

of the Dominion of Canada at Ottawa in 1925. There have been shipping and trade relations, a system of mutual preference, between Canada and the West Indies for a good many years past. Those relations were strengthened and developed by the Conference held between those colonies and Canada in 1920, but the recent Conference went a good deal further, and in it—I have no doubt the Prime Minister of Canada may wish to say something more in detail about the matter—these various colonies gave a considerably extended preference to the Dominion of Canada under a great many different heads, while Canada has given an increased preference to them on certain things that are of special importance to them—things such as sugar, bananas and cocoa. Newfoundland, I believe, was not actually represented at that Conference, but, from what the Prime Minister of Newfoundland said the other day about his readiness, so far as Newfoundland is concerned, to extend the system of preference within the Empire, I have no doubt he is also taking into consideration the possibilities of whether he can deal with the West Indian situation as well as with the general problem of Imperial Preference. Another part, and from the point of view of the West Indies certainly not the least important part, of the agreement which was made in 1925 was one for a better steamship service between Canada and the West Indies. That service has not yet actually been put into effect. The full time limit within which it was to be carried out has not yet expired, and the Government of the Dominion has been occupied recently with other more immediately pressing matters. The West Indies are naturally very anxious about the future of their shipping service, and they look in that matter, as indeed in many other matters of their development, with the keenest interest to what Canada is prepared to do in the way of developing mutual trade for the benefit of both sides in this bargain.

West Indian Telegraphic Communications.

I may add that another aspect of West Indian communications—that of telegraphic communications, the deficiencies of which were a serious obstacle to the development of West Indian trade a few years ago—has now been satisfactorily settled. A scheme which was suggested to the Government of Canada at the Economic Conference of 1923 has now been put into operation, and has successfully, at any rate to a very large extent, solved the difficulties which previously existed. Under a co-operative scheme the cost of operating the cables from Barbados to Turks Island, from Barbados to Trinidad, and from Barbados to British Guiana, and wireless stations in Barbados and other islands, is now met by contributions from His Majesty's Governments, both here and in Canada, and by the various West Indian colonies in partnership. The system of communication is managed by the Pacific Cable Board, and has, I think, proved, in the experience of the colonies concerned, a reliable and efficient means of communication at lower cost than the system previously in operation. I might mention that in 1924 an Act was passed empowering the Pacific Cable Board, with the approval of the Governments represented on it, to undertake any telegraphic work as agents for the Governments of any part of His Majesty's Dominions. So much for the problem of West Indian isolation.

Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad.

Another factor in their relative backwardness has been that their methods of production have fallen behind those of the rest of the world. The first great step forward in their regeneration was taken by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain when he established the Imperial Department of Agriculture in the West Indies; this gave a new lead, a new inspiration, to methods of cultivation in the West Indies. I remember being told by the head of a large sugar factory in the West Indies, which was initiated entirely as the result of the work of that Department of Agriculture, that during the war they had paid in excess-profits duty £175,000 to the Exchequer here, and had, in that way—one firm alone—more than compensated the taxpayer of this country for the expenditure on that Department. That Department of Agriculture in the West Indies, after twenty years of very valuable work, has been absorbed in the greater project of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad, to which I referred this morning. I have already referred to the immense part which I believe it can play in the future development of the tropical Empire. What I might perhaps mention in connection with its administration is that I have recently arranged that all candidates accepted for appointments in the agricultural services of the colonies should spend at least one year at that college. Similarly, the Empire Cotton-growing Corporation has arranged that the college shall be the training centre for all its officers, and a good many nominees of other Governments are now going there. There are young men from every part of the world attending its courses, and, as I said this morning, its ex-students are already beginning to be found in important appointments in every part of the Empire, both public and private appointments.

British Guiana.

There is one part of the West Indian sphere which more than any other has puzzled successive Secretaries of State—that is British Guiana. You have there a great continental territory as large as Great Britain, with every resource, as far as one knows, of soil, minerals under the soil, and climate to make it a rich, prosperous, and developing territory, which, however, has on the whole remained without great development for the last century. One of the difficulties in its development is the fact that its present population is very limited, and is practically confined to a narrow strip of sea-board. I have just sent out in the last few days a small parliamentary Commission to inquire into the possibilities of British Guiana, and to see in what way and by what means its resources can be effectively used. I do not wish to convey the impression that those resources have not been utilized at all. There have been notable developments in some directions. There has been very considerable development in mining for bauxite; a Canadian company under the control of the Northern Aluminium Co. of America has been in operation for some time, and a strong British syndicate has also been formed to take part independently in the development of the bauxite of that country.