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JAMES McISAAC,  
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**Ocean Freight Rates.**

Improved ocean freight rates is a question of much importance that has come under the consideration of the Borden Government, and upon which action is likely to be taken in the near future. A representative of the Federal Government will be despatched to Great Britain at the beginning of August, for the purpose of opening negotiations with the Imperial authorities with a view of joint control of charges on freight in transit between Canada and Great Britain.

This is a problem that has become acute within the last year or two and has attracted no little attention in the press, and also in Parliament. The present Solicitor-General, Hon. Arthur Meighen, brought the matter to the attention of the House of Commons towards the end of the last parliamentary session in a speech that showed careful research. He was able to show that the rates on traffic westward had in a comparatively short period, increased fully twenty-five per cent. A peculiarly annoying feature to Canadian interests in this matter is the fact that, for some years, an energetic and successful campaign has been waged to control and lessen land freight rates.

The Board of Railway Commissioners regulate matters regarding freight and kindred subjects along the overland routes and controls telegraph and telephone lines and express companies. This tribunal has doubtless, exercised its jurisdiction wisely and successfully, but it should be realized that the land journey embraces only one third of the distance between Liverpool and Winnipeg, for example. Over the other two thirds that distance no public control exists.

A peculiar feature of the situation is the conduct of the Laurier Government in relation thereto. In 1910 the Liberal Government took up the question with the Imperial authorities and were met most cordially. Then the Federal Government suddenly dropped the whole matter. On February 26, 1910, a minute was passed by council suggesting that the matter be brought to the attention of the British government with a view to the establishment of a joint tribunal for the regulation and control of ocean rates. In August, 1910, a despatch was received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies enclosing a memorandum from the marine department of the Board of trade in which it was observed that there seemed no reason why the Imperial government should not discuss with the Canadian government the question of holding a joint inquiry into the rates charged and facilities afforded by shipping companies engaged in the trade between the United Kingdom and Canadian ports. Thereupon, strange to say, the Canadian government took no action on the suggestion. The British authorities repeatedly pressed the Canadian government to take action in the matter, but the Laurier government presumably was too much engrossed in the effort to force reciprocity upon the Canadian people to take any notice of the subject. The last communication from the Imperial authorities bore the date of August 18, 1911. These repeated queries from the British government were allowed to pass unanswered.

The Borden government took the matter up in February of the present year and carried through a preliminary departmental survey of the situation. It now will move in the direction of personal negotiations with the authorities of the United Kingdom. The representative to be despatched to the mother country will be a person of the highest competency and will present a report to the government upon which it is hoped effective action will be based. It is pointed out here that the institution of a proper tribunal would in reality prove a protection to the ocean carriers. Their recent increases of rates have aroused much antagonism and they have possessed no adequate means of laying before the public affected the reasons actuating them. If they are placed in the position the Canadian railways now occupy they will be able to state the reasons which they consider would justify any increases.

**H. M. S. New Zealand.**

The visit of the New Zealand and to Canada, elsewhere referred to, recalls the opening of an important chapter in the history of the Empire. It was in March, 1909, that Mr. McKenna, then First Lord of the Admiralty, made his remarkable statement on the subject of the rivalry in naval construction. He had been reminded that the policy of the British Government was traditionally one of "peace, retrenchment and reform," but there were moments, he said, when the most determined economist was willing to make a sacrifice. He went on to state that Germany had accelerated the execution of her programme. The extent of German ship-building and ordnance making resources had been under-estimated, and the need had arisen for a great effort to be made.

This remarkable avowal exerted a great influence upon public opinion in the Empire. To New Zealand belongs the credit of making the first response. Within less than a week of the speech, Sir Joseph Ward's Government had decided that New Zealand should defray the cost of building and completing a vessel of the largest class, and had intimated the intention to the British Government with the expression of their willingness to be responsible for a second vessel of the same class if the need should arise. Public opinion in New Zealand rallied with practical unanimity to the Prime Minister's offer of a battleship. The Legislature approved of it, and even proposed to send the Leader of the Opposition with Sir Joseph Ward to the Imperial Defence Conference as a proof of unanimity. At the Conference Sir Joseph Ward in an official letter to the Admiralty embodied New Zealand's attitude as in favour of "one great Imperial Navy with all the over sea Dominions contributing either in ships or money."

