

## Commercial Clippings

**MANITOBA BUTTER.**—In 1919, Manitoba exported 153 carloads of butter to the United States and Europe, according to the report of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. This is a very good showing, in view of the fact that Manitoba imported 55 carloads in 1912. The increase is due to the improvement in the butter made in that province and educational campaigns among creameries and butter makers.

**TAX TARIFF PUBLICATIONS.**—The Board of Trade and Transportation, at a meeting at New York, passed a resolution urging abolition of the Canadian Government imposition of a charge against each United States shipper for every tariff publication supplied. The resolution characterized the charge as "unfair and unjust to the United States shipper, and unbusinesslike and detrimental to the interest of the Canadian Government-controlled lines."

**NEW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.**—Kitchener is the latest Ontario city to decide on the formation of a Chamber of Commerce. The Canadian City Bureau, that has conducted a number of campaigns in different cities of the Province, is commencing in Kitchener immediately. Directors of the local Board of Trade met last week and decided unanimously to re-organize under the auspices of the Canadian City Bureau, which is a branch of the American City Bureau. A campaign crew of three men is conducting the organization of the Chamber of Commerce, lasting one month, while under the terms of the contract entered into with the Board of Trade, field representatives of the bureau will exercise occasional supervision for three years.

**DIFFER AS TO TARIFF.**—By a resolution adopted at the meeting of the Montreal Chambre de Commerce, last week, that organization will take no definite united stand on the tariff question. Each member of the Chambre is left free to express his own views on this issue. The resolution followed a report from a special committee named by the Chambre some time ago to outline a policy to be followed by the members in testifying before the Federal Tariff Commission at Montreal.

The report of the special committee was read by Mr. Joseph Quintal, chairman. The text is as follows: "The special committee named to suggest to the Chambre de Commerce the attitude which its representatives ought to assume before the governmental commission which has been charged with enquiring into the question of the customs tariff has the honor to report that, in view of the differences of opinion, concerning the wisdom of revising the tariff, it would be better to leave each member free to act according to his own initiative before the commission of enquiry."

**CLOTHING PRICES REDUCED.**—In harmony with the reduction on the price of clothing in the United States, there has been a considerable reduction in the same line in Canada. The manager of a large departmental store in Montreal, in an interview, stated that the reduction amounted to almost fifty per cent. This loss, he said, is partly borne by the manufacturer and partly by the store itself. The lower prices in clothing, he thought, were in great part due to the warm weather. People had not been buying fall goods to the extent anticipated, and manufacturers were anxious not to carry over their stock. Consequently, the stores had been enabled to make considerable reductions.

**FURTHER DECLINE IN WOOL.**—While the majority of Canadian wool merchants are optimistic regarding the final outcome of the market they are unanimous in their contention that the prices of Canadian fleece will see further declines during the next two months. The fact that there is a plentiful supply of all wools on the market is having a tendency to bring about a general slump. Another factor is that all the American mills are closed down while one or two Canadian mills are running on short time on account of lack of orders.

During the past two weeks the Canadian mills have been expecting several large orders from Europe and bought large stock in readiness, but to date the orders have not been received and the mill owners find the stock left on their hands at high prices.

South American wool made the greatest decline during the past two months, dropping approximately fifty per cent. Black and gray wool from South Africa is plentiful at greatly reduced prices, while the wools from England and Ireland have declined about thirty per cent. Further declines are expected in practically every line before staple prices are reached.

We expected the recent declines and anticipate further drops, declared one authority. "During the war wool prices, soared in accordance with other prices and although every one knew that the prices would drop they did not expect them to re-act as quickly as they did. The whole trouble is that the retailers will not take their loss. Outside of a few bargains there has not been a general cut in the price of clothing and the public are wise to this fact and are holding off. The only remedy is for the retailers to cut prices to the rock bottom and then the market will become active again."

**MERCHANTS DON'T LIKE LUXURY TAX.**—Sir Henry Drayton, Minister of Finance, and the Hon. J. D. Robertson, Minister of Labor, met in conference last week, the retail merchants of St. John, N.B., to hear the complaints of the latter regarding the hardships imposed by the present method of collecting the luxury tax.

