

Canada's Great Import Trade

British and U.S.A. Rivalry in this Imperial Market.

The British Export Gazette's View.

The latest reports from Canada indicate that the tendency which set in early in 1920, involving steady reduction in the volume of exports and an equally marked increase in that of imports, has in no way been checked.

The main facts regarding Canada's industrial expansion and export trade were dealt with in a recent article in "The British Export Gazette", and here we propose only to deal with certain aspects of the import trade, in which tendencies are asserting themselves which cannot be ignored. For example, in the competition between Great Britain and the U.S.A. for Canada's trade, the overwhelming preponderance of the latter is slowly being reduced, while Great Britain's interest in the market is steadily increasing. That is a fact of which we believe very few are aware, and yet it is plainly revealed when the Dominion's trade returns for the last few years are intelligently studied. In the 12 months ended August, 1918, America's share in the trade equalled 82.2 p. c. of the total imports; during the following 12 months it sank to 79.3 p. c.; and in the period ended August last to 69.8 p. c., altogether a drop of 12.4 p. c. in the three years. During the same period Great Britain's interest in the market rose from 7.8 p. c. to 8.7 p. c., and then to 15.9 p. c., a total advance of 8.1 p. c.

The U.S.A. has, of course, the very great advantage of close proximity to the market, to which may be added the similarity of climate, soil, products and general conditions of living in the two countries. There can be no wonder, therefore, that an increasing amount of American capital is being invested in the Dominion with a view to still further developments. It is, however, equally true — as Mr. Stanley M. Machin, President of the London Chamber of Commerce of the Imperial Council of Commerce, stated recently on his return from the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire at Toronto — that there is no doubt of the loyalty and affection which exist between Canada and the Mother Country. This is emphasised by the efforts, official and semi-official, which have been made on behalf of the Dominion to get into closer business relations with the United Kingdom, not merely for the purpose of finding a bigger market in England for Canadian products and manufactures, but also for the absorption of a larger proportion of British commodities by the Dominion, a consummation which, as shown by the figures quoted in the preceding paragraph, is slowly being realised.

The whole responsibility for bringing about closer commercial relations between Great Britain and Canada must not, however, rest upon the latter. A still greater obligation rests

upon statesmen and commercial men of the United Kingdom. H. M. Trade Commissioners, for example, must receive all the encouragement and support for which they are entitled to look, Canadian efforts in the direction of the Motherland must be reciprocated to the full, and, what Canadians expect most of all, British manufacturers must take a much keener interest in the market, by personal visits, by assiduous study of requirements, by the appointment of agents there instead of utilising the services of those in New York, and in a hundred other ways.

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