

## EXPRESS COMPANIES CASE CONSIDERED

### Representatives State Arguments for Higher Rates—Net Earnings Decreased in Spite of Heavy Business

The first subject considered by the Dominion Board of Railway Commissioners this year was the application of the Express Traffic Association of Canada for an increase in rates. Representatives of the companies on the one hand, and of the Manufacturers Association and other bodies on the other hand, were received at the meeting of the board in Ottawa on January 7th.

Mr. F. H. Phippen, K.C., appeared for the association, which includes practically all the express companies operating in Canada, and opened the case by reviewing briefly the situation which had confronted the companies during the past seven or eight years. He emphasized the fact that the high cost of living had affected the business of the express companies as well as that of other lines of industry, and that the war had caused for a time a great falling off in the work of the carrying companies. The increase in business due to war orders had revived to a degree the business of the express companies, but since the year 1911 certain regulations and orders had caused a decrease in the rates which the companies could charge.

### Why Higher Rates are Required

The Railway Board, said Mr. Phippen, had seen fit to order increases of freight and passenger rates over Canadian railways. The Dominion Express Company operating over Canadian Pacific Railway lines, had to pay to the road a certain percentage on the first-class freight rate. Therefore, the increase in freight rates authorized by the board for the railways, acted as a hardship on the express company, which had to pay more to the railway and received no increase in the rates chargeable to the public.

In illustrating the wartime expenses which the express companies were called upon to meet, Mr. Phippen stated that since the war began billions of dollars in gold and securities had been moved from the Pacific coast to Ottawa and other eastern points. In order to move these immense sums safely it was necessary to exercise all kinds of precautions. Trains had to be run before and after the one bearing the gold as a camouflage, and it was a subject for congratulation that not a cent had been lost in the movements.

It was only war business, said Mr. Phippen, that permitted the companies to operate profitably under the tariff of 1913. The express companies were only asking for a fair tariff which would enable them to operate with reasonable profits under conditions now prevailing. They were willing to assist the board in any way to arrive at what might be considered a fair tariff. But the companies must have assistance, just as the railways were given assistance. The express companies in the United States had been granted an increase in tariffs.

J. E. Walsh, representing the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, spoke briefly after Mr. Phippen. D'Arcy Scott, representing the National Dairy Council, asked for the new rates on cream, and asked also that a special date be set to hear the representations of the cream manufacturers.

### War Business Over

In the afternoon John Pullen, president of the Canadian Express Company, gave evidence. Under examination by F. H. Phippen, K.C., Mr. Pullen said that since 1913 the Canadian Express Company's profits had diminished, while there had been a steady increase in operating expenses. He thought the company was being administered with proper economy. "That is my duty," Mr. Pullen declared, "and unless I do it they will get someone else."

The company had had a large increase in business due to war conditions. There had been large movements in war supplies, machinery for munition works, and so forth. But the peak was now passed, and the company was returning to normal.

Mr. Pullen submitted a number of statements comparing conditions previous to the war with those prevailing

in 1918. He drew attention to the tremendous increase in the expense account, and pointed out that, though the gross earnings of the company had increased, the net earnings had gone down. The cost of nearly every item which entered into the operation of an express company had, he said, increased. Claims for damages which must be met by the company were on the increase. These claims arise through careless handling of goods and also because the company had been forced, through greater volume of business, to leave goods standing unprotected on station platforms, where some of them were stolen. The cost of handling new business had greatly increased when compared with 1913.

The case will, it is understood, be continued before the board.

## ASSOCIATION OF LIFE INSURANCE PRESIDENTS

The printed proceedings of the 12th annual meeting of the Association of Life Insurance Presidents, held in New York on December 5th and 6th, were issued on Tuesday, December 31st, and are now being mailed. The volume, which contains about 160 pages, reproduces the formal addresses presented at the meeting as well as the other transactions.

Accompanying the proceedings is a catalogue of the various publications which have been issued or distributed by the association from time to time, numbering 155. These are classified in the following groups: General pamphlets, 5; group insurance, 3; health and vital statistics, 20; investments, 40; law and legislation, 25; taxation, 25; war, 16; miscellaneous, 21.

## COMPENSATION LAW AND PROVINCES

The inability of a workman to enter suit against his employer in the courts of his own province on account of injury sustained while outside that province, recently came up for discussion in a Quebec court before Mr. Justice Green-shields. An employee of the Foundation Company, Limited, engaged at their head office in Montreal, was injured while working for them at Amherstburg, Ontario. He entered suit for compensation in accordance with the Workmen's Compensation Act of Quebec. The defendant company argued that the plaintiff had no right of action in Quebec province. It happens that in Ontario, however, his only action would lie against the Workmen's Compensation Board, which has jurisdiction over all cases of workmen's compensation in Ontario. The court's judgment was reserved.

## BELGIAN COMPANY TO PURCHASE HERE

A Belgian co-operative company has been organized under the name of "Comptoir National Pour La Reprise De L'Activite Economique en Belgique" (National Society for the Economic Reconstruction of Belgium).

This company, the object of which is to provide for the re-equipping of all Belgian industry and for the re-provisioning of trade, is looking for specified offers of machinery, implements, or raw material of all kinds. Manufacturers are invited to mail their offers to the company, c/o Ministère des Affaires Economiques, Bruxelles. It is also requested that tender, catalogues and price lists be sent in triplicate.

The initial capital of this firm is about \$100,000, and it is expected that it will increase rapidly now that such a large proportion of Belgium has been recently vacated by Germany. Financial assistance on the part of the state has also been granted, and on the other hand, the society is submitted to government control. The Comptoir has the power to enter into an agreement either on behalf of the government, or on behalf of manufacturers or tradesmen supported by state credit. It may also purchase for the account of private firms.