

standards become applicable to international carriers, they automatically set a standard for a majority of the provinces of Canada, and they would in all probability become the general standards for the Dominion.

TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION.

In the report of the special Canadian trade commission to Great Britain, France and Italy, just published, considerable emphasis is placed upon the problem of ocean transportation. The commissioners think that the established lines between Canada and the allied nations have not given that service in linking this country with other countries which might have been expected. Freight rates have been of such a character as seriously to impair their usefulness as a means of developing Canadian trade.

"Canada's ocean transportation will have to be completely reorganized if the Dominion is to derive the fullest benefit from her natural resources and manufactured products," says the report. A suggestion of the commission, one member dissenting, is the centralization under Imperial control, say, in London, of ocean cargo tonnage available by tramp steamers, which form the larger proportion of the tonnage. Employment of ships might be so adjusted, it is thought, that the different means of the Empire might be met as the requirements of the crop or season might demand. "If such a mobilization of Imperial transportation facilities could be achieved," says the commission, "it would lead to an adjustment of freight carrying which would ensure adequate return to the steamers and at the same time bring about a reduction of freight rates which would enormously assist transportation between Canada, the ports of Great Britain and the allied nations. This is a novel suggestion. A centrally controlled commercial fleet, placed during the busy season in various parts of the Empire, would probably have a drastic effect on the freight rates of privately owned vessels. Whether such a scheme is practicable and could satisfy various needs without conflict of interest in various parts of the Empire is a matter for decision when further information is available.

"The ocean carriers, until the war broke out, were apparently strong enough to withstand all the influence of government commissions and of governments themselves exerted with a view to regulating freight rates and sailing schedules. The war has brought about important changes in the world's shipping. Governments have, as war measures, taken an active interest in the control of shipping. How far this influence will be exerted after the war is problematical. One may reasonably expect, however, considerable opposition from shipping companies to any scheme of government control of ocean transportation. These considerations do not belittle the fact that the problem of ocean transportation is one for serious consideration by the governments of the British Empire."

Our trade commission points out that they were confronted by this problem at every point. The commission feels that it can only report conditions respecting freight rates as they find them, but they reaffirm their belief that the question is a matter of such material importance to the country's export and import business that they recommend "as strongly as possible a complete governmental survey of the freight situation, and prompt

application of such remedial measures as may be found necessary."

The report is one of 158 pages, and contains many other important recommendations, together with valuable information concerning the competition which Canadian manufacturers must expect to meet in marketing their goods, especially in Great Britain, France and Italy. The commissioners signing the report are Mr. J. W. Woods, chairman; Mr. T. Wardleworth, vice-chairman; Mr. W. F. Hatheway, Mr. F. Pauzé, Mr. H. E. Dupré and Mr. G. W. Allan. They have produced an exceptionally useful document which has much matter for the active consideration of the government, our manufacturers and trade interests generally.

DON'T HAMPER THE FARMER!

Considerably more than half a million men formerly engaged in productive occupations have been enrolled either in the Canadian army or engaged in munition, military or non-productive work of some kind or other connected with the war. A large percentage of these men were farmers. In the United States, before another year has passed, a million men will be called to arms, of which more than a quarter will likely be drawn from agricultural pursuits. This all means that a great strain will be put upon the farmers of the continent, who are already being urged to do everything possible to increase the production of their lands.

The farmers have responded nobly to the world's call for food, but of what use is it to produce food supplies if they cannot be delivered to market? Corn that stays in the farmer's cribs, as it was held for months during last winter in many places, does nobody any good. Wheat that stays on the farms helps only the rats.

The feeders of the railroads, our public roads to shipping points, must not be neglected so that the good work of the farmers is rendered of little avail by inability to get the stuff from the land into cars. Some people seem to think that good roads are a luxury because their grandfathers did not have them. They forget that their grandfathers did not have to feed 110,000,000 Canadian and American mouths, not to mention a lot of hungry ones among the 46,000,000 people of Great Britain and Ireland and the 40,000,000 of France. All grandfather had to do was to supply food for four or five million persons. His ways are interesting to read about but worthless to copy. Why hamper the farmer who is helping to win the war, by making him try to haul food supplies over roads that even grandfather would "cuss"? Our roads must be maintained and new ones built where the demands of food production dictate. Economy is the order of the day, but not false economy.

The Minnesota Supreme Court has upheld the city of Minneapolis in its plan of assessment for Marshall Avenue paving. A portion of the street has a street car line on it, and the company paved the part of the street occupied by its tracks. The property owners along the car line were assessed \$5.50 a front foot, and, where there was no car line, \$8.20 a front foot for creosoted wood block, all put in under one order. The property owners paying the higher rate brought suit, maintaining that the assessment should be uniform along the entire length of the street. Quoting from the decision: "Street car tracks and the operation of cars circumscribe the use of the street. The situation is much the same in principle as it would be if one portion of the street between curbs were wider than another."