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FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 1921.

TRADE CONDITIONS.

The New York Journal of Commerce draws attention to what it deems the mistaken fashion of using war prices as a measure to ascertain the condition of trade. If the pre-war standard is taken—and there was milk and honey in the land of Canaan in those days—the present state of business, both domestic and foreign, is found to be large. The Journal of Commerce says: Both exports and imports, measured in quantities, are above their true pre-war level, and taking them together they are far above the old base. We speak of them today as having fallen off. But there is demand for shipment to foreign buyers of as much food and materials as well as of about as many manufactured and semi-manufactured goods as before the war. It has always been a mistake to accept the war level as a basis of comparison, and this mistake is more obvious than ever at the present moment because it is plain and plainer that we are not likely to get back to the war level or anything like it—indeed, ought not to do so.

Speaking of trade in a broad way, manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing, complaints arise, we imagine, less from diminished turnover than from losses caused by declining prices of all commodities in hand a year ago have had to be written down in value, and in respect of manufacturers and wholesalers goods have been sold at a loss. The writing down of prices has been slower with retailers, but no class of traders has escaped loss on stocks held when the price recession began.

The point is that the volume of business has not diminished to anything like the same extent as the value, remarks the Montreal Gazette. Figures for domestic trade are not available, but exports and imports being compiled in respect of both value and volume, it is easy to gain information as to relative movements. In July, for example, exports from the United States were \$329,000,000 less in value than in the corresponding period last year, the decrease being slightly more than 50 per cent.; yet of thirteen principal commodities the quantities shipped were actually greater than a year ago. A few specific instances drawn from the foreign commerce of the United States in the year ended June 30, 1921, may be interesting. The import of hides and skins fell off 72 per cent. in value and 56 per cent. in quantity; raw silk, 58 per cent. in value and 38 per cent. in quantity; crude rubber, 58 per cent. and 44 per cent.; wool, 63 per cent. and 25 per cent.; and coffee, 43 per cent. and 4 per cent. Foodstuffs continue to go out in well sustained volume, but at materially lower value. All depends on how trade is measured. If the measure is price, then a heavy shrinkage has occurred and large losses have befallen both producers and distributors; while if the measure is quantity, the contraction has not been so serious. Falling prices much more than diminished sales make business unprofitable. Quantity movement is still much in excess of any pre-war year, and when prices all round have been adjusted to the lower level several basic commodities have already reached, trade will again become profitable even though the volume is not enlarged.

INACTIVITY IN WAR

The financial secretary to the British Ministry of Transport, explaining the deficit under government operation of the railways, says that during the first two and one half years of the war one hundred trains were kept on sidings, with steam up, ready for an emergency that never came. The government feared the Germans might land troops in the British Isles by Zeppelin, and the one hundred trains were held in readiness to rush soldiers to repel the invader.

Here is a new example of the essential wastefulness of war. One hundred trains could have carried a vast amount of freight in two and one half years. The immense army that Britain kept idle at home to meet a possible German expeditionary force could have done much, either in France, where the Germans were, or in industry. The millions spent on how valueless wooden ships in this country and on supplies that later were auctioned off at a huge loss could have been put to better use for they had not been thought necessary for war, but at least they bought action, far in excess of the apparent green-

dous activity of war, though little realized in the excitement, is its product of inaction.

The material losses of war are not wholly measured in the destruction of life and property in combat. There must be added the labor resources that are inactive and the capital that is sacrificed or left idle. In the impassioned bustle of war, as in the accelerated movement of peace time, we are not nearly as universally active as we think we are. Much that goes for action is merely energy spent in tense anticipation, or wasted in the illusion that we are actually doing something. A soldier spends more time killing time than killing enemies. Seldom if ever in the late war had any nation half its enrolled troops under fire at once. War's strenuousness is shocking; its idleness is deadly too.

SALE OF U. S. WOODEN FLEET.

