

TRADE

EXCHANGE BEGINNING TO CRACK.

The adverse rate of exchange set up by the United States against Canadian purchasers is beginning to crack, according to information received by Canadian importers. It is said that business conditions are so poor in the eastern states, that manufacturers and merchants there are beginning to look anxiously at their falling export trade, and in order to boost it will accept Canadian funds. If as is hoped, the movement becomes at all general, it presages a fall in the cost of living, for business men here point out that this means a 10 per cent drop in prices of imported goods, and Canadian manufacturers and producers, to meet it, would have to reduce their prices too.

EXPORT TRADE FALLS OFF.

Figures issued from the Department of Customs show an increase in the grand total of Canadian trade for the first half of the fiscal year amounting to \$220,230,040 as compared with the same period a year ago. In a six-month period of the present year, which ended on the 30th of September last, the grand total of Canadian trade was \$1,274,878,502. During the first half of the 1919 fiscal year, the grand total was \$1,054,648,462. Goods were imported into Canada during the six months ending September 30, to the total value of \$713,012,191. When this total is compared with the figures for the same period last year, an increase of \$261,251,781 for the present year is shown. The imports for the first six months of the last fiscal year amounted to only \$451,760,410.

Although Canada increased her imports, and the value of commodities brought into this country is much greater than it was during the six months of the last fiscal year, this cannot be said for the exports. The statement shows that the value of domestic merchandise exported from this country during the six months period in 1920 was \$30,662,923 less than during the same period in 1919. The total value of domestic exports during the six months of 1920 was \$548,780,172 while in 1919 it was \$579,443,075.

INQUIRY FOR PLYWOOD BOXES.

With reference to an inquiry from Shanghai, China, for 50,000 plywood boxes for the shipping of tea and rubber, Mr. J. W. Ross, Canadian Trade Commission at Shanghai, writes:—

"A very large demand exists in China, the Straits Settlements, Java, Ceylon and India for boxes in which to ship away the various export products of those countries principally tea and rubber. The boxes of which the accompanying photograph is an accurate illustration, are made of laminated or ply wood (3 ply), the sizes are 19-inch by 19-inch by 24-inch, and thus measure 5 cubic feet, and are made to contain 200 pounds of sheet rubber, or 160 pounds of crepe rubber. Such boxes are now being made locally in Java, and are furnished complete with sheet iron corners, as seen loosely placed upon the corners of the box in the photograph. Their cost in guilders 3.25 each, or about \$1.25 United States currency. I have received an inquiry from one firm for 50,000 of these boxes, but the demand from the Straits Settlements, the Malay States, Java and Sumatra will greatly exceed this number; it is estimated that 4,000,000 of these cases will be required in 1920 in which to ship the season's output. The employment of laminated or ply wood for packing cases for the shipment of certain products is yearly becoming greater for it possesses certain advantages over the common type of packing cases."

SHIPPING

SERVICE TO THE FAR EAST.

The management of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine has made an agreement with the British India Steam Navigation Company for a joint service to India and the Far East, from the St. Lawrence route in summer and the Maritime Provinces during the winter, and has arranged for the first sailing. The route will be from the St. Lawrence via the Atlantic and Mediterranean to Kurrachee and Calcutta, thence to Java and the Straits Settlements.

LATE SAILINGS LIMITED.

Though the season of navigation in the St. Lawrence is very promising for another three months at least, as far as the port of Quebec is concerned, the movement of ocean shipping is already limited. The Canadian Pacific Ocean Services will have only five passenger sailings from Quebec to Liverpool, commencing today, when the steamer Victorian will sail. The Robert Reford Company, Ltd., will have four or five sailings of steamers which will stop at Quebec to take on part cargo of lumber, and the Manchester Line will have several more sailings.

NEW CANAL TO ST. JOHNS.

