

## World's Bunkering Conditions Reviewed

### Further Coaling Stations Called Inopportune.

A special bunkering supplement has recently been issued by "Fairplay," London. An article on "Foreign Coaling in 1917 and 1918—A Review of the World's Markets" reads in part as follows:—

"We have heard, for some time past, various comments with regard to the necessity for the establishment of further coaling stations to cope with the increased trade which may come about after the conclusion of peace. We think, however, that those who express themselves in this manner can hardly have any idea as to the extent of the facilities already existing, which are undoubtedly capable of handling a very much increased volume of trade without the slightest difficulty. We think that probably a great deal of this chit-chat arises from the talkers being mesmerized by the advertising literature of the manufacturers of mechanical appliances for the handling of coal; appliances which do undoubtedly operate with advantage in various places, more particularly in America. It must, however, be borne in mind that the conditions at no two coaling stations are identical, and it must be further recognized that in the great majority of the ports, which, owing to their geological situation, have become the great coaling stations for long voyages traffic, the absolutely smooth water which is so important where any mechanical appliances are employed is conspicuous by its absence.

"On purely commercial grounds the contemplated establishment, at the present time, of further coaling stations, particularly in view of the admitted reduction of the world's tonnage, is obviously inappropriate, seeing that for the provision of the necessary plant very large sums would be required, whereas the presently existing coaling depots which, as stated above, are more than adequate for all likely requirements, have been constructed in years when the prices of all materials were much below their present level.

#### WELSH AND DURHAM.

"Welsh and Durham Coaling.—The supplies of Welsh and Durham coal available for shipment to the coaling stations have, throughout the year been adequate, and, broadly speaking, there has not been the necessity of looking to America for any considerable quantities, which statement, however, we must qualify by the fact that, chiefly on account of greater facilities of tonnage, a certain proportion of American coal has been shipped to South American ports, and very occasional cargoes to the Atlantic Islands.

India.—It is satisfactory to be able to chronicle that during the past year the coal trade of India has maintained a position of entire sanity, although there has been, to some extent, an appreciation in values, which, however, was only to be expected. We hear also that the contract prices which are being suggested for deliveries at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, etc., for the year 1918 rest upon a very moderate scale. It is fortunate that means have been found for supplying the requirements of Bombay in their entirety, and of Madras in part, by means of direct rail shipments from the Bengal mines, thus reducing, to some extent, the demand upon the world's tonnage, and ensuring very much lower prices for bunker supplies than would otherwise have been the case.

Natal and Delagoa Bay.—The extreme pressure for coal at these stations, and particularly at Natal, continued for some time after the opening of the year 1917. Subsequently, however, the position became much easier, and steamers continued to be handled with prompt dispatch up to the time of the outbreak in May last of the unfortunate strike upon the Transvaal & Delagoa Bay Railway. This strike coincided with a somewhat increased demand for coal for steam purposes, and, although it appears to have been treated with a firm hand, the dislocation which was produced was very great. Unfortunately the port of Natal has suffered even more from the effects of the strike from Lorenzo Marquez, owing to so many steamers being transferred to the former port, with the result that the facilities provided were not sufficient to cope with the greatly increased trade.

"As we go to press we hear that the Natal Government Railway has suffered a further dislocation by reason of the recent serious floods in the colony having produced washouts on the line.

#### JAPAN AND CHINA.

Japan and China.—The price of coal in Japan has risen enormously during the last twelve months, and the recent quotation of the best lump coal, f.o.b. at the coaling ports is now in the neighborhood of 45s

per ton. There is no indication that prices will decline in the near future, indeed the contrary is more likely to be the case, owing to the continued great demands for internal consumption. Supplies for bunkers are likely to be scarce for some time, especially in the Hokkaido district, where the annual consumption of the Wanishi Iron & Steel Works is now probably not less than 300,000 tons, to which has to be added the growing consumption of other factories in Hokkaido and the mainland. There has been some talk that the Japanese Government was contemplating the restricting of the export of coal as a means of checking the great rise in price, but this report has since been denied by the authorities.

With regard to Chinese coal, the output of the mines controlled by the Kailan Mining Administration continues to increase, and supplies of bunkers can always be had at the coaling port of Chinwangtao. At Hong Kong and Shanghai the demand for Kaiping coal now exceeds the supply, and prices remain high in sympathy with the freight market. So far we have no indication as to the prices that will be likely to rule for contracts over next year, or whether the Administration will be prepared to contract at all for supplies at Hong Kong and Shanghai.

"Australia.—At the end of the year 1916 an announcement was made by the War Precaution Court that all coal prices would be increased by 3s per ton, as from January 1, 1917. This increase duly came into force, and first class Newcastle coal started the year at 15s, while the price for best Southern coal was advanced to 16s at Port Kembla and 17s 6d at Sydney, all plus trimming and other charges. On this basis for the colliery ports the prices for bunkers at the outside ports were raised to 26s 3d Melbourne, 29s 9d Adelaide River and 35s 6d for Albany and Fremantle.

"In April the Government imposed a wharfage charge of 3d per ton on all bunker coal supplied at Sydney, this further increasing the price at the port to this small extent.

