

MONTREAL SECTION

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GEORGIAN BAY CANAL.

Proposition of Sir Robert Perks before Canadian Government—Board of Trade Resolutions—Banker's Trial.

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"A proposition is being made to the Canadian Government, which, if accepted, will bring about the commencement of work on the Georgian Bay Canal this spring," said Sir Robert Perks, Bart., M.P., who passed through Montreal, this week, on his way to Ottawa. Sir Robert, associated with Sir Alexander Henderson, Mr. C. H. Walker and a number of other prominent Englishmen, is at the head of the company organized for the purpose of constructing the Georgian Bay Canal. Continuing, he said: "We are prepared to finance the undertaking without delay, providing the Canadian Government will guarantee interest at the rate of 3 per cent. on the bonds and an additional half per cent. to provide for the sinking fund. The company to carry out the work would be a Canadian corporation and the Government would have representation on the board. The profits would be equally divided by the Government with the company. If an agreement is made, Canada will have the canal as soon as it is possible to build it. Work might be carried on first between Georgian Bay and North Bay, or this part of the canal might be carried out simultaneously with the section between North Bay and Montreal. The Government guarantee might not cost it anything at all, as the tolls from the traffic which would immediately follow would be sufficient to provide interest charges from the outset. I doubt if this would be the case, though I feel every confidence in the earning power of the enterprise."

Government Could Take Over Canal.

In a reply to a question as to whether the present harbour or a new one to be constructed at Back River, on the north shore of the Island of Montreal, would be used as the eastern terminal, Sir Robert said he thought Back River would be the choice. "It would be cheaper to build there," said he, "besides the additional advantage of having an alternate route." The present route from the Ottawa River, past St. Anns, to Montreal, could be made available by the construction of a new lock at St. Anns.

The estimates placed the cost of the canal over one hundred million. By the arrangement now being proposed at Ottawa, the tolls would be subject to the approval of Government, and the Government would also have the option of taking over the canal at one week's notice upon returning to the company the amount of money expended on the canal. Montreal is deeply interested in the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal, the grain trade being of the greatest importance to the success of the port.

Mr. F. B. Mathys, signs a statement issued on behalf of the Committee of the Dominion Cotton Company's shareholders, which reads in part, as follows: "On the contrary, the minority shareholders of the Dominion Cotton Mills Company have come to an agreement amongst themselves to pool their interests in said concern for a number of years, in order to pursue more vigorously their present legal issues, and to take such other steps and legal proceedings as necessary to further protect their interests."

The Yorkshire Insurance Company has purchased from Messrs. Leslie, Gault and others, Nos. 136-138 St. James Street, for the sum of \$101,000.

Mr. Griffith, who is said to be the official assayer of the Bank of England, reached Montreal recently by the s.s. "Corsican," and proceeded to Cobalt in company with an engineer who represents large interests. Some of the mining interests are wondering what the significance, if any, of the visit may be.

Board Passes Free Trade Resolution.

Much talk is being heard in Board of Trade circles regarding the resolution passed by that body, last week, for presentation at the Seventh Annual Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, to be held at Sydney, Australia, in September next. At Wednesday's meeting of the Council of the Board of Trade it was decided to call another meeting to consider the resolution, and if advisable, rescind it. The resolution in question, though proposed by Robert Meighen, an avowed protectionist, and seconded by Alex. McFee, who would probably be loath to declare himself a free trader, contained sentiments which protectionists find most objectionable. The clause referred to reads as follows: "Therefore resolved, that on imports and exports of produce and merchandise the component parts of the British Empire should protect themselves against the producers of foreign countries, and that with this end in view the Governments of Great Britain and of the Colonies should grant to one another a substantial preference in duties, and that in so far as their respective revenues will permit, the principle of free trade within the Empire shall prevail." Naturally, the resolution met much opposition, but it so happened that the majority of those present at the meeting favored it. Unfortunately for the high protectionists, their chiefs were absent from the meeting. No sooner had the word gone forth that a resolution favoring a measure of free trade had been adopted than there was an uproar among those whose interests were threatened by the sentiment expressed, and a movement was put on foot for the purpose of calling another meeting to rescind the objectionable resolution. This movement resulted in the decision of the council to call another meeting for Tuesday next, when, it is expected a lively fight will develop. Mr. Alex. McFee, speaking to the Monetary Times, said: "The resolution was passed at a meeting of the Board of Trade and it would be a most unusual thing to call a meeting to rescind it. As a matter of fact, if such a meeting is called there is a possibility that the opponents of the resolution will be confronted with a motion which will be even less to their liking, for many of the members were disappointed that a resolution favoring absolute free trade within the Empire had not been proposed instead of one in which we should tax one another for revenue purposes." It is very doubtful if the members of the Board of Trade would really favor anything very sweeping in the nature of free trade, although not a few very prominent members are strong free traders. The feeling seems to be gaining ground here that the Imperialistic idea may eventually demand that the different parts of the Empire shall trade freely between each other, so that those who are not receiving special benefits from the present system would be very apt to think kindly of free trade within the Empire. After Mr. Meighen's resolution had been carried, last week, he sailed for England, never suspecting that his work would be undone by a further meeting.

Bank President's Trial.

The Hon. P. H. Roy, formerly President of the Banque de St. Jean, whose trial began at St. Johns, Que., this week, is fighting every step of the way. His counsel, Mr. A. D. Girard, argued that the presence of Crown Prosecutor Hibbard, in the room where the Grand Jury deliberated, was

(Continued on Page 2051.)