

Conclusions From Yearly Trade Returns

BY OUR OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT.

Ottawa, May 12.—As seemed probable, the trade returns for the fiscal year ending March 31st., show that during this period the United States was Canada's best customer, having taken commodities to the value of \$591,000,000, as compared with \$495,961,000 purchased by the United Kingdom. These figures are for the total exports. Taking Canadian produce alone into account, the United States purchased but \$464,029,014 worth, while the United Kingdom took \$495,868,284 worth. But of foreign, or re-exports, the United States took \$37,099,354; while the United Kingdom is credited with but \$6,810,061.

In drawing conclusions on this subject, and on that of the trade balance, some take only the figures for Canadian produce into account, but the total exports are undoubtedly an accurate statement of the country's external trade. Foreign goods are handled at a profit, just as native products are, the only difference being that in turning them over less is made than in the case of those commodities produced entirely within the country.

This is the first time since 1889 that the value of exports to the United States has exceeded that to the United Kingdom, in which year the margin in favor of the former country amounted to \$3,500,000. Previous to that year the same thing had happened in 1882 and 1888. But only four times during the last 47 years has the value of exports to the United States exceeded that to the United Kingdom. For several years before the outbreak of the Great War the United Kingdom was purchasing from this country from \$30,000,000 to \$50,000,000 more a year than was the United States. The change has come about through the increasing resort of the latter country to Canada for raw materials and other commodities, occasioned through the depletion of her resources.

In spite of the rate of exchange, which is supposed to check the bringing in of goods from the United States, imports were higher during the last 12 months than at any other time in the history of the Canadian-American trade. In 1917-18, when this country was bringing in large quantities of raw and semi-manufactured products to be work-up into war supplies, imports touched \$792,894,957, or exactly double what they were for the year just preceding the outbreak of war. But it was never expected that these record imports would be continued. In 1918-19 there was a drop to \$750,203,024, and it was expected that the combined influences of a reduced demand for United States raw and semi-manufactured supplies, together with the rate of exchange, would result in a much greater reduction in imports during 1919-20. But instead of this happening, another record has been set up, imports for the year having reached \$802,102,187.

Imports from the United Kingdom are also increasing rapidly. For the year they were \$126,692,274, as compared with \$73,029,215 in 1918-19. For March they were \$25,555,386, or about \$13,500,000 in excess of those for February. Of the total value of imports during the last twelve months, forty-four per cent came in during January, February and March. During March their value was about four and one-half times that for March 1919. The imports during last year were forty-three per cent over those for 1918-19, and were within \$12,000,000 of those for 1912-13, the highest figure ever reached, insofar as the United Kingdom is concerned.

While Canada exported \$24,000,000 more of commodities to the United States last year than she did the year before, the balance of trade against the Dominion was not lowered. For while exports

were increased by this amount, imports were increased by \$52,000,000, which means that the adverse balance of trade, instead of going down, went from \$272,500,000 in 1918-19 to approximately \$301,000,000 in 1919-20. This does not justify much hope of an early righting of the exchange situation through a reduction in the disparity between imports and exports between the two countries. The record of trade balances between Canada and the United States during the last five fiscal years is as follows:—

	In favor of the United States
1919-20	\$301,000,000
1918-19	272,500,000
1917-18	351,504,037
1917-16	374,733,986
1916-15	153,827,312

The exports to the United Kingdom during 1919-20 were valued at \$496,000,000, or about \$64,000,000 less than for 1918-19,; \$365,000,000 less than for 1917-18, and about \$260,000,000 less than for 1916-17. The decline in imports is attributable to the fact that with her own industries back on a peace basis, the United Kingdom does not require Canadian manufactured goods as she has done during the last five years and, in addition, the rate of exchange makes it more difficult to sell than formerly. Whether exports to the Mother Country will decline much further will depend largely upon her ability to get from other sources cheaper food and raw materials than Canada can supply.