The sale for \$2,100 each of 205 wooden ships, which cost the people of the United States (on an average) \$700,000 each to build, has its reason in altered shipping conditions. The moral seen by Commissioner Plummer of the Shipping Board is that the building of the vessels was a mistake. It was at least a radical emergency measure.

The Allied nations were crying for ships, any kind of ships that would carry goods and men and could be built quickly. The outcome of the war depended largely upon ships. So the orders for wooden craft went forward. Even concrete ships were experimented with. The thing was, like much of the war expenditure, a gamble with chance. The wooden fleet might turn out unnecessary; it might, if the submarine scores kept up, become the very device that saved the day. No one at the time could have told which.

Now that even steel vessels are "eating their heads off" in idleness it is the wooden fleet that must go at a sacrifice. The loss, some \$140,000,000, must be written off simply as one of the many costly consequences of war.

RUNNEMEDE IN HISTORY.

The report that Runnymede Meadow, where the barons exacted the Magna Charta from King John, will be sold by the government, has stirred such indignation that certain quarters in England that are now appearing unlikely. It would indeed be a pity were this sacred spot to pass out of the hands of the Crown, perhaps to be divided up and put to commercial purposes.

In recent years it has been too much the habit to belittle the significance of the events which took place upon this spot seven centuries ago, to dwell with too much emphasis on the fact that the barons were not concerned with human liberty, were actuated only by a selfish desire to safeguard their own privileges against royal aggression. This is beside the point. The important fact remains that guarantees were here made by the King in the form of a charter which became the very cornerstone of Anglo-Saxon liberty. Over and over again the English people, when their rights were endangered by royal aggression, harped back to that great document, announced their intention of defending it with their very lives.

Runnymede, therefore, should be held sacred by all Anglo-Saxons, like Westminster Hall, a place of hallowed recollection. To permit it to pass into private hands, hands which perhaps would fail to appreciate its true meaning in the history of human liberty, would be most unfortunate.

SEVERAL MOTOR CAR ACCIDENTS

Chatham, Aug. 25.—When Mr. and Mrs. Stymies and friends were returning from Chatham to Tabusintac Sunday evening their automobile was overturned over the Mill Cove hill and upset twice before landing at the bottom of the bank. Mrs. Stymies had her arm broken in two places, but the others in the car escaped injury.

This Car Burned.
Moncton, Aug. 25.—Joseph Melanson, local taxi driver, had the misfortune to lose his Reo limousine yesterday, when it caught fire in the Salisbury Road just outside the city. The car was completely destroyed.

Goes Over Bridge.

Chatham, Aug. 25.—Two young men, accompanied by two young ladies from Newcastle, met with an accident here recently. Their car accident when going down hill near the Dominion pulp mill and went over a bridge. Only one of the four was seriously hurt. A girl in the back seat sustained a broken arm.

LUMBER MILL BURNED

Shediac, N. B., Aug. 25.—The most costly fire that has occurred in the town of Shediac for many years started at a late hour last night in the steam lumber mill of R. C. Tait, Limited, and burned until one o'clock this morning, destroying the entire plant consisting of long-lumber mill, shoop and barrel manufacturing department. Much valuable machinery was ruined, but large piles of sawn lumber and the logs were saved. Very little lumber was damaged.

Gies Club Held Social.
The Gies Club of New Brunswick held a very successful social in Victoria Hall, which was attended by many from the city, Morrison's Mills and New Brunswick. Dancing was enjoyed and refreshments sold and \$31 realized.

All Former Records Broken

WESTMORLAND MAN WRITES OF THE ATTEMPTS BY THE BIG LUMBER OPERATORS ON THE CROWN LANDS OF NEW BRUNSWICK TO HAVE THE STUMPAGE RATES REDUCED.

To the Editor of The Gleaner.

Sir,—Some people charge Farmers with being a grasping, profiteering class. Others think our Manufacturers want a lot more than is justly due them. Labor leaders are being blamed for holding up enterprise and industry everywhere by demanding an extremely long price for a very short day's work. However, much or little, any of the above mentioned classes may be criticized for that besetting sin, of wanting "something for nothing" (or other people), it is safe to say that none of them can half compare with the latest attempt of our big Crown Land lumber operators to raid the public treasury and appropriate the people's forest lands (and their revenues) too for little or nothing.

