

The Chronicle

Banking, Insurance and Finance

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1861

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

Vol. XXXV. No. 43

MONTREAL, OCTOBER 22, 1915.

Single Copy 10c
Annual Subscription, \$5.00

CANADIAN TRADE.

The Dominion trade returns continue to be of a character that is satisfactory for the present and gives good ground for confidence regarding the future. The September return just issued shows imports of merchandise, \$38,026,000, and exports of domestic products amounting to \$46,129,000. Compared with September, 1914, these figures show a large increase in our trade, particularly in exports. A year ago our imports were \$36,567,000 and domestic exports, \$31,796,000, so that this year our September exports showed the very considerable gain of over 14 millions, or 45 per cent. over September last year. For the six months of the fiscal year ended September 30, the excess of our domestic exports over imports was apparently about 33 million dollars, the figures announced from Ottawa being \$246,392,000 domestic exports, and \$213,588,000 imports of merchandise.

* * *

Last month's increase in our exports was fairly distributed among the various classes of the Dominion's products. Agricultural products aggregated \$11,139,000 against \$7,478,000; manufactured products were \$9,244,000 compared with \$5,188,000; animal products, \$10,188,000 against \$7,063,000 and fisheries products, \$2,750,000 against \$1,900,000. From the point of view of the general well-being, this wide distribution of our increased export trade is particularly satisfactory, but it is important to bear in mind that much of it is caused by circumstances of a temporary character. Someone has sagely remarked that the only war which has not ended is the present one, and it would be unwise in the extreme to build up expectations of continued prosperity to divers Canadian industries on the basis of the great demand which the present conflict in Europe is making upon them. An artificial stimulus has in particular been given to our manufactures, and undoubtedly until peace is signed, the exports of munitions and war supplies of all kinds will

play an important part in our export trade. The signing of peace may be yet a long way off. But sooner or later, on its arrival or soon after, exports of this character will be reduced practically to nothing, and past experience has not yet demonstrated that our manufacturers, with a few exceptions, can compete in the open markets of the world on such terms as to make our exports of manufactures an important part of our whole export trade under normal conditions. Whether the manufacturers will be more successful in the future in this particular remains to be seen; at all events, it would clearly be unwise at present to rely too much upon this possibility.

Still, there are substantial reasons for thinking that with the close of the war, and possibly before, Canada will enter upon a period of soundly-based prosperity. But it is well to bear in mind the essential preliminaries of this prosperity, which will not come by merely talking about it or by the devotion of superhuman energy to the business of speculation in real estate. Soundly-based prosperity can only come by hard work in the systematic development of the great natural resources in which the Dominion's wealth mainly consists. It is to the exports of our grain, our lumber, our minerals, and our other natural products that we must look for the means in the future of paying our debts abroad and securing to ourselves accumulated wealth. The present temporary activity in certain lines is undoubtedly exceedingly useful as a contributory in that connection. But it would be very unwise in the stress of unusual and temporary circumstances to forget what are the only possible bases of the permanent expansion of Canadian trade. It is to be hoped that this year's record grain acreage will not be seen later as a merely sporadic and isolated effort, but that 1915 will be the beginning of a new era of production. For it is only through production that sound prosperity can come.