"The labor situation has continued to be very unsettled throughout this year, and in August, owing to the railway strike, the collieries of the Newcastle district (comprising the sub-districts of Borehole and Maitland) had to close down, as well as the majority of the Southern Collieries. Later the strike became general, and all coal business was taken under the control of the Government, who thereupon fixed prices varying in the neighborhood of 20s per ton on the basis of delivery f.o.b. Newcastle.

#### CONDITIONS IN CANADA.

"Canada.—With the great activity which exists in Canada in the manufacture of munitions of war of all descriptions, the demand for coal throughout the Dominion has, for a long time past, been intense, and with a certain amount of falling off in production, due to the recruitment of labor, very much more reliance has had to be placed by the industries of Canada upon supplies of United States coal.

"In the case of Sydney and Louisburg the advance has been from about \$6 per ton at the opening of navigation to as high as \$10 per ton, although probably at the present time single supplies could be arranged at somewhat between \$7 and \$8 per ton.

"At Halifax and St. John supplies of any large quantities have been practically unobtainable, as owing to the scarcity of tonnage for the conveyance of coal from the Cape Breton ports, the Dominion Government have deprecated the taking of full bunker supplies at these places, and have insisted upon the steamers proceeding to the coal, rather than that the coal should be brought to the steamers.

"In view of the favorable location of Sydney, and still more so of Louisburg, upon the route between the Northern States, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia and Europe, this policy has not entailed any serious hardship or delay to steamers.

"With regard to the possibilities for the coming year there does not, as far as we can ascertain, appear to be any prospect of a departure from the present policy of the colliery companies of quoting only for single supplies, which system was inaugurated at the commencement of the present year."

#### BRITISH SHIPBUILDING.

Great Britain in 1913 launched 2,282,000 tons of ships, of which 1,920,100 tons was merchant tonnage, highest output ever reached. If output for December this year equals that of November, tonnage launched this year will equal that of 1913. November rate and thus far in December is 18 per cent higher than in 1913.

#### 424 SHIPS BEING BUILT IN U.S.

A recital by Secretary Daniels of how the U.S. Navy Department prepared for war by adding several hundred ships to the fleet and letting contracts for hundreds of others, including dreadnoughts, battle cruisers, destroyers and auxiliaries, and an explanation of the operation of the navy supply department by Rear Admiral McGowan, Paymaster-General, marked the opening last week of the enquiry by a House sub-committee into the navy's war activities.

"We have 424 ships in course of construction," Secretary Daniels told the committee. "That does not include submarine chasers, of which we are building 350, and does not include the small craft. The chasers will be in service by early spring."

Included in the 424 ships, he said, were battle cruisers, battleships, scout cruisers, destroyers, fuel ships, gunboats, hospital ships, ammunition ships, sea-going tugs, mine-sweepers and submarines.

Secretary Daniels said the navy now had more than one thousand ships in commission, as against 300 two years ago, and an enlisted personnel of 280,000 officers and men, compared with 64,680 men and 4,376 officers when America declared war.

"Has the navy measured up?" he asked. "It is my firm belief that at the close of the investigation your answer will be: 'It has, and the country has every reason to repose confidence in the navy.'"

Secretary Daniels gave a general review of what the navy has been doing, avoiding, as he explained, disclosing any facts that would be of value to the enemy. He told how the navy is now building 424 capital and other important ships.

Discussing the use of submarine chasers, he said they were regarded as a necessity, but there was "no great enthusiasm" about them as a weapon for permanent effectiveness.

Naval aviation, he said, has made gratifying strides, but has been hampered by lack of manufacturing facilities.

Secretary Daniels praised the co-ordination between the personnel of the navy and the personnel of the Allies.

One of the great problems, he said, was to furnish gun crews to merchant ships.

"We made these reserve ships," said Mr. Daniels, "a school for gunners, and the efficiency with which these officers have taken hold of the young men and made the young men efficient is really one of the big things of the navy in this war. We have put guns on every ship going into submarine war zones that requested it."

The Secretary said he was glad to have Congress and the public know somewhat of the navy's activities. The present inquiry cannot fail to bring ways for still further improvement and for still more efficient work in the future, he said.

#### IDLE GERMAN SHIPS.

It is unfortunate, says the New York Times, that all the idle German ships, held at South American ports cannot be made active and useful, like the 45 which were seized by Brazil when she declared war. Thirty of these are going into service for France, by the terms of an agreement which provides for a small loan from that country. France also undertakes to buy \$20,000,000 worth of Brazilian products. Interned and idle for more than three years in the ports of other South American countries are 156 German ships, but these must remain inactive unless the republics in whose waters they lie enter the war. Chile has 89 and Argentina 15. At our Atlantic ports 80 Dutch ships can still be seen, where they have been lying for more than five months. One ship of steel and another of wood have been launched, and about 35 that were commandeered have been finished. This is only a beginning of our new fleet.

#### A POPULAR TRAIN.

The International Limited, Canada's popular train, runs every day in the year, leaving Montreal (Bonaventure Station), 10.15 in the morning, for Cornwall, Prescott, Brockville, Kingston, Napanee, Belleville, Cobourg, Port Hope, arriving Toronto 5.45 p.m., Hamilton, Brantford, Woodstock, London, arriving Detroit 11.14 p.m., and Chicago 8.05 the next morning. This train of superior service is appreciated by experienced travellers. Its route is double tracked all the way. Full information from M. O. D'Arcy, Grand Trunk City Ticket Office, 122 St. James St., Cor. St. Francois Xavier St.