on which £4,500 is being expended this year, and whose funds will, when it is fully organised, amount to about £17,000 a year, has for its principal objects:—

- (1) The consideration and encouragement of the experimental cultivation of the sugar cane, with a view to improving its saccharine richness. In this connection there will be a thoroughly scientific investigation into the diseases affecting the sugar cane, and the proper application of manures in order that an exact knowledge of the nature and character of the manures to be applied to the sugar cane may be obtained.
- (2) The supervision of the Botanical Stations which have been established in the Windward and Leeward Islands.
- (3) The establishment of Industrial Schools to train black children in the actual details of horticultural and agricultural work. Such schools Dr. Morris hopes to start at once in St. Vincent, Dominica, and St. Kitts Nevis.
- (4) The teaching of Agriculture in Elementary Schools. This will be of two sorts, theoretical teaching given by the teachers and masters of the schools, and practical teaching given partly by the masters and partly by a staff of agricultural instructors, who will be engaged in visiting the schools and supervising the upkeep of a school garden.
- (5) The holding of Horticultural Shows in all the islands, at which the Department will offer prizes for the production of improved fruits and vegetables, and for the improved packing of fruit and other produce for export.

Dr. Morris laid great stress upon the importance of the Agricultural Instructors, a band of whom will be organized by the Department. They will show the population of the West Indies on their own ground how to prune their Cocoa or their Coffee, and by being on the spot will be enabled to give them practical hints as regards forking the grounds, so as to allow the rain to sink in, and also as regards the application and preparation of Manures.

CORRESPONDING BRANCHES IN ST. KITTS AND ST. VINCENT.

The Honourable E. G. Todd and Messrs. D. K. Porter having kindly consented to act in that capacity have been duly appointed Honorary Corresponding Secretaries to the West India Committee in St. Kitts and St. Vincent respectively.

The Secretary hopes shortly to be able to announce similar appointments for Dominica and Antigua, it being understood that Dr. H. A. Nicholls, M.D., C.M.G., will kindly represent the former, and the Honourable J. Freeland Foote the latter island on the West India Committee.

THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN ITALY.

The French Consul at Genoa reports the formation in that town of a Company, with a capital of 4,000,000 lire (£160,000) for the manufacturing of Beetroot Sugar. The site selected for the erection of the factory is in the environs of Bologna, but the management and working will be entrusted to some Engineers of Genoa, where moreover, the greater portion of the Capital has been subscribed. The number of the existing Beetroot Sugar Factories in Italy is four, viz., at Savigliano, Sinigalia, Legnano, and Rieti, the last being the most prosperous. Another concern with the same object in view, and controlling a Capital of 1,000,000 lire (£40,000), was formed in September last at Turin, and is now erecting the buildings at Segni. Italy, in fact, is strenuously endeavouring to produce for herself the sugar which she needs. In 1897 75,582 tons were imported, whilst in the same period the home production increased from 23,000 cwt. to 33,000 cwt.

THE LOUISIANA SUGAR CROP.

From New Orleans it is stated that the Louisiana sugar crop is proving disappointing. Fully one-half the grinding season is over, but the results have not so far been encouraging. The tonnage of cane is heavy, but the yield of sugar is comparatively poor, and complaints on this score are general, in spite of the fact that the sugar factories are now equipped, it is said, with the very best machinery for extracting the sugar from the cane, and it is therefore, other things being equal, now possible to secure a higher yield per ton than ever before. "There is a general belief," the New Orleans *Picayune* remarks "that the existing conditions are primarily traceable to the drought during the early months of the growing season. This so delayed the crop that at the commencement of the harvest the cane was fully a month behind in point of maturity. The weather which has been experienced since the commencement of grinding has been anything but favourable to the maturing of the crop, there being too much rain. The rains have also made plantation operations difficult. Should the weather from now on prove cold and dry, it is possible that better results may be obtained; but it must now be accepted as certain that the yields of sugar per ton of cane delivered at the mill will be surprisingly small compared with the yields of recent years. This is greatly to be regretted, for the reason that a much larger crop than usual was planted for, and there was every reason to expect a heavy yield."

CENTRAL FACTORIES.

Sir Thomas Lipton's Agents left by last Mail to report on the prospects of Central Factories in Barbados. It is said that if their report is satisfactory, Sir Thomas Lipton will be prepared to find the necessary capital for their erection.

WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

Telegrams :
"CARIB." LONDON

BILLITER SQUARE BUILDINGS,
LONDON, E.C.

December 23rd, 1898.

The West India Committee is an Association of Planters, Merchants and other gentlemen interested in the British West Indies and British Guiana.

