

COMMERCE and TRANSPORTATION

TRADE WITH GERMANY.

The Objects of the German-Canadian Economic Association—Some Significant Trade Statistics.

By J. J. Blakeslee.

The writer of this article, the English advisor of the German-Canadian Economic Association, is now in Canada, together with Dr. E. J. Neisser, the general secretary. The intention of these gentlemen is to make an extensive tour through Canada, and to inform themselves by personal inquiry and inspection of the country's resources and development, as well as to seek to come into touch with those who may be in sympathy with the objects of the Association.—Ed. M. T.

In pleasing contrast to the war-like views attributed to Germany by certain political journalists, are the efforts that are being made by German commercial interests to foster the arts of peace, and to increase the trade between Canada and Germany. For some time past isolated attempts had been made in that country to induce the Government to enter into negotiations with Canada, for the purpose of bringing about a commercial treaty, but they were unsuccessful, even as certain sporadic efforts made by interested parties here have failed to accomplish anything.

About a year ago a number of representative men from the various branches of German industry determined to see if an organized effort might not be more fruitful of results. This effort was to be in itself not political but only preparatory to such political steps as those interested in the respective countries might subsequently see fit to take. Under these circumstances the German-Canadian Economic Association was formed, on the membership roll of which the names of a large number of prominent merchants as well as of the representatives of the most important transportation companies and of large banking institutions are to be found.

Work of the German-Canadian Association.

The work of the Association, it has been said, was to be preparatory. That is, in the first place an effort was to be made to show Canadians what opportunities Germany could offer as a market for their products, as well as to make the Germans themselves better acquainted with Canada, with her resources, her development, in fine with her present commanding position and with her assured future. In the second place it was thought that the inertia which precedes and renders difficult a first step might thus be overcome, and opportunity be rendered easier for those on the Canadian side, who are interested in an increased intercourse between the two countries, to express themselves accordingly.

This latter has to a certain extent been realized, and a number of encouraging letters and communications showing sympathy with its objects and efforts have been received by the Association. As to the first point above mentioned; the German trade to Canada is to be sure, in absolute amount more than three times that in the opposite direction, and according to one mode of reasoning this means that Germany has three times the interest of Canada in the commercial relations of the two countries, but this is not an accurate inference from the statistics. What place does each country hold respectively in the total export trade of the other? This is the proper question to ask. According to the figures for 1908 Canada takes from Germany only one-half of one per cent. of Germany's total exports, while the portion taken by Germany of Canada's total exports is nine-tenths of one per cent. These figures likewise show how comparatively small is the present trade between the two countries. Small in com-

parison with the total trade of each country, small, too, in comparison with the amount of their respective products and their respective needs.

Some Interesting Trade Statistics.

But the comparative value of the present day trade of each country with the other is by no means a gauge for measuring the importance of the matter. Rather should we ask to what amount may and can that trade be brought. They build neither wisely nor well who plan solely for the immediate present, and as Canada has only about 5 per cent. of her tillable domain under cultivation the point to consider is not, whether Canada can now sell all that she produces, but that soon she will be able to produce all that she can sell. On which account the more markets that are open to her the better for her trade. Germany is the greatest wheat importing country in the world, with the exception of Great Britain. In 1908 Germany imported more than 90 millions bushels of wheat of which she took from Canada less than three hundred thousand. Germany is importing over 180,000 tons of fresh apples a year, of which Canada's share for the fiscal year 1907-1908 was only 18,000 barrels, whereas in 1903-1904 it was 20,692 barrels, and in 1905-1906 it was 63,221 barrels, and it could be easily increased beyond the largest of these numbers.

Why are these things so? Is it because the German miller does not want to buy Canadian wheat? Not at all; he,—the largest buyer of wheat outside of Great Britain,—would be only too willing to get it to mix with the softer wheats; he appreciates its strength, its high percentage of gluten; he would become a competitive bidder for it, and the more bidders the better the price. Besides, he would prefer not to be so dependent upon Argentine and the United States for his supply. And the Canadian apples, are they less liked than formerly? Has the German taste changed in this respect? Not at all. The German housewife, knowing little and thinking less about the moves upon the tariff chess-board only wonders why she can no longer get the superb apples that used to be offered for sale at the shops, and must be content with sorts that place her less.

Unsettled and Abnormal Tariff Conditions.

We who know are aware that the difficulty in the cases mentioned is owing to the unsettled and abnormal tariff conditions existing at present, between the two countries. We who know are also aware that if these conditions were equitably adjusted not only would Canadian wheat and apples flow in ever increasing streams into Germany, but likewise the canned lobster of Nova Scotia and the canned salmon of British Columbia, and that her import of Canadian agricultural machinery and of whatever else she takes or could take from Canada, would feel a sympathetic impulse. More than this, the effect of such an adjustment would reach farther, and bring in its train in increase of German immigration into Canada and an influx of German capital, these to be added to the men and capital from other nations—the best imports which a young and rapidly developing country can secure. But does Germany ask anything for all this? She does. Germany is herself a protectionist country, and she does not presume to say what Canadian tariff rates should be. That is a question between the Canadian consumer and the Canadian manufacturers. Canada has to buy as well as sell. This Canada cannot help if she would. And Germany asks,—the British Preference being saved—that she may compete at least on as favorable terms as other nations for that share of Canada's trade to which she may be entitled by virtue of the excellence of her wares and her commercial position.

Canadian Trade Commissioner for Berlin.

There is a desire in Germany that ultimately a Canadian Trade Commissioner should be appointed for Berlin. These