

COMMERCE BOARD READY FOR WORK

Chairman States that Ordinary Judicial Procedure Will Not be Observed

THE Canadian Board of Commerce has now been constituted and will shortly be available for such complaints as may be laid before it. It will act under the Combines and Fair Prices Act, and is given power to institute investigations on its own motion or at the request of the responsible parties who bring subjects to its notice. The chairman states that the procedure will be of an informal character. Preliminary investigations of any complaint will, of course, be made before the board moves to the place in question. On August 14th, after holding its first session in Ottawa, the board issued a statement reading in part as follows:—

"All the records made under the previously prevailing investigation system will be secured and taken over by the board, and, in addition, as soon as the board can make the arrangements, and before the lapse of many weeks, the full board will, in joint session, visit all the principal cities of Canada and conduct therein open courts of enquiry into cost and price conditions and the means of remedying these conditions. Only such delay will ensue before the board sets out as is imperatively necessary in order to enable intelligent enquiry. In the meantime, the board is organizing its personnel and preparing its itinerary.

"When the intended sittings are held, they will be open to all who wish to complain or testify, or defend allegations made. No formality whatever, nor any notice will be required. Afterward, from the information on hand and to be gained while on its itinerary the board will take such action as to it should seem proper by way of general remedy. Special remedies will be applied as the occasion for the application arises."

Statutory Powers

Provision is made in Section 23 of the Combines and Fair Prices Act that all proceedings instituted or had under order-in-council P.C. 3,069 of the 11th day of December, 1918, but not fully concluded shall continue, and may continue under this part of this act, whether the board (Board of Commerce) be substituted for the minister of labor, as fully and effectually as if said order-in-council continued in force, notwithstanding the decision thereof. Section 19 of the act constituting the board gives the board power, by notice in writing under the hand of its secretary, to "require any person who operates, controls or manages any cold-storage plant, packing house, cannery, factory, mine, warehouse, or other premises in which or in any part of which any necessary of life is prepared, manufactured, produced, or held by such person for himself or for another, or who in any manner deals in any necessary of life, to make and render unto such board or the Dominion Statistician, within a time set in such notice or from time to time, and such person shall make and render unto such board or statistician, precisely as required, a written return under oath and affirmation."

The sub-sections set forth in detail that the person notified shall show the species and amount of any necessary of life held at any indicated time or times; the time when any or all of such necessary of life was prepared, manufactured, produced, acquired or taken into possession; cost of such, including all charges and expenses affecting same; price at which it has been sold, or, if unsold, the price for which it is held, and other such information as the board may require, including a full disclosure of all contracts or agreements affecting the prices of necessities of life or the time for which they are to be held, or limiting the quantity which should be sold to any one buyer or combination of buyers, or within any limited district. It is further provided that if the board's order is ignored by any person dealing in or holding necessities of life, and a return is not made within the given time, the board may appoint examiners and investigate the business and examine all papers, books, premises and records of the person failing to make returns, and the same course may be followed if the returns made in the judgment of the board justify such action. The act also provides that no one may impede the board or its examiners, and every person

required to give evidence touching any case before the board shall attend and give evidence whenever so required.

The effect of the order made on the 14th inst. is that the office of Cost of Living Commissioner being now abolished, the system of investigation established by Mr. O'Connor in 1916, and continued by him until his resignation two years later, is fully restored and will be augmented in its scope. So far as possible, the former staff will be gathered together under the jurisdiction of the board.

ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED

Total premium income of this company, for the year 1918, was \$23,451,445 and interest derived from investments, \$4,665,410, making a total of \$28,116,855. Total assets at the end of the year were \$134,581,915. Of this total \$88,576,938 represents life assurance and annuity funds and \$11,128,535 fire insurance funds. The paid-up capital is \$5,000,000 and the company does fire, life, marine, casualty and miscellaneous business. There is a balance of \$4,677,658 in the profit and loss account. These figures are translated from sterling at the rate of \$5 to the pound. The Canadian branch is managed by Mr. T. D. Belfield, Montreal.

OBITUARIES

MR. LOUIS R. GRIMSHAW, secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Crocker-Wheeler Co., Ltd., St. Catharines, Ont., died recently.

MR. DUDLEY L. HILL, late chief accountant of the Dominion Bank, head office, Toronto, died last week at Cedar Island, Orillia, Ont. He had been chief accountant since 1887, leaving that position last December on account of failing health.

MR. JOHN R. FOLSETTER, of Ayr, Ont., died last week. He was manager for the past ten years of the local branch of the Standard Reliance Mortgage Corp., in which he was a heavy stockholder and bondholder.

ONTARIO HYDRO WANTS TO BE REIMBURSED

Formal application has been made to the Minister of Finance by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, asking that the Dominion government reimburse it approximately \$5,000,000 for the extraordinary war expenditures incurred on unavoidable extensions due to the necessity of providing power on a large scale for the manufacture of munitions and other materials for war purposes in order to meet the demands made by the manufacturers and the power controller. In support of this application the commission has forwarded to Sir Henry Drayton a file containing the voluminous correspondence and orders covering the period when the extensions were made. It is pointed out by the commission that the power controller, under whose orders much of this work had to be undertaken to meet the needs of the munitions manufacturers, had authority only over Ontario. This control was exercised, it is claimed, almost solely over the Hydro-Electric Commission. In such cases as private companies ordered to make extensions, it is said by Sir Adam Beck that they were either reimbursed by the Imperial Munitions Board or the manufacturers whom they supplied.

In making this application to the Dominion government the commission states its belief that the Dominion government will recognize that the financial burden of the war should be borne by the people of the Dominion as a whole, and not by one province or group of municipalities who happened to be in the fortunate position, owing to the existence of cheap hydro-electric power, of contributing so largely to the defence of the Empire by the manufacture of these munitions.