

The Journal of Commerce

MONTREAL, CANADA

VOL. XLVIII, No. 18

GARDENVALE, P. Que., Tuesday, May, 4, 1920.

Price 10 CENTS

The Journal of Commerce

Devoted to

CANADIAN INDUSTRY, COMMERCE
AND FINANCE

Published every Tuesday morning by the
Journal of Commerce Publishing
Company, Limited.

Editorial and Advertising Offices, Room 205,
Drummond Building, St. Catherine and Peel
Streets, Montreal. Telephone: Uptown 7773.
Toronto Office: 1402 C.P.R. Bldg., Toronto. Tele-
phone: Adelaide 3310.

Vancouver Office: 507 Board of Trade Bldg., Van-
couver.

Printed at the Garden City Press, Ste. Anne de
Bellevue, Que. Telephone: 165 St. Anne's.

HON. W. S. FIELDING,
President and Editor-in-Chief.

B. K. SANDWELL,
Managing Editor.

Subscription price, \$3.00 a year
Advertising rates on application.

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Senator Underwood's Threat

MR. UNDERWOOD, of Alabama, was for some years a very prominent member of the United States House of Representatives, and in that capacity was particularly identified with the tariff policy of the Democratic party. He passed from the House to the Senate, where also he has taken a foremost place. Recently he disputed with Mr. Hitchcock, of Nebraska, the Democratic leadership in the Senate, and the Nebraskan retired, leaving the Alabama Senator to be chosen to the party leadership in that branch of Congress. What Mr. Underwood says in any political matter is, therefore, entitled to much consideration.

Some weeks ago, at a moment when some irritation had been caused by a temporary delay in the shipment of newsprint paper from a Canadian mill having contracts with some United States publishers, Mr. Underwood was moved to get a resolution through the United States Senate requesting the appointment of a commission to inquire into the alleged embargo, to visit Canada and enter into negotiations for a removal of it, and, in event of failure, to advise as to what could be done to meet the situation. Although veiled with mild words, the Underwood resolution was generally interpreted to mean a threat of American retaliation if Canada declined to do whatever her neighbors might be pleased to ask respecting the supplies of wood, pulp and paper. The resolution was sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence. As nothing more was heard about it for some weeks, the impression was formed that better counsels had prevailed and that the resolution had been allowed to drop. This, however, has proved to be an erroneous impression. The resolution was called up the other day in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Senator Underwood appeared before the committee in a very militant spirit. Affirming that he had always been well disposed toward Canada, and that he was practically responsible for effecting the free admission of newsprint paper, Mr. Underwood, in very strong words, threatened Canada with all sorts of retaliation if his views concerning supplies of wood and pulp and paper from Canada were not complied with.

It is much to be regretted that a public man of Mr. Underwood's standing and influence has adopted such an entirely unjustifiable attitude. When he moved his resolution in the Senate some weeks ago he assumed the existence of an embargo where there was none. The Canadian official who had supervision of the paper industry had made a regulation requiring that a certain proportion of the product of a mill should be set apart for Canadian needs, and the remainder might be exported. There was nothing unreasonable in that. For a few days there was a misunderstanding respecting the operation of this regulation, but this was speedily cleared up and the shipments to the United States have since been made. There is no embargo on shipments of either wood or paper from Canada to the States. Often strong efforts have been made in Canada to prohibit the export of pulpwood. Arguments having much weight were advanced in support of such a policy; but the Canadian Government never yielded to the request. So far as the Dominion Government and Parliament are concerned there is no embargo on the shipment of such materials to the States. Whatever restrictions there are have been applied by the Provinces, which, within certain limits, are free to make their own laws, just as the States Legislatures are free to do so across the border. It is not in the power of these Provincial Governments to forbid the export of pulpwood, or pulp, or paper. As a matter of fact considerable quantities of wood grown on private lands, or pulp produced from such wood, are shipped to the States. Only a Dominion law could prevent this, and no such Dominion law has been passed.

What has been done by the Provincial Governments in relation to this matter is more in the capacity of landlords than as legislators. The Provincial Governments hold large areas of land which they lease to parties who wish to use them. The landlord has the right to determine the terms and conditions under which he will lease his property. In this case the landlord says he does not wish to lease his property except on the condition that the logs cut on it shall be manufactured in Canada. How far this is a wise policy may be a question for consideration within the Province. But