

Mr. Geo. G. Foster, K.C., on the Free Port Question

THE RIGHT TIME TO START THE MOVEMENT IS NOW.—NOTHING EXPERIMENTAL ABOUT THE IDEA.—IT WOULD BRING EUROPE COMMERCIALY THREE THOUSAND MILES NEARER TO CANADA.

Montreal, June 12th, 1916.
To the Editor,

"The South Shore Press."

Sir: —

I heartily congratulate you upon your idea of a Free Port District in the Harbor of Montreal. There are great possibilities, not only for Montreal, but for the whole of Canada, in the project. Its practical effect would be to bring Great Britain and the Continent of Europe commercially three thousand miles nearer to Canada. In other words, to graft a part of Europe on to North America. There is nothing experimental about the idea. Free Ports are as old as protection. Each, in fact, is essential to the other. If Free Ports have not increased greatly in number in Europe in recent years, it has been due to the existence of that great free trade area in Great Britain; all the ports of which are free, except to a very limited class of imports. The growth of Hamburg and of German commerce and shipping since 1888, when the Free Port of Hamburg was opened is a convincing object lesson.

This is the right time to start such a movement; because when the war is over we shall be faced with a brand new set of economic conditions, and we may as well grapple now with

some of the numerous problems that have arisen and see how we can prevent the Germans from carrying economic war into Canada, as into the other parts of the Empire and make of the Dominion a slaughter market for goods "Made in Germany"; until they have killed off all the new industries which the war has brought into existence.

the other ports of the Empire and with our faithful allies), in developing a commerce between us that will make us absolutely independent of Germany.

How can we increase the commerce and industry of Canada and with this end in view increase the shipping facilities of Canada.

This last is of paramount importance to our farmers. Grain is shipped to the Port of Montreal and put into elevators where it often has to wait for long periods for ships. The trouble in the past has been the want of return, westward bound cargoes. It does not pay to send ships across the ocean with freight and bring them back again in ballast. A Free Port in the Harbor of Montreal would bring hundreds of ships with freights for distribution all over the continent of North America. The same ships would be available for use