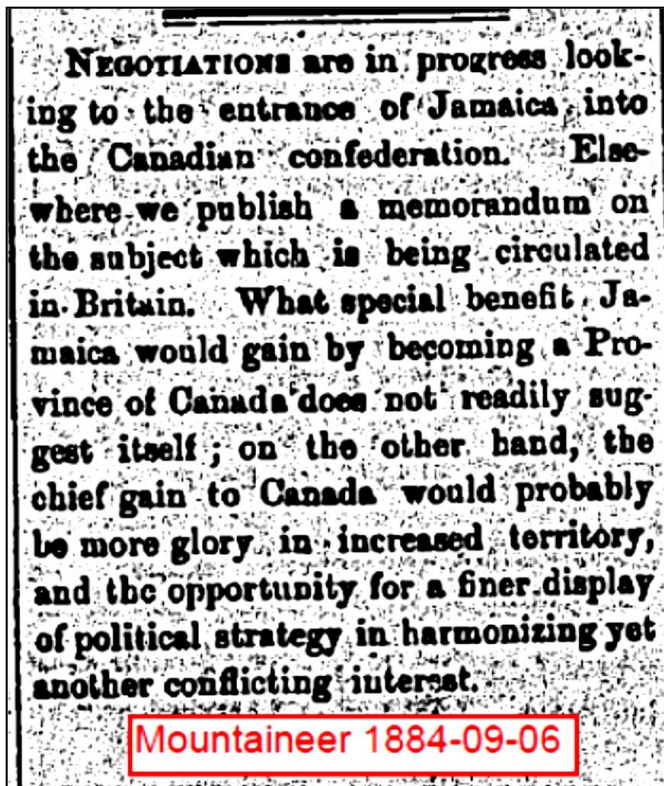


Jamaica almost joined Canada.

Are you kidding me?

Well you know there was talk about it way back in September of 1884. In Morden, this story was first mentioned in a short article on Septem-



ber 6th. Julius Galbraith, the editor of the Manitoba News gave a short editorial comment on it.

It was during the turbulent times when the folks of Nelson woke up to the fact that they had to abandon their town for Morden, even though Nelson was less than 10 years old.

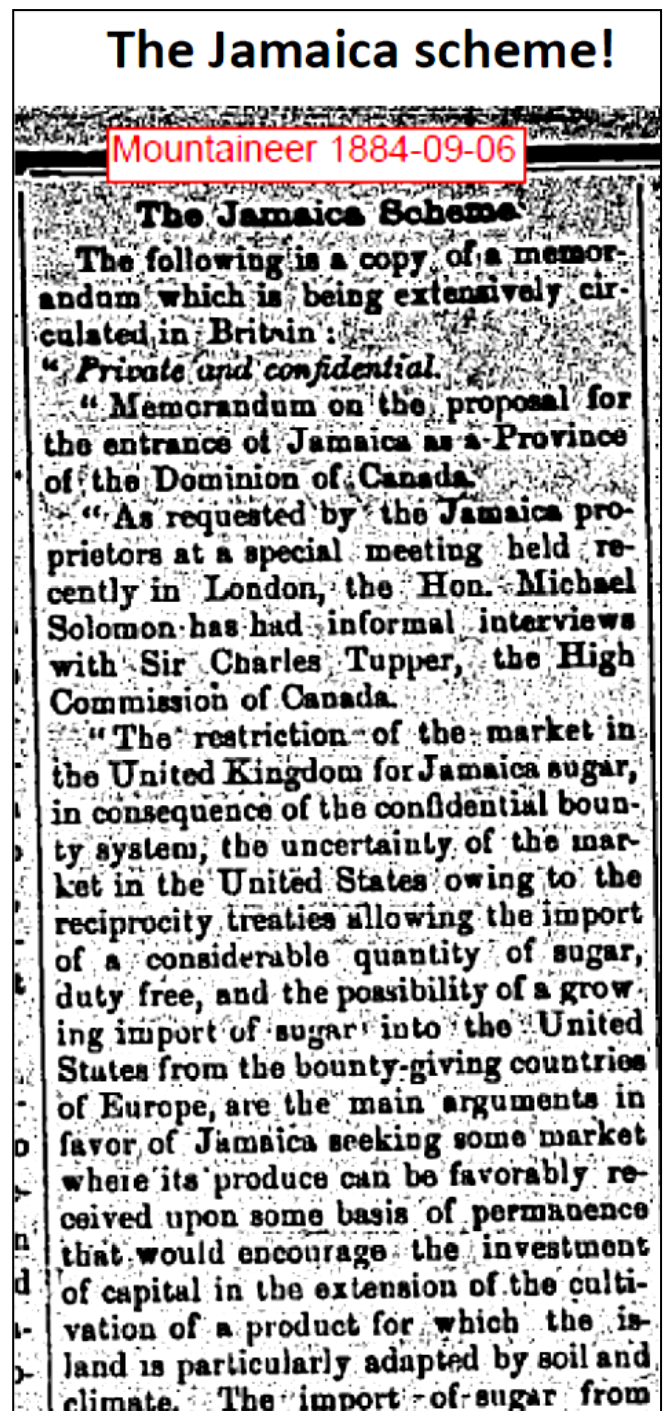
The plight of the farmers was dire. Prices were down, and they couldn't get their grain to market. The CPR had a monopoly and was milking it. At the same time the CPR was colluding with the Ogilvie Elevator and Flour milling concern based down East.