Through Mr. DeWolfe of St. Stephen, the merchants recommended to the Minister of Finance that the luxury tax be discontinued at the earliest possible date, and that immediate relief be given from the present method of collecting by stamps, and that there be substituted in its stead a simple tax to be collected from the manufacturer or producer, with a greater percentage of taxes on luxuries, if it is deemed desirable. In making this recommendation, the merchants are impressed with the belief that the collection of such a tax as proposed would net the Government a much larger return than the present luxury tax because of the relatively small expense in collecting it, and further that it would tend to remove many obstacles which now hamper trade.

**EVILS OF LUXURY TAX.**—Premier Meighen promised a delegation from the Retail Merchants' Association of Canada, Alberta Branch, last week, that he would send a lengthy wire to Sir Henry Drayton, Minister of Finance, advising him that there is strong opposition to affixing the stamp on the sales slip issued by retail merchants in connection with the luxury tax. Department stores, clothiers, shoe merchants, tailors, druggists, piano trade, hardware and furriers were all represented in the delegation.

While the Premier admitted that there was something in the arguments presented by them, he said:

"I do not like the idea of abolishing the luxury tax. We have been pressed so much to put the tax on."

**TAX CAUSES UNEMPLOYMENT.**—That the luxury tax now imposed by the Dominion Government is causing unemployment, injuring business, discouraging the investment of cap-

ital, and, on the other hand, that it is securing comparatively little revenue for the Government, are the grounds on which the Canadian Manufacturers' Association is asking the Dominion Government to abolish this type of taxation.

The executive council of the association at its last meeting passed a resolution to the above effect, and representations are now being made to the Government. It is claimed that the public have greatly curtailed their purchases of those articles on which the tax is now placed. It is felt that the removal of the luxury tax would encourage the public to buy such goods more freely, with the result that business would be stimulated, and more employment would be available.

**THE DOWNWARD TREND.**—Further downward movements in prices are shown by the monthly report prepared for publication in the October Labor Gazette by the Cost of Living Branch of the Labor Department. This report shows that the retail prices of foods averaged lower during October than in the previous month, the decreases being marked in sugar and potatoes. Smaller decreases were reported in the prices of beef, bread, flour and rolled oats. There were advances in prices of hog products, eggs, milk and in coal. The weekly food budget averaged \$15.83 in sixty Canadian cities at the middle of October, as compared with \$15.95 in the middle of September, \$14.21 in October, 1919, and \$7.93 in October, 1914.

According to the report, substantial decreases occurred during the month of October in the prices of grain, cattle, sheep, butter, vegetables, cereals, sugar, cotton, hides, some lines of metals and lumber, linseed oil, turpentine, chemicals, raw rubber and laundry starch.

## Oppose Measured System of Telephone Rates

Industrial and commercial bodies opposed to the measured system of telephone rates appeared before the Board of Railway Commissioners at the Court House, Montreal, Wednesday, and stated their reasons for opposing the application of the Bell Telephone Co.

In the course of the inquiry it was stated that it will probably be at least six weeks before the Commission would be able to hold its final sessions and determine the broad principles of the application. The representatives of the Union of Municipalities said it would be impossible for their technical experts to have their report ready before that time, owing to delays by the accounting firm. The final sessions will be held at Ottawa after all the data has been completed.

Commissioner S. J. McLean, when the point was raised as to whether or not any increase granted would be retroactive, said that it would not that any increase, if granted, would date from the issuing of the order of the Board.

This led to a request by counsel for the Bell Telephone Company that proceedings should be hastened, since they claimed that under present rates they were losing \$275,000 a month, and it was a matter of importance to them that the final decision should be reached with as little delay as possible. The experts for the Union of Municipalities were urged to hasten matters, in view of this presentation, but were firm that there was no possibility of having the full technical reports ready for the Railway Board until six weeks from that date.

The brief filed by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, among other things, to show that the measured system was unnecessary and unjust, stated the company's revenue, as shown, was \$16,500,000, and they asked for an additional \$4,500,000, or 27½ per cent, over present revenue. By increasing the flat rate for business telephones 30 per cent., residence telephones 25 per cent. and long distance calls, 30 per cent., the company would secure an increase of \$4,620,000, while the figures of the C. M. A., secured by inquiry, showed that at a conservative estimate the measured system as proposed would mean an increase in Montreal alone of \$1,955,679.