

PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF THE YEAR.

1909 and 1910 the Commissioners presented their Report on August 9, 1910.¹ In addition to making a variety of recommendations on different subjects coming within the scope of their reference, the Commission reported in favour of the establishment of reciprocal trading exchanges between Canada and the West Indies, and drafted a form of agreement between Canada and any one of the West Indian Colonies, with schedules of the products of the respective countries which should receive the benefits of preferential tariffs when imported into the Colony or into Canada.

A scheme for the holding of a conference between representatives of Canada and of the West Indian Colonies desirous of adopting the recommendations of the Royal Commission was drawn up by the Imperial Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was accepted by the Government of Canada and by the Governments of the Colonies concerned. The conference met at Ottawa from March 29 to April 9, 1912, and at Toronto on April 10, 1912, under the presidency of the Hon. George E. Foster (Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce). The other members of the Conference included the Hon. J. D. Reid (Canadian Minister of Customs), the Hon. W. T. White (Canadian Minister of Finance) and the following representatives of West Indian Colonies: Mr. H. B. Walcott (Trinidad), Mr. J. M. Reid (British Guiana), Dr. W. K. Chandler, C.M.G. (Barbados), Mr. E. J. Cameron C.M.G. (St. Lucia), Mr. F. W. Griffiths (St. Vincent), Mr. W. D. Auchenleck (Antigua), Mr. T. L. Roxburgh, C.M.G. (St. Kitts), Mr. W. H. Porter, I.S.O. (Dominica) and Lieut.-Col. W. B. Davidson-Houston, C.M.G. (Montserrat). On April 9, 1912, the Conference settled the terms of a ten years' agreement for submission to the different Legislatures concerned.² Its chief provisions are as follows:

(1) That the duties of Customs on goods enumerated in Schedule A, being the produce or manufacture of Canada imported into the West Indian Colonies represented, shall not at any time be more than four-fifths of the duties imposed in the Colony on similar goods when imported from any foreign country, provided that on flour the preference in favour of Canada shall not at any time be less than 12 cents per 100 lb.

(2) That the duties of Customs on goods enumerated in Schedule B, being the produce or manufacture of any of the Colonies represented, imported into Canada shall not at any time be more than four-fifths of the duties imposed on similar goods when imported from any foreign country, provided that on raw sugar not above No. 16 Dutch Standard, in colour, and molasses testing over 56 degrees and not over 75 degrees by the polariscope, the preference in favour of the Colony shall not at any time be less than 4½ cents per 100 lb., and for each additional degree over 75 degrees the preference shall not be less than ½ cent per 100 lb.

(3) That on goods enumerated in Schedule C, viz., cocoa beans, limes and lime juice, imported into Canada from the Colonies represented, there shall be no duties of Customs; but certain specific duties are to be imposed thereon when imported from any foreign country.

¹Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Relations between Canada and the West Indies, September, 1910 [Cd. 5, 369]. Minutes of Evidence: Part II taken in Canada [Cd. 4,991], January, 1910; Part III taken in the West Indies [Cd. 5,370], September 1910; Part IV taken in London [Cd. 5,371], September, 1910.

²See British Parliamentary Paper entitled "Agreement between Canada and Certain West Indian Colonies, dated 9th April, 1912, and Correspondence relating thereto, June, 1912." [Cd. 6,092.]