The southwestern farmers had their futures at stake and were fighting hard to make

their lives better, so I wonder how many people were getting themselves all stirred up and passionate about Jamaica becoming the 8th province of the new Dominion. Yes, if negotiations were successful, Jamaica would become a province before Alberta and Saskatchewan!

His feeling was that it wouldn't be so great for Canada. He and his readership were full to the cheeks of "conflicts of interest"! They had been fighting such just to sell their grain at a fair price.

He also printed a copy of the memoran-



dum that was going around the business and political circles of London. Jamaica was still a colony and wouldn't you know it, the reason had to do with selling sugar!

The locals in Jamaica weren't getting paid enough money for their sugar crops to live prosperous lives. And, the big investors in London couldn't make money by lending it to the Jamaicans either because they weren't making enough money to repay their loans. That may have sounded a bit familiar to the southwestern Manitobans!

Three weeks later a second article appeared in the Manitoba News. The article is in the column to the right on this page.

In this article Julius Galbraith was reprinting an article that came from the Winnipeg Sun to keep his own readers abreast of developments that might make Jamaica a colony of Canada, or maybe even a Province. Julius himself was not in favor of the proposal. I believe that like the Winnipeg Sun reporter he believed that all of the capital and energy in eastern Canada should be invested in the Northwest Territories. Northwestern Canada had millions of acres of arable land available for development and it was devoid of infrastructure (mostly railways I mean by infrastructure) and population. The article then lapsed into unpleasant journalism when the writer of the article spoke with arrogance and racism about the people of Jamaica. The comment about negroes could have been inserted to ramp up the passions of the readers in Winnipeg. What the feelings of people who read that remark really were can only be guessed at. On the other hand the comment was made 130 years ago. The point of concentrating our efforts as Canadians in the development that was needed right at home was lost to me as a modern reader because of outrageousness of the previous comment. But, the Winnipeg Sun reporter told it like he felt it!

FURTHER action is being taken in the direction of annexing Jamaica to the Canadian Confederation. To us the scheme seems a wild one, and we have no desire to see it realized. Speaking on the subject, the Winnipeg Sun of a late date says:—The cable to-day reports that a Jamaica agent is to be dispatched from London to Ottawa to discuss the scheme for annexing that island. It is to be hoped Sir John will not commit the country to it. The North-West needs all the time, attention and money Eastern Canada has to spare. It will be infinitely better from a political as well as a material point of view, to develop and populate this vast region where the world's food may be grown than to attempt to make Canadians out of 600,000 negroes for the sake of their sugar crop, which we can now have free of duty if we choose to admit it. If the Jamaicans are in a bad way, let the British Government attend to their case. We cannot afford just now to indulge in Quixotic experiments.

Mountaineer 1884-09-27

Mr. FROB DOUGLASS, M.P. for

I loved the comment about Don Quixote in the last sentence of the article. The writer was back to acceptable humor. Don Quixote was a Knight who went off his rocker a bit. He donned his armor, mounted his "Noble Steed", tucked his lance under his arm and attacked a windmill!

In the paper of the following week, September 7th there was a letter of explanation from a man named the "Hon. Mr. Solomon" for proposing to the legislature of Jamaica that the colony

should become a province of Canada. You can see the frustration of the writer. Mr. Solomon had gone to London to try to get the support of the

The following text of the letter by Hon. Mr. Solomon to the Colonial Standard and Jamaica Despatch, explaining his views on the proposed annexation with Canada, will be read with much interest:—

SIR,—In reference to the notice of motion which I have given in the council to consider the advisability of forming a political and commercial alliance with the Dominion of Canada, I have been impelled to do this by the circumstance that the major industry of this Island is threatened with immediate extinction and ruin, and the ruin of such industry must extend to the injury of every class of the inhabitants of Jamaica. We have sought from the English Government some help out of our distress, all we have received is a dogmatic chapter on political economy, and instead of assistance, England rejoices in the power she possesses to facilitate our ruin.

While in England I brought a proposition for consideration to the

British government in improving economic conditions in Jamaica. What he experienced was the arrogance of the British Empire whose politicians were their Colonial Masters! His letter was written to the Jamaican newspapers a month earlier on October 6th of 1884.

Then it all fell apart!

It was really quite funny. When the motion came before the council of Jamaica, they squashed it by an 8 to 1 vote! That was a very emphatic statement! They apparently didn't think any more highly of Canadian arrogance than of British arrogance.

And really, you can see the thread of arrogance in the Canadian press as you read the articles. I don't know if that arrogance was shared by average Canadians in Morden but I guess they got put in their place a little bit.

When you start to read old archived news-

THE Jamaica annexation "boom" has collapsed, for the present time at any rate. Canadians had somehow possessed themselves of the idea that the inhabitants of the tropical island were anxiously eager to become part and parcel of this great Dominion, and that to be or not to be rested entirely with the Canadian people. From this bearing all the big and little Canadian newspapers have been editorially laboring for months. And now it transpires that the Jamaicans feel fully equal to the occasion all themselves, and that public opinion in Canada was of very little account in the solution of the question. In brief, Jamaica despatches received at Halifax, Nov. 11, state that on the previous night the Legislative Council of the island rejected, by eight to one, Solomon's resolution looking to confederation with the Dominion.

Manitoba News 1884-11-14

papers to learn about your ancestors it is surprising the things you find. Finding this little tidbit of history was entertaining.

I just can't figure out why it wasn't taught in history class when I went to school?