

The Importance of Stimulating the Water Haul

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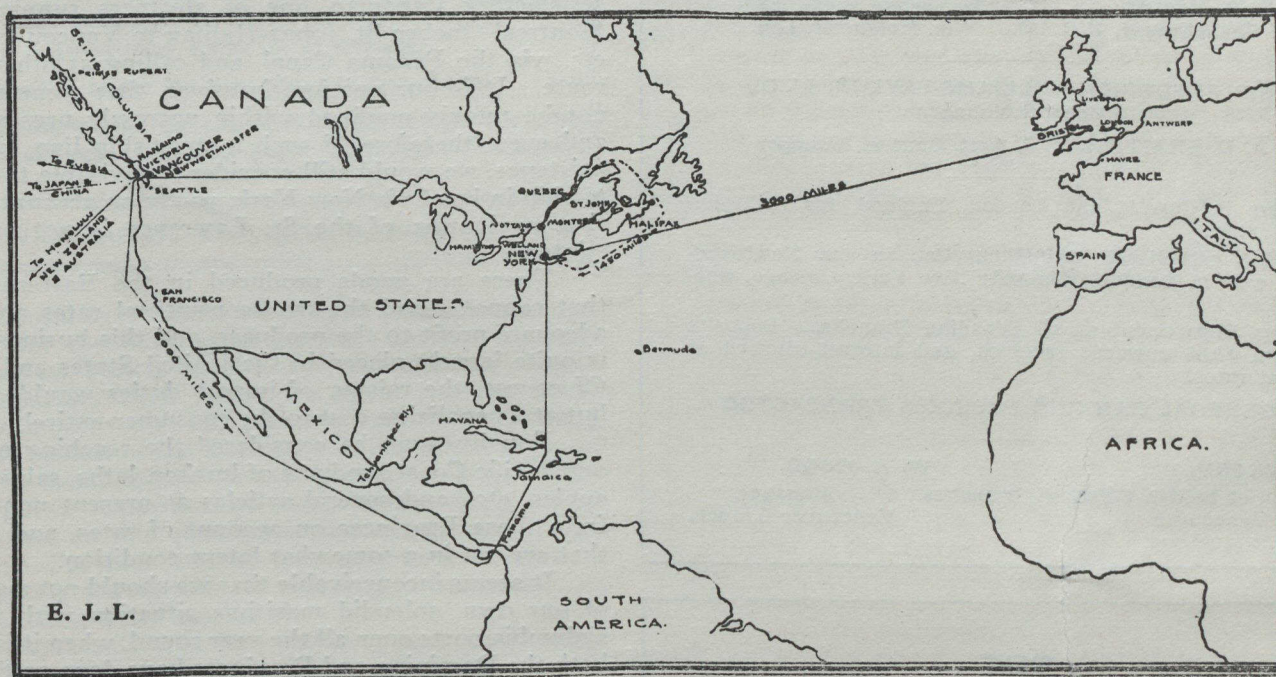
Placing a Canadian Customs Official at New York Would Permit Eastern Canadian Goods to Come in Bond by Water to British Columbia, and Permit Our Goods Being Distributed in That Territory by the Same Route, to the Mutual Profit of Both.

The Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster Boards of Trade have been recommending, during the past two years, the establishment of a Canadian Customs Office at New York, so that British Columbian products may be shipped by ocean to New York, thence in bond by rail (or water) to Eastern Canadian points; and equally that the

due allowances for the fact that they were not in position to decide what the actual findings of their association would be.

Recently the Vancouver Board of Trade have addressed the Toronto Board of Trade, soliciting their active co-operation in urging the Government to grant their request, and expressing the well supported belief that the result would be mutually beneficial.

Let us now briefly consider the arguments for and against our proposal as we understand them. We think they can be outlined as follows, giving the opposition's arguments first:—



Products of Eastern Canada may have the opportunity of reaching British Columbia by the use of the same route.

Any question as to the advisability of adopting so simple an expedient for economically linking together the East and West of so vast a Continent, we think, should be quickly resolved in its favour, when the map of North America is examined in particular reference to the Panama Canal route.

But large opposition has developed, some of it governmental at Ottawa, but most of it emanating from the Canadian railroads. The important assistance of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has been invoked by our Boards of Trade. This association is Canada-wide, but bulks most largely, as may be well understood, in the Eastern Provinces, to which locality we on the Pacific Coast instinctively look for our buying market quite as much as for the disposal of most of our products.

It has been felt by us for some time that this very important body has not rallied to our support in a wholehearted manner. We have just been favoured with a visit of several days by Mr. S. R. Pearson and Mr. J. E. Walsh, vice-president and traffic official, respectively, of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. The committees of the Boards of Trade of Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster have had two important sessions with these gentlemen, besides the opportunity of individual conference. Due recognition of the uniform courtesy and attention extended to us by these gentlemen is gladly given, and also the fact that they state the matter will be very carefully considered by their association, which, we are given to understand, is generally in favour of the bonding privilege desired. It is most evident, however, that united aggressively active work by our local boards is most essential, as the statements of our Eastern guests, to our regrets, seemed lacking in indicating any real shoulder-to-shoulder support, even making

(1) Transportation will be largely diverted from the Canadian railways all rail, Coast to Coast route, to shipping lines not owned in Canada, there being no Canadian steamship line in existence at present or likely to be established during the war, at least, covering the Coast to Coast route.

(2) Rail business is dull and inadequate for the railroads already in operation in Canada; hence why seek to divert any of the traffic they now enjoy.

(3) The Dominion Government has spent immense sums in connection with the building of transcontinental railroads, and in at least two instances the Government feels itself to be practically the chief responsible owner; therefore it feels it to be its duty to itself to protect these interests.

It is unnecessary for us to answer these arguments in seriatim, so we will do so collectively.

In the first place we do not ask from the Canadian railroads what they do not freely enjoy in the United States; in other words, by virtue of U. S. Customs officials being stationed at various Canadian ports, the C. P. R. and its competing Canadian railways are enabled to haul American goods in bond from various American ports over Canadian rail and lake lines, for hundreds and thousands of miles, to other American ports. This is a very valuable privilege, and we rejoice that our lines enjoy it. The right is resented by American railroads, and we cannot imagine that the U. S. authorities would have granted it and kept it in force for all these years if on the broad ground of national business policy it was not considered wise.

In the particular matter at issue, we are not asking our railway lines to give a quid pro quo to their American competitors, nor do we seek to pit our railways against theirs. We believe we are dealing with factors, unfortunately now