Mr. C. H. Catelli, chairman of the transportation committee of the Chambre de Commerce, Montreal presented a report to the Chambre endorsing the plan for a canal between Montreal and St. Johns, Quebec. This canal would reduce the water route between the two cities by eighty-eight miles and would open a more direct trade road between Montreal and New York. It was stated that the canal would be built by private enterprise. No government or other subsidies would be asked for. Part of the scheme is to generate electricity, retailing it to municipalities on the course of the canal.

R. M. S. P. WANTS INCREASED RATES.

The future of the Royal Mail Steamship Packet Line was considered at a meeting of the West India shippers in St. John, N.B., and the Board of Trade Council. It was pointed out that the company, which is controlled in England, is losing money at present, and as the local shippers have no desire that it should go out of business, they are endeavoring to assist it. It was decided to communicate with the Halifax Board of Trade and ask its co-operation, and later take the situation up with the Federal Government. In a word, the Royal Mail Steamship Packet Line desires an increase in freight rates, but as the Government is operating a West Indian service also, it is necessary to consult Ottawa.

U. S. SHIPBUILDING.

Of the total number of building ways in American shipyards capable of producing steel vessels, 52 per cent. are now idle. This reflects the actual condition of American shipbuilding today, and it is not surprising when the enormous expansion that the industry enjoyed during the war period is considered. A contraction was inevitable, and the immediate outlook is that a still greater percentage of the ways will become idle as fewer orders are being placed with the yards. There are now 627 ways in 98 American shipyards which are capable of turning out steel ships. The growth of the industry after the United States entry into the war is apparent when it is known that in the spring of 1917 only 239 building berths existed. A careful survey of the industry made by the New York Journal of Commerce on October 1st, revealed the fact that of the present 627 ways 226 were idle, and 101 were to be dismantled.

LABOR

WESTERN MINES RUNNING.

Strikes in all mines along the Crow's Nest branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which had developed as a result of One Big Union agitation, have been settled and practically a hundred per cent. of the crews are at work at Fernie, Michel and Coalhurst, which were the three main camps affected.

BELGIAN WORKERS URGE SOCIALIZATION.

The Belgian Trades' Union Congress have unanimously passed a resolution urging the Socialization of successive stages of various industries. The commencement of the socialization would be with the railways, shipping concerns, coal mines, assurance companies, credit and banking institutions and light, power organizations.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

Halifax shipworkers and caulkers are enquiring into the objects and merits of the Canadian Federation of Labor. Information has been forwarded to them by D. Giroux, secretary here of the Federation, and he expects to go to Halifax shortly with the object of affiliating certain Halifax unions. He has also been asked to go to Quebec for a similar purpose.

SUGAR WORKERS' HARDSHIPS.

Intimating that the whole sugar situation was largely brought on by a "sugar ring," and that the refinery workers were paying price of the "greed and market manipulations of the sugar barons," Tom Moore, president of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress, in a statement told of the hardships being suffered by the workers following the abrupt shutting down of the industry and emphatically declared that it was just such situations that created revolt in the minds of honest toilers.

EXPRESS MEN WANT RAISE.

M. J. Dundas, General Chairman of the Express Employees of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, states that the Canadian Express Company has been served with a notice by the employees asking for an increased rate in the present schedule of wages. It is thought that the express employees will ask the same proportional raise as the railway men received. The notice was served last month upon the company, but the president, John Pulan is now away at the Pacific Coast and will not be back for some time.

EMPLOYMENT BUREAU STATISTICS.

The Employment Service of the Department of Labour reports that returns from the Dominion and Provincial offices of the Employment Service of Canada for the week ended October 2, show an increase in placements as compared with the returns for the preceding week. These offices reported that they had made 9,394 references to regular positions, and that 8,229 placements were effected. This is an increase of 159 as compared with the returns for the previous week when 8,070 placements were reported.

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES WAGES.

The Municipal Employees' Union will in a few days present to the Administrative Commission its claim for higher wages, says Arthur Bouchard, president of the organization. Information from various departments has been collected, which will be used in supporting the request for consideration. Mr. Bouchard, who is also president of the Federal Workers' Union of Policemen, declares that it is merely the low wages paid that makes it difficult to fill the vacancies in the Montreal police force.