

The application of the Long Acre Company has been referred back to the Commission for consideration and action within the limits of its authority. This decision is, as stated, unusually interesting in view of the powers of the Quebec Public Utilities Commission, which include the right, if necessary, of taking full possession of the property and books of a company during the Commission's investigation.

### "WIRELESS" STOCKS ARE SPECULATIVE.

Despite the large amount of new securities for absorption by the investor, investment waste still continues in the large patronage given to highly speculative and stock jobbing propositions. If it were possible to divert the great amount of cash applied to bad stocks which will never yield returns, legitimate securities undoubtedly would benefit considerably. The Monetary Times continues to receive numerous letters from readers who have been approached by the seller of wireless telephone and telegraph stocks. In many cases they are dubious about dabbling. In most instances they have purchased at high prices, have heard little or nothing about their company and are beginning to wonder whether wireless telegraphy will ever mean more butter for the investor's bread.

The arrival in Canada of Mr. Marconi, the famous inventor, and president of the Marconi Wireless Company, again draws attention to the stocks of wireless companies as investments. He states that his system has been re-established on an entirely new and improved basis. The other evening one thousand words, commercial messages, were sent from Montreal to the station in Ireland without a mishap. Marconi has contributed much to the science of wireless telegraphy. Nobody denies him the honor due for the scientific chapters he has contributed to history. As The Monetary Times has previously pointed out, the first consideration is the fact that many of the most clever inventions have failed to prove a commercial success. The second is that the inventor is frequently too much engrossed with his scientific researches to attend to the financial side. This often gives an opportunity for the financial fakir to step in where inventive genius fears to tread. The third is that in many cases the monetary support of the public is solicited before reasonable prospects of return to the investor are in sight. The stock seller is the medium between the company and the individual. His work is to dispose of his wares. He does this often with the aid of considerable imagination. Later, he disappears and the company and the investor are left alone. Then, what the stock salesman said counts little.

Most of the wireless telephone and telegraph companies are capitalized at absurd figures. One defence of large capitalization is that the authorized capital is small compared with that of the established telegraph and telephone companies. Nothing is said of the enormous staff expenses and the cost of equipment maintenance of the latter corporations. The prices of many of the wireless stocks are advanced periodically. While it is easy to purchase at continually higher figures, it is practically impossible to sell. Few of the stocks are listed on the exchanges, this channel of disposal, therefore, being barred. If it were possible it would be an interesting experiment for the army of Canadian holders of wireless stocks to endeavor to sell their shares. A table compiled from their experience and showing the prices paid and later realized for wireless securities would probably prove highly admonitory.

Wireless telegraph stocks cannot be regarded as an investment. At the present time, they are a speculation and nothing more. The Marconi Companies have made perhaps more scientific progress than any of the others. Even their securities can be classed only as a speculative proposition. A large number of industrial companies have yet to pay dividends before wireless telegraph companies do so. Those who desire to place their money in a speculative proposition seeking to market a good invention and make of it a widely utilized

commercial success, will find wireless stocks offer them the opportunity. As to dividend returns, the road is long and probably circuitous.

### MONTREAL'S RESOLUTION.

The Montreal Board of Trade is fighting shy of commercial reciprocity with the United States. Keen in their belief, they have drafted a resolution for Sir Wilfrid Laurier's perusal. It says that the time is not opportune for a reciprocal treaty with our neighbors. The two following extracts from the resolution seem to contain the chief fears of Montreal's business parliament—

"That, while being in favor of Canada maintaining the most friendly relations with the United States, the council considers that the very causes that commend a reciprocity treaty to its people, that is, access to our undeveloped natural resources and an extended market for their manufactured products, are, from our point of view, those for which Canadians stand to lose most, and that this country cannot afford to endanger its growing manufacturing industries or to have its natural resources exploited for the benefit of the United States.

"That, above and beyond material points, reciprocity with the United States must inevitably tend towards a slackening of the tie that binds us to the Mother Country, and that this council takes the strongest stand against anything that would even remotely work to that end, being convinced that our every interest, either of business or sentiment, requires that Canada shall remain a part of the British Empire."

Uncle Sam, stripping his cousin of the natural resources garments, at the same time weaning him from the Motherland, is the picture which the Montreal Board of Trade has painted, with its resolution hung below. The Empire sentiment can well take care of itself. The United States is chiefly concerned with obtaining a much larger share of Canada's import trade. Any treaty which gives our neighbors the right of entry, smiling and empty-handed, and the right of egress, chuckling and with well-packed grips, may properly be examined. Friendly commercial relations are a good thing, and Canada has an excellent esteem therefor. The chief point to watch is that Canada's natural resources are not sacrificed at the altar of brotherly love and handshakes. In that thought is probably the origin of the Montreal resolution.

Parliament the other day passed an Act respecting the Guelph Junction Railway Company. One is not surprised to know that its passage was stormy and that the Act was buffeted by discussion. It seems that years ago this road was promoted by private individuals. Later the royal city of Guelph obtained a controlling interest, three or four of the original promoters and shareholders retaining their stock. Presently the railroad became busier, traffic increased and freight grew heavier. Guelph thought it would be a good thing to own the railroad. A bill was, therefore, drafted with the object of acquiring any shares in the company not standing in the name of the city. The particular shareholders did not wish to dispose of their stock to the civic authorities. The bill, which parliament passed, forced them to hand over their shares at \$400 per share. That may have been a good price; perhaps it was not. The chief consideration is the principle which allows a city, through an Act of parliament, practically to confiscate the shares of private individuals. Sir Wilfrid Laurier stated that the supreme law is the old Roman law, that is to say, the interest of the State is the supreme law of the State. That applied to a city as well as to the nation itself. Which may be true. The only reason, so far as we can see, for Guelph to squeeze out these shareholders was that the city desired to say, with pride, "We own the Guelph Junction Railway." That is a pretty poor reason.