If correctly reported in the Moncton Transcript of Aug. 12th, some nine or more of these influential lumber kings met our government, in St. John's city, and actually proposed to ask them to reduce our stumpage rate from \$5 per thousand feet to \$2.50 per thousand. Not only do they ask this half-price rate for next year's cutting, but they request all former records of their own and all other classes for supreme selfishness by boldly asking our government to pay them back in cash, more than half of all the net revenue from our forests already paid into the treasury, (or now overdue), for last year's cut.

The Transcript says, "It was contended by these men that the action was necessary on account of the condition of the lumber market, the depreciation in the value of last year's cut, and the large quantity of lumber now on hand that there is no market for."

Can anyone imagine how much clear sheer "gall" it took for any "delegation" of business men to put up such a ridiculous proposition to any government? Even if our government had millions of money to burn, and no longer needed to preserve our forest or husband its revenues, how in the name of common sense could it increase the price of lumber or help unload the stocks on hand, to give these big operators nearly the whole of last year's net revenue, and more than half of next year's net returns, as an encouragement to double up next winter's production?

All this seems too absurd to be noticed, and all such outrageous demands, coming from any class, should go unheeded by our government. But the Transcript says our government has "promised" the lumbermen consideration of their requests. Usually the Transcript seems to have a foreknowledge of our government's intended policy. At least that newspaper takes good care not to say a word against giving away the balance of our depleted forests to these men, and then paying them back their stumpage money, taking their chief value, off our hands.

What is the matter with these lumber operators anyway? Did not our last Minister of Crown Lands save them the chance of a lifetime to make millions of money out of \$30 and \$40 lumber in the year before he ever thought of raising the stumpage on them to half its former value? Why do not these wealthy operators take their medicine of broken prices and glutted markets and look pleasant, like other men? Why do they unload their immense stocks of old lumber at just what prices they can get, the same as farmers all over the province unloaded their potatoes last winter and this year? Why do they not let honest competition among themselves cut down the prices of all their dressed and rough lumber, boards, laths and shingles to the same level of the farmer's cattle, sheep and other live stock, along with hides and wool, to one-third of the market prices of two years ago? With a similar cut in their prices, houses would be built in every town, employment given to working men, and rents reduced to a live and let live basis. Does anyone hear of our farmers sending up big delegations begging of our government to borrow more money, and to tax other industries, to make goose their immense losses on farm produce—losses away in advance and incomparably larger than the losses of any other class or section of our people?

If our farmers can stand all this, and face a hard winter, with only half a crop to back them up, surely our lumbermen need not ask for aid. Their stumpage is a little cheaper enough, even for these present times of depression. To cut it down to half, at the present time, would be a cruel blow to all our lumbermen, and disastrous to some who own their lands, and operate the same. It would mean a serious loss to all interest concerned, except possibly, some of our business men, and to the thousands of men who are employed in the lumber industry. It would mean a serious loss to all interest concerned, except possibly, some of our business men, and to the thousands of men who are employed in the lumber industry.

The examination was closed by the Crown.

The Cross-Examination.
Mr. McDade asked: "Did you know anything else against Mr. Stewart in this matter?"

Answer: "I think so. I know I am in jail charged with the murder of Mr. Ross, and my brothers Joe and Fred also. My brothers and I have talked of this, but not out of the way. We talked of it just as other people would talk. I did not tell them what for a time, and they did not tell me what they meant to say. I am quite anxious to give evidence and tell all I know. I will not swear that I did not brag of what I would say on the witness stand."

When asked why she made brags, she said she could not answer in the way she was wanted to. She did not know what was at the house that evening until we met me two brothers on our way to the house. I did not say to Stewart that Jim Ross was away and it would be a relief to me to get in. I know Mr. Stewart is a justice of the peace. I did not talk to him of the property in the way of asking advice; my brothers did.

