

ABSTRACTCommercial Relations Between Barbados
and Canada, 1898-1939

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Commercial Relations between Canada and Barbados 1898-1939 attempts to present the early history of commercial ties between the two countries. The year 1898 marks the first tentative step taken by Canada to foster improved commercial relations between the Dominion and her West Indian neighbours. Over the next four decades several trade agreements were hammered out between Canada and the West Indies. These agreements were aimed at widening the base of trade which was founded on sugar and molasses from Barbados and foodstuffs from Canada. However, by 1939 there was no major change in trade vis-a-vis the goods traded.

The paper revolves around the 1898 preferential tariff and the subsequent trade agreements of 1912, 1920 and 1925. These agreements were examined to determine whether they did in fact increase the flow of trade between the two areas. After a careful analysis of the statistics for the period, it became obvious that despite the trade agreements between the

two regions that the basis of trade had not been widened, though, the volume had improved. It is noteworthy that Canada was able to make substantial inroads into the Barbadian market during the war years, that is 1914-1918. However, once peace was established Canada quickly lost her position. It seems to suggest that though the agreements aided improvements in trade, the greater impetus for improved commercial ties was in fact international events.

Thus, international events affected trade relations between Canada and Barbados. The other major problem was that of shipping which the paper takes a closer look at. Shipping proved to be the linchpin of the trade agreements. It became obvious by 1925 that without a fast and efficient shipping service the effects of the trade agreements would be minimal.