The Secretary of State accepted the offer on behalf of the Mother Country with warm recognition of the loyal and spontaneous Imperial spirit of the Dominion. The contract was awarded to the Fairfield Company on the Clyde. The New Zealand was laid down at Govan on June 20th, 1910, and launched on July 1st, 1911. When she left Devonport for Portsmouth last September, it was said she was "the smartest ship which ever left the sound." The New Zealand has a length of 590 feet, beam 80 feet and

a displacement of 18,800 tons. Her main armament is eight 12 inch guns and the weight of a broadside, three tons. She also carries sixteen 4-inch guns, five machine guns, two submerged torpedo tubes, and eight twin search-lights. The complement is 789 officers and men. She has a speed of 27 knots or 31½ miles an hour. The ship was commissioned at Devonport by Captain Lionel Halsey on November 23rd last and sailed on her long cruise of 40,000 miles to visit the Dominions on February 6th of this year. Prior to her departure the King visited and inspected the ship and extended to the officers good wishes for an enjoyable voyage and a safe return.

In the course of her voyage the New Zealand has visited Cape Town, Durban and Natal in South Africa, Melbourne and other cities in the Australian Commonwealth, and numerous ports in New Zealand. It is needless to emphasize the fact that wherever the battle-cruiser touched she received a hearty welcome. It is estimated that up to the time she sailed from New Zealand en route to Canada half a million people boarded and inspected the ship. After leaving the Pacific Coast the New Zealand will visit several South American ports, including Panama, and touch at several of the islands in the British West Indies. At the conclusion of the cruise she will return to England and in accordance with the desire of the people of New Zealand will be placed at the disposal of the Admiralty. The immediate purpose of this long cruise was, of course, to permit New Zealanders to see what manner of ship they have built and dedicated to Imperial ends, but there can be no doubt the Admiralty also commissioned the New Zealand to show the flag in the distant waters of the Empire to demonstrate British naval efficiency, British ship-building and warlike equipment.

The occasion of the New Zealand's visit to Canada is noteworthy in that she is the first fruits of the practical co-operation of the Dominions ever seen in Imperial Naval Defence. She represents the generous, dignified and self-respecting acceptance of responsibility by one of the smaller British Dominions. The same loyal sentiments prevail in Canada. The people of the Dominion will support the declaration of Mr. Borden that Canada will pay for three battleships proposed in the Naval Aid Bill. Mr. Churchill was right when he declared his belief that Great Britain will not be left unaided by Canada to face the emergencies of the future. When the time comes for the people of this country to speak they will declare in a tone that cannot be misunderstood that, like the people of New Zealand, they intend to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Mother-land in the naval defence of the Empire.—St. John Standard.

**Theories Versus Facts.**

In their editorial columns, remarks the Toronto News, Opposition newspapers continue to copy amiable theories and Maxims from Cobdenite text books. In their news columns they have to print Economic Facts concerning the cumulative movement of American industries to Canadian soil as a direct result of the Canadian tariff. The National Policy compels these enterprises to build on this side of the international boundary line if they wish to share to the full in one of the world's best consuming markets.

A Detroit despatch recently stated how Canada by defeating Reciprocity gained the city, which is now being established at Ojibway, and which otherwise would have been built on the Michigan side of the Detroit River. By rejecting the Washington trade agreement Canadians rendered certain the rise of scores of industrial centres and the conversion of villages and towns into cities all over the Dominion.

**Terrible Explosion.**

Beloeil, Que., July 24.—Seven lives were snuffed out at Beloeil today, when an explosion of nitro glycerine blew one of the isolated buildings of the Canadian Explosives Company to pieces and scattered the dismembered bodies of four men and three girls in every direction.

An instant after the explosion the space for a hundred and fifty feet around was strewn with wreckage intermingled with the mangled remains of the unfortunate victims. The detonation brought workers from the other houses rushing out of doors, but the distance between the houses was great enough to prevent the

shock from producing other explosion. The search for the bodies was started at once, and it is expected that as much of these victims as can be found will be identified without difficulty. The head and half the trunk of Miss A. Eli were found covered with wood, but the bodies of the other victims were too hopelessly torn into fragments to permit of identification on the spot.

Those killed are: Eugene Larivee, 28 years of age, of St. Hilaire. Alphonse Guilmin, 36 years of age, married, of Beloeil. Philippe Paquette, 21 years old, of Beloeil. Rosario Mongeau, of Beloeil, 16 years of age. Miss Mary Thresa Williams, 19 years of age, of Beloeil. Miss Lorenza Lacasse, 17 years old, of Beloeil. Miss Aurore Eli, 16 years old, of Beloeil. The victims were the only persons employed in the destroyed building and all were instantly killed.

