

Commercial Clippings

Canada imported \$144,000,000 worth of textiles and fibre products, during the five months ending September.

The Argentine Chamber of Deputies has adopted a bill whereby the export of wool and the import of cloths are exempt from customs duties.

There were 15,000 exhibitors at the Leipzig Fair, but business was very small, except in boots and shoes, motor cars and textiles.

CONTRACT SYSTEM ABOLISHED.—A permanent tailoring shop has been established at the Royal Military College, Kingston, for the manufacture of cadets' uniforms. The system of contract for years in vogue has been abolished.

THE NEW OILSTRIKE:—"We consider this an important strike, and essentially of much value," says President C. O. Stillman, of the Imperial Oil Company, Limited, in a statement referring to the oil strike near Fort Norman on the Mackenzie river. "From a commercial point of view, however, it is not of immediate value and it will probably be years before it can be made available in quantities for the use of the Canadian market."

"It would be necessary to demonstrate, by actual drilling and production," says President Stillman, "that there is sufficient quantity of oil to justify laying a pipe line, which, in itself, would probably cost fifty million dollars."

The point where oil has been struck, President Stillman points out, is 900 miles from the nearest calling point of a river boat; 1,200 miles from the nearest railroad and 1,500 miles north of Edmonton, the nearest city. The only means of access to the location at the present time is down the northern rivers, which will only float boats of four or five foot draught, and several rapids necessitate the unloading and transporting of the cargoes overland and reloading on barges. This precludes bringing oil up the river in any quantities until adequate transportation facilities are provided.

GOVERNMENT RECINDS SUGAR ORDER.—The sugar order of the Board of Commerce is to remain suspended. Mr. Huntley R. Drummond, president of the Canada Sugar Refining Company, at the opening of the hearing at Ottawa, intimated that because there was no warrant in law for the action of the Board of Commerce, they would not press for the order to be confirmed, but would leave their claims for redress in the hands of the people and Government of Canada, with complete confidence that justice would be done.

Premier Meighen said that under these circumstances the suspension of the order would have to be made permanent because on that ground alone the suspension would be justified. Accordingly the hearing was considered closed.

It is stated that two alternative proposals are being submitted by the refiners. These are (1) That the Government shall extend to the refiners, by way of credits or loans, sufficient financial assistance to enable them to meet the present situation; (2) Adjustment of the customs duties on raw sugar now in bond or to come under contracts made under the direction of the Canadian Trade Commission.

In their formal memorandum, the refiners maintained that they had been financially prejudiced as the result of Government control and that they had a just claim for relief; but they submitted no concrete scheme of relief. They merely appealed to that "sense of justice which should find a resting place in the breast of every honest man."

EXPORT OF LEAD.—Last year Canada exported 25,341,900 pounds of lead, having a value of \$1,654,947. The greater part of this lead was sold to the United States. In 1915 the export amounted to only 3,257,602 pounds, and that year China bought one-third of the lead sold by Canada.

DEMAND FOR CANADIAN CHEESE IN FRANCE.—The demand for Canadian Cheddar is necessarily limited by the preference felt by the French people for the soft cheeses that come from Switzerland. Hard cheeses are, however, favoured in the north of France and Belgium, where English Cheddar is considerably used. One dealer said that he could do good business in Canadian Cheddar at 24 cents, allowing 15 francs to the Canadian dollar, but he must have credit extension. Last year the Belgian market was rather oversold on Canadian cheese but this fact is not considered to have harmed the demand this year. Another importer suggests that we should pack our cheese in half the ordinary size, the present size being found too large and liable to become stale when exposed.

TRADE WITH BRAZIL.—That there are excellent opportunities for increasing trade between Canada and Brazil, especially for Montreal and Eastern Canada, was the opinion expressed by Major E. L. McColl, the recently appointed Canadian Trade Commissioner to Brazil, who was at the Board of Trade after a tour through the Maritime Provinces to look into trade possibilities. Major McColl will sail from New York on October 30th for Rio de Janeiro to undertake his new duties.

"I talked business prospects over with many of the leading manufacturers and dealers in the Maritime Provinces," said Major McColl, "and

all agreed that the prospects for increased trade with Brazil are very bright, especially with the C.G.M.M. and Houston lines giving direct service. There is already a lot of trade, but unfortunately it has mostly gone through New York agencies, and has been classed as American trade. The result has been that Canadian goods have gone from New York to Brazil as American, and the return trade has come back to Canada also through New York.

CONTRACT WITH GERMANS.—The Chemnitz Allgemeine Zeitung says it learns from Essen that the Russian Soviet Government is about to conclude a contract with a German syndicate for locomotives to an amount aggregating 600,000,000 gold marks, the payment of which is to be guaranteed by two foreign banks. The newspaper adds that the contract originally was offered British firms, but their prices were exorbitant.

NO STOCKS IN SIBERIA.—Business men outside Russia are prone to be over-optimistic regarding immediate trade prospects in that country, according to a statement made to the Associated Press correspondent who recently crossed Russia, by the only foreign business man who was then in Siberia for the purpose of developing trade relations with the Bolsheviks.