Court adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow.

the Foster Government. No one seems to know what that Board was appointed for, unless it was to put down, and to keep down, the price of stumpage to half its market value. If that was their duty, they certainly worked well on their job all the time that Hon. A. E. Smith was our Minister of Crown Lands.

Recent events, and increasing taxes, have fully aroused the people of New Brunswick to the value of the public lands and the necessity of strictly preserving the timber growth and securing an annual crop of logs for revenue purposes. More than ever before, they now demand of the minister in charge the best business management and the keenest salesmanship in disposing of their lumber at competitive market prices.

No doubt much good work was recently done in holding down the fires until the rain came. But now, though the fires are all out, it is still up to the Hon. C. W. Robinson to protect the people's property from this bigger, stronger and more grasping danger than a dozen fires.

He is the one man in New Brunswick who the rank and file of the voters hold responsible for the safe keeping of our forest and its revenues. At all events the public will soon be able to see "Who is Who" in the management of our lands at the present time. Whether our stumpage rates are fixed by these lumber kings, or by that "Advisory Board," or by other members of the Government, or by the Minister of Lands himself, who has been entrusted to handle them as a business proposition in which every tax payer is financially interested.

Yours,
WM. B. FAWCETT,
Sackville, N. B., August 24, 1921.

THE MIRAMICHI MURDER TRIAL

Continued from page two.)

The last time I went in the house then and Stewart came in the house shortly after. He told Mrs. Stewart we had not gone down to the place but had only gone to my brother-in-law's. We did not talk any more. I went to bed.

"On the broad road Stewart got out of the left hand side of the wagon, but not sure. The horse did not stop for my brothers to get off, when my brothers came back to the wagon I saw nothing in their hands or anything that was different. It was very long after my brothers got out of the wagon till I heard the two shots. My brothers got out just past the gate. We were almost to the bridge when I heard the shots. The horse walked all the way. I could not have counted more than three between the sounds of the two shots. Their immense difference in the sound of the shots. I saw Millet Stewart drinking soft beer and ginger beer that day."

"Did you see him drink anything other than beer within a few days?"

Objected to by Mr. McDade and upheld by His Honor.

"I saw him drink beer, lemon and beef, Irish and wine. The conversation we had was in English. All the French was spoken by Mr. Stewart. The other talk was all in English. I think it was nearly 10 o'clock at night when we got home, on the evening of Aug. 2."

"The next time I saw Mr. Stewart was after I went to bed. He came to my bedroom door. He said, 'Do you think I killed him?' I said I did not know and told him to go to bed. I saw him at the door. I saw him next the following morning when I went in from the barn. I had never heard Stewart make any threats against James Ross. I had heard him speak of him in an unfriendly way. I did not know Stewart from James Ross. The way he was talking, Stewart wanted me to tell my brothers not to tell what he had said at the shore that night. Stewart said, 'Don't say anything about it; we will be all right.' He was home part of that day but went away with the horse in the afternoon. I was a witness at the inquest. Stewart spoke to me about the evidence I was to give."

"He said for me not to say he had a rifle. He asked me what was going to any. I said I would tell the truth. I knew; I was going to tell the truth. He said, 'By God, if you do you will get all that's coming to you.' I reported this threat to Peter Coughlin. Stewart also said he was going to swear he had no rifle. I said, 'It will be a false oath because you know you did.' He said, 'don't give a damn for a false oath.' I did not tell all this to the coroner."

The examination was closed by the Crown.

Mr. McDade asked: "Did you know anything else against Mr. Stewart in this matter?"

Answer: "I think so. I know I am in jail charged with the murder of Mr. Ross, and my brothers Joe and Fred also. My brothers and I have talked of this, but not out of the way. We talked of it just as other people would talk. I did not tell them what for a time, and they did not tell me what they meant to say. I am quite anxious to give evidence and tell all I know. I will not swear that I did not brag of what I would say on the witness stand."

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Court adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow.

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