An inquest will be held tomorrow by Dr. Fontaine. Evidence of a sensational nature is promised at the inquest if the statements of villagers can be taken. It is alleged that machines were used for packing cartridges, which had been condemned by government inspectors only a few days ago. However, it will be difficult to prove these facts as all the employees in the building were killed.

**Appaling Holocast.**

Binghamton, N. Y., July 23.—Fifty persons were killed, according to late estimates and many injured, a dozen of them mortally, in a fire which swept the four story factory building of the Binghamton Clothing Company this afternoon. The victims were chiefly women and girls.

Early tonight twenty-two bodies had been recovered. In the city hospital and in the private institutions are thirty injured. Some two score persons are known to have escaped, as by a miracle, from the building which burst into flames like a tinder box and became a roaring furnace almost in no time after the first alarm was sounded. About 125 persons were in the factory when the fire broke out. The unaccounted for, or most of them, are believed to be still in the red hot ruins of the structure.

Around the scene of the catastrophe the greatest city has ever known, thousands tonight watched the rescuers work in the glare of three big search lights, many in the great throng being restrained only by closely drawn police lines from rushing into the ruins in an effort to find the bodies of relatives and friends.

Water in many streams is being poured into the fiery pit that a few hours ago was the cellar of the burned establishment. As the rains were cooled a bit, from time to time, in a spot upon which the streams were centered men went forward to dig as long as human endurance would allow them to work. Occasionally a body was found and taken quickly away.

This work will go on all night and perhaps all day tomorrow, before the glowing mass gives up its last dead. It will take at least two days, the authorities believe, before the cellar can be cleared and the whole truth known.

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The French Government has promised that a new income and capital tax will be imposed to meet the heavy expenditure made necessary by the recent increase in the time of service of conscripts in the army. This will help to even things up in a way. The masses furnish the men; the classes will have to provide the money.—Montreal Gazette.

American manufacturers, despite protection, sold us seven million dollars' worth of machinery last year. If our free traders had their own sweet will, that amount would have been multiplied several times.—Hamilton Spectator.

Some Liberal papers in Canada are commending the Imperial government for moving to reform the House of Lords. Nothing is heard from them about the Canadian Senate. Shouldn't reform begin at home, and Liberal enthusiasm for it be vigorous here first?—Ottawa Journal.

It will be long before any of the oversea dominions will have work to keep in operation the vast plant required for the building and equipping of Dreadnoughts and super Dreadnoughts. The Borden arrangement with the Admiralty to ensure plenty of work for Canadian shipyards of the capacity for building the lesser warships is well conceived in the interest of the Canadian shipbuilding and cognate industries.—Mail and Empire.

**Sir Wilfrid Gloomy.**

Ottawa, Ont., July 25.—Additional gloom has settled upon the Liberal horizon. During the last few weeks Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been doing quite a lot of missionary work. Time was when this was not necessary. Other time was when it could be done by one of the lesser leaders of the party while the white plume remained at home and fixed his gaze on higher things. There is an accumulation of evidence that those times have changed. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has no one left upon whom this responsibility would safely rest.

**Shorten the Season.**

Ottawa, Ont., July 23.—The Department of Marine and Fisheries has under consideration a report presented some time ago by the Shell Fish Commission, which made a thorough investigation of the lobster and oyster industries in the lower provinces and submitted a number of recommendations. While no action has yet been taken it is believed that the principal recommendations which have been submitted will be made effective by order-in-council.

It is proposed to considerably limit the season in which lobsters may be caught, and also define the minimum size. The lobster fisheries not having proved an unqualified success, it is proposed to build no more of them till their benefits are better demonstrated in regard to oysters, the season also is to be shortened, a size limit prescribed and a uniform oyster barrel adopted.

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George Division of Montreal in the last provincial campaign and was badly beaten. The situation in Ontario is also a generous contributor to the Liberal melancholy. A month or more ago the announcement was made that Sir Wilfrid Laurier would undertake a tour of Ontario. Following this announcement there were a couple of gatherings of ex ministers seatless and otherwise in Ottawa. About that time the plans for the Ontario tour were described as very indefinite. If there was to be a tour it would not take place till the fall, etc. Then came the Liberal disaster in North Grey and Sir Wilfrid Laurier immediately found occasion to go up to Toronto and spend several days there in conference with leading Liberals. He appears to have got very little sunshine out of the encumbers presented by his political friends in Toronto, and now there is a prospect of the Ontario tour being called off altogether, just as the western tour was called off a year ago—"on account of the harvest."

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