The objects are to promote the welfare of the British West Indies and British Guiana, and by united action to further the interests of those Colonies generally.

A General Meeting is held once a year. At this Meeting a report and statement of accounts for the past year are submitted to Members and an Acting Committee consisting of the Chairman, Deputy-Chairman, Treasurers, the Chairmen of the West India Associations of Glasgow and Liverpool, and twenty-four Members is elected. The Acting Committee meets on every alternate Thursday throughout the year, or more often if occasion arises.

Sub-Committees are appointed for exceptional purposes, the representations of such Sub-Committees being submitted to a meeting of the Acting Committee for confirmation.

The West India Committee is in close communication with the West India Associations of Glasgow and Liverpool, and has Committees in British Guiana, Barbados, Trinidad, St. Kitts, and St. Vincent, with whom a regular correspondence and exchange of views is maintained to mutual advantage, and similar Committees are in course of formation in the other Islands.

A monthly circular is issued to Members two days before the departure of the West Indian Mail, giving a review of events of importance which may have taken place during the preceding month, such official correspondence of the Committee as is suitable for publication, statistics as to Sugar, Cocoa and Rum sales, Weather reports and other interesting information connected with the West Indies.

At the office of the West India Committee may be seen the Colonial papers, blue books and other publications of interest.

Subscribers of £1 Is. and upwards to the West India Committee are entitled to the Monthly Circular, Weather Telegrams, and other publications for the year.

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL,

Secretary.

REPORT
OF
THE ACTING COMMITTEE
OF THE
WEST INDIA COMMITTEE

For the Year 1898.

In presenting their report for the year 1898, to Members and Subscribers, your Committee are desirous of recording their gratification at the honour which Her Majesty the Queen has conferred on the West India Committee by the appointment of their Chairman to be a Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, for services in connection with the West Indian Colonies.

During the past year 20 Meetings of the Acting Committee have been held, in addition to frequent meetings of the Sub-Committees, appointed from time to time for special purposes.

Corresponding branches have been formed in British Guiana, Jamaica, Trinidad, Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, with which a regular correspondence and exchange of views has been maintained, to mutual advantage. Your Committee have also kept in close communication with the West India Associations of Glasgow and Liverpool.

The special appeal for subscriptions issued in January was readily responded to by the Colonies, planters, merchants, and others interested in the West Indies and enabled your Committee, after providing for its own requirements, adequately to support the Anti-Bounty League.

The Monthly Circular has been regularly posted to Members and Subscribers, as also have the various publications of the Anti-Bounty League.

The important question of immigration has received the continued and careful attention of your Committee, who have never ceased to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the importance of maintaining a sufficient supply of labour for the Colonies of British Guiana and Trinidad, and your Committee are not without hope that their efforts to procure the ultimate abolition of the Back Passage Clause of the immigration ordinances, which at present seems to stand in the way of this being sanctioned, may prove successful.

With the co-operation of the Refiners' Committee, Queensland, the Mauritius and India, much has been done by means of the Anti-Bounty League during the past year to educate public opinion on the disastrous results which the Foreign State Bounty System entails.

Twenty-two thousand book pamphlets have been prepared and printed, viz. :—

- 5,000 "The Truth about the Foreign Sugar Bounties";
- 5,000 "Our West Indian Colonies";
- 5,000 "The House of Commons and the Anti-Bounty League";
- 2,000 "The House of Commons and the Sugar Bounties";
- 2,500 "The Bitter Cry of the West Indies";
- 2,500 "The Open Door for British Sugar Industries";

and over eighty thousand smaller pamphlets, leaflets, and reprints from newspaper articles, &c.

On September 10-12th the disastrous Hurricane swept over the Islands of Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and your Committee lost no time in taking steps for the relief of the sufferers. A deputation at once waited upon the Lord Mayor, praying him to inaugurate a Mansion House Fund, and the Lord Mayor, who was also approached on the subject by the Colonial Office, readily acceded to their request, with the result that a sum of £46,116 was collected and transmitted to the Colonies. To augment this fund, your Committee did all in their power, by appeals to the clergy and other bodies. The suggestion of your Committee that arrangements should be made for the immigration of island labourers from Barbados and St. Vincent to Trinidad and British Guiana, as a means of relief, was adopted by the Colonial Office. On September 30th, a deputation waited on the Rt. Hon. Lord Selborne, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, and laid before him the detailed information which they received from their correspondents as to the extent of the damage incurred, and indicated to him that Imperial assistance on a considerable scale would be required, with the result that on December 23rd, they were able to communicate to the Colonies the announcement that in addition to a considerable relief from taxation in St. Lucia, Her Majesty's Government proposed to make substantial grants and loans to Barbados and St. Vincent.

