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WHAT THE CEMENT INVESTOR MUST CONSIDER.

Perhaps the most interesting document anticipated in Canadian financial circles is the prospectus of the Canada Cement Company, a combine of many of the Dominion's cement companies. The information afforded by the promoters up to the present has been somewhat meagre. The request of the Monetary Times for definite data has been met by a statement that there was "nothing further to add to what has already appeared in the daily press." As a basis, therefore, must be taken the data printed in that medium.

A leading official of the combine has stated that its annual output will be 4,500,000 barrels. The total production of cement in 1908 was 3,495,961 barrels. The amount sold in that year was 2,665,289 barrels, or 829,672 barrels less than the amount manufactured. In addition, 469,049 barrels were imported into Canada, making the total consumption 3,134,338, still considerably short of the actual manufactures. The Canada Cement Company therefore propose to commence with an annual output which, on the 1908 figures, is 365,662 barrels in excess of the total consumption of cement in Canada for that year. The merger includes only about nine of the Canadian cement companies, several of the large mills not being merged into the combine. Nine companies, then, propose to manufacture more cement than all Canadian companies manufactured in 1908, in which year the output was largely in excess of the sales.

There is good reason to believe that the way is being well paved for the introduction of either the stock or bonds of the Canada Cement Company in London. An English contemporary observes that "the position with regard to the States is sufficiently secure, as with the existing duty it is quite impossible for the Americans to send in their cement product (to Canada) at a profit." As a matter of fact, one of the chief causes of the amalgamation was the keen competition with Canadian companies by those of the United States. It is not quite impossible, but has proved to be easily possible for the "Americans" if not actually to send in their products at a profit, to manufacture them in Canada and sell at a profit. Had it not been for that factor, the Canadian companies would probably have agreed many months ago on the question of price, thus eliminating what had become keen and unprofitable competition. If the Lehigh Portland Cement Company, a United States firm with a branch at Belleville, Ont., will agree to enter the combine, the imports feature will not loom up so seriously. Then competition will still be in evidence in the shape of another, though smaller, cement combine, which is applying for a charter.

But even so, the United States cement mills are looking for a market for their surplus output. A cement manufacturer across the border says that a surplus of ten million barrels is in the hands of United States manufacturers, without counting the large stocks purchased by the consuming interests at low prices now in storehouses and builders' yards. He states also that the consumption of cement in the neighboring republic to-day is not over sixty per cent. of the manufacturing capacity. A well-defined movement is said to be under way there to eliminate a large number of the small manufacturers. The final result will probably be a big combination. It must certainly be big and absolutely