This man, Henrik Tornblom, a Swede, who represented American and Swedish concerns in Omsk, Siberia, for eight years previous to the Russian revolution, returned to Soviet Siberia during the past summer.

His plan was to arrange for the exchange of Swedish farm machinery for vast supplies of wool, flax and furs which the Bolsheviks stated had been gathered for shipment to Omsk. Arriving in Omsk, he found the amount of goods available for export far below what he had expected, and that the goods available had been stored for years, many of the bales of hides having become worthless because of improper handling.

Ten thousand tons of raw material, mainly wool and hides, available for export from all Siberia was Mr. Tornblom's estimate after his investigation at Omsk.

Complain of German Methods Swedish Traders Resentful.

There is a very strong feeling of resentment in business circles in Sweden, and also in other Scandinavian countries, against the methods adopted by German exporters during the year 1919. It is alleged that German firms entered into contracts with Swedish firms, but in a large number of cases, failed to fulfil their obligations, bringing forward a parade of excuses, few of which seem justifiable. The Germans are said to have urged that they had been refused permission to export, or that the decrease in the purchasing power of the mark, the increase in the cost of labour and of raw materials made it impossible for them to carry out the contract under the conditions agreed to in the beginning.

The French Chamber of Commerce in Sweden makes the following observations on these pretensions:—"The first of these reasons was often untrue, and the German authorities have admitted that in many cases the sellers never even applied for licences, or that they had made it impossible to grant them by reason of false declarations. Sometimes even after having been refused a licence on these grounds, certain German firms made arrangements with Swedish importers to deliver such goods at fixed prices, with evident bad faith. As to the second excuse, the Swedes aver that business customs are entirely opposed to such methods. In most cases their complaints concern contracts entered into when economic conditions were almost normal. It is obvious that the seller is expected to ensure his supplies of raw materials, and if he neglects to do so he must bear the consequences. As regard increases in wages, these may certainly have some effect, but not on contracts already made, and cannot so influence the net cost as to justify the increases demanded by some German firms on these grounds. Many complaints were also received as to delay in deliveries, each request for further time being accompanied by notifications of further increases in price. Had the orders been fulfilled in the agreed time, these disputes could not have arisen. Moreover, many of the complaints concerned goods already in stock, but held for future delivery, and in consequence the foregoing excuses are entirely without justification."

GUTTA PERCHA IMPORTS.—Last year Canada's import of gutta percha and India rubber and goods made of these materials, had a value of \$12,065,693. Rubber tires for vehicles of all kinds alone had a value of \$1,045,140.

SUGAR PRICES DROP.—A drop in sugar prices was announced on Thursday, by the Dominion Sugar Refining Company, who are now quoting \$17 per hundred pounds. No change has taken place in the quotations of the other refineries.

EMBARGO ON SUGAR PRODUCTS.—The fixing of the price of sugar by the Board of Commerce brought from the Biscuit and Confectionery industries of Canada, an association representing an investment of \$40,000,000 of capital, an immediate and vigorous appeal for a complete embargo on all sugar products coming from the United States. William Robertson, chairman of the association, called an emergency meeting of the executive and a strong telegram urging protection of the biscuit and candy business was despatched to the members of the Board of Commerce.

MARKET FOR APPLES.—There is a market for the finest grades of table apples in France, in December, January, February and March, but during the autumn the domestic crop is sufficient to fill all requirements. The French want cold storage apples of great perfection. Their own cold storages are limited but efforts are being made to extend them. Meanwhile apples stored in Canada and shipped at the right moment in the spring would be well received. Freight rates bring the price of cooking apples to high to compete with the French crop. Canadians are strongly advised not to quote prices in American dollars, as it only complicates the transaction and gives a false impression of prices.

B. C. APPLE SHIPMENTS.—From two to three solid train loads of apples are being dispatched from Wenatchee, B.C., daily, amounting to from 100 to 150 refrigerator cars. Total shipments to Wednesday were 1,750 cars, compared with about 1,200 at the same date one year ago.

A refrigerator car famine is impending and already shippers are using box cars wherever possible. Only about 2,000 refrigerator cars are on the Great Northern line.

Shippers and growers are making every effort to get the crop off the trees and into cars before cold weather. They are also appealing to the car supply commission in Chicago for more reefers through the Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association, the manager of which is now in Chicago.

PAYMENT AGAINST DOCUMENTS.—French import agents are complaining bitterly of the unwillingness shown by Canadian firms to grant credits in accordance with established customs in France. "I am convinced," says a prominent importer, "that a large trade could be built up between Canada and France, but I am equally convinced that nothing of any importance can be accomplished until Canadians recognize the stability of our credit system."

The same attitude is found on every side, says the Trade Commissioner in Paris. Canadians, when entering into negotiations with a French house for the first time, ask for payment against documents, and insist that the importer take the risk of damage to goods during the voyage. This, it appears, has wounded the feelings of many Frenchmen. When the French firm is better known, the Canadians are willing to treat on a basis of irrevocable credits deposited in a Canadian bank. Although this system is generally practised, the French are becoming averse to tying up their capital in this way, and frankly state their preference for other countries where they can obtain more lenient conditions.