Your Committee take this opportunity of recording their gratitude to Sir Horatio D. Davies, M.P., the late Lord Mayor, the British Public, the Colonies, and the Clergy, who so readily came to the assistance of their fellow subjects with subscriptions and other support.

On November 25th, your Committee entertained His Excellency Sir James Hay, K.C.M.G., Governor of Barbados, at dinner at the Whitehall Rooms, in recognition of the services which he rendered to that Colony after its devastation by the Hurricane.

Considerable progress has been made with the question of the Countervailing Duty imposed by the British Government on British Colonial Spirits, and your Committee feel sure that the time cannot be far distant, when Her Majesty's Government must afford to the West Indian Colonies this act of justice, for which they have so long appealed, *i.e.*, the abolition of the Surtax on Spirits coming from those Colonies whose excise regulations are under the control of the British Government.

Your Committee trust that the proposals of the Government for the promotion of Central Factories in the smaller Colonies will shortly bear actual fruit to their substantial benefit.

In Antigua and St. Kitts, your Committee have been instrumental in securing very material reductions in taxation.

Your Committee are keeping before them the questions arising out of the Adulteration and Merchandise Marks Acts which protect the buyers of sugar, securing to them the quality for which they ask.

Your Committee have to record, with sincere regret, the death in the past year of Mr. Claude Neilson, who was one of the oldest Members of the West India Committee.

N. LUBBOCK, *Chairman.*

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL, *Secretary.*

April 14th, 1899.

West India Committee.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE, Dec. 20th, 1897, to Dec. 31st, 1898.

To be submitted to the Annual General Meeting in April, 1899.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
1897.							
Dec. 20.—To Balance in hand at this date	0	2	1				
1898.							
Dec. 31.— „ Subscriptions received to date	2,265	9	10				
„ „ — „ Interest on Deposit	3	4	8				
1897.							
Dec. 20.—By paid Mr. J. L. Ohlson balance due to him ..	32	13	8				
„ „ „ „ „ „ on a/c of salary ..	67	6	4				
1898.							
„ „ „ „ „ „ on a/c of £250 gratuity as sanctioned by Committee	225	0	0				
„ „ „ „ „ „ sundry expenses incurred by him	18	19	6				
					343	19	6
Jan. 1. — „ Cannon Street Hotel, hire of room for Meeting, December, 22nd, 1897 ..		3	13	6			
„ 24. — „ A. Siegle, Printing		7	8	6			
Feb. 16. — „ Telegram to Demorara re Coolio Immigration		3	18	10			
June 1. — „ F. Hadley & Sons, Binding Books ..		5	17	0			
„ 15. — „ Registration of Cable Address, "Carib"		1	1	0			
July 8. — „ Subscription to Press Cutting Association		5	5	0			
„ 25. — „ W. Jeffrey, Book Shelves & Linoleum ..		8	4	0			
Aug. 4. — „ R. Pottle & Son, Newspapers ..		16	6	0			
„ „ — „ Mr. J. L. Bannerman, Reporting Speeches on motion on Finance Bill in House of Commons re Rum Surtax question, June 13th, 1898 ..		3	1	6			
Oct. 9. — „ Placed on Deposit with Messrs. Prescott, Dinsdale & Co.	750	0	0				
„ „ „ „ „ „ Less withdrawn and placed to Current Account Dec. 30th	100	0	0				
					650	0	0
„ 31. — „ Payments to Anti-Bounty League during the year		583	19	0			
„ „ — „ Secretary's Salary, ten months ..		250	0	0			
„ „ — „ Economic Life Assurance Co., Rent for six quarters, being the last two quarters of 1897 and the four quarters of 1898		129	0	0			
„ „ — „ Eden Fisher & Co., Printing Account ..		64	16	9			
„ „ — „ Postages, Petty Expenses, Salaries, &c. ..		84	9	0			
					2,110	19	7
					157	17	0
					£2,268	16	7

£2,268 16 7

On December 31st, 1898, the following Accounts were still outstanding, viz.—Eden Fisher, Printing, £26 10 9; Wyckoff, Siemons & Co., Typewriting, £2 10 1; R. Pottle & Son, Newspapers, £2 7 6; Final Instalment of Gratuity to Mr. J. L. Ohlson, £25 0 0.

SPENCER H. CURTIS,
 R. RUTHERFORD,
 CYRIL GURNEY, } *Treasurers.*
 ALGERNON E. ASPINALL, *Secretary.*

REPORT
OF
THE ACTING COMMITTEE
OF THE
WEST INDIA COMMITTEE,
For the Year 1898.

April 14th, 1899.