The decline in the value of exports to the Mother Country, which has also been accompanied by a marked decrease in the value to France, would seem to indicate the wisdom of the policy adopted for a time last year, of granting credits where conditions justify it. Had it not been for nearly \$20,000,000 of credits extended to Belgium, France, Greece and Roumania, the exports to these countries would probably have been about that much less. The \$20,000,000 private loan to the City of Paris will materially help Canadian trade in a quarter where it has lost much ground during the last year.

The exports during the last year dispel the impression existing in some quarters that while Canada is building for herself a considerable mercantile marine, she has not done much building for other countries. From the outbreak of the war up to the end of December, 1919, these were built and sold to other countries vessels to the approximate value of \$65,000,000. The trade returns show that the value of vessels in January was \$7,306,000 and in February \$5,840,000; while the March returns will probably add another \$500,000 at least. In other words, during the last five years Canada has built and sold to other countries vessels to the value of nearly \$80,000,000. Over \$40,000,000 of this appeared in the 1919-20 trade returns, which shows that the exports would have been materially less had it not been for this item.

Among the imports that have increased greatly during the last year sugar stands out notably. Up to the end of February 929,836,660 lbs. had been imported, or at the rate of 84,530,600 lbs. a month. For the twelve months this would mean 1,011,367,000 lbs. During 1918-19 the quantity imported was 718,982,416 lbs. The value of these imports at the end of February was approximately \$56,000,000, which would make the value of the total imports for the year well over \$60,000,000. In 1918-19 the value was \$35,385,000, and in 1913-14 but \$15,063,000. These figures show that the increase in price has far outstripped the increase in consumption.

Know Your Own Country

"Spend your vacation money in Canada and learn to know your own country" is the new slogan of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, which is being backed enthusiastically by many other influential organizations. The Association is launching a Dominion-wide campaign to induce Canadians to spend their vacations and their motoring touring within the Dominion, during the coming summer and fall.

Among other reasons, this step has been taken in view of the unfortunate rate of exchange existing between Canada and the United States, where many thousands of the Dominion's residents go each year at vacation time. This year, in addition to the head tax, they will have to face an 85-cent Canadian dollar. The various railways and hotel organizations will also lend their assistance in keeping the Canadian dollar where it is worth 100 cents, as well as encouraging Canadians to visit their own beauty spots.

With such diversified scenery offering the fullest enjoyment to every temperament, it is difficult to account for the large exodus from the Dominion at holiday times. There are few attractions elsewhere which cannot be offered in the width of the broad land from the quiet rural beauty of Prince Edward Island, the charm of Nova Scotia's "Country of Evangeline," the grandeur of Niagara Falls, the Ontario Lakes, the majesty of the Rockies, the rugged simplicity of the National Parks, and the varied scenery of the Dominion's Pacific coast.

In such a range of choice, it is possible to suit every taste, whilst, for the sportsman, opportunities in every line could not possibly be excelled.

Montreal Fire Preventive Measures.

A new fire alarm system is being installed in Montreal with a view to keeping district chiefs in closer touch with alarm headquarters. A school of instruction for the firemen has been opened to acquaint them with the new system.

The proposal to compel the installation of automatic sprinklers has not been discarded. A by-law of this kind was recently recommended by the Administrative commission, and the city council still has it under consideration. Dwelling-houses will, however, be exempted. The proposal is that owners or tenants be compelled to install, at their own expense, one or more sprinklers within sixty days after notice is given by the city.

Someone has sent in a clipping that opens up a question piscatorial that is of unusual interest scientifically and otherwise. In the Spring, this clipping points out, man has an imperative yearning to go a-fishing. This year, he adds, fishing enters upon a new era. Formerly there was a certain atmosphere, a particular aroma, about the fisherman which now must be absent. What will the effect be upon the fish? The writer declares it is his belief that in former times the fish have been lured from the streams by the feeling or the notion that there was something in the world superior to water beverage. Fishermen have been enabled to take advantage of them by reason of this fact. Now that there is no such fragrant suggestion will fish bite?

We confess we cannot answer. We took down our ouija board and sought light on this subject from the one supreme authority, the late lamented Izaak Walton, author of the Complete Angler. No one should know more than an inhabitant of the spirit world.

Ouija said his "line" was busy. That's the way it always is when you want a person particularly.