SUIT AGAINST STEAMSHIP COMBINE.

Thirteen Ocean Carriers, Including Two Canadian Lines, Are Charged With Attempt to Restrain Trade.

The United States Federal Government have brought suit under the terms of the Sherman anti-trust law, in the United States Circuit Court of the Southern District of New York, against thirteen of the principal transatlantic carriers, estimated to control ninety per cent. of the steerage traffic, worth to them $55,000,000 a year. These thirteen companies, the Government charges, entered into an illegal contract on February 5th, 1908, at London, England, by which they constituted themselves the Atlantic Conference, with power to apportion all traffic pro rata, impose heavy fines on members of the Conference for violation of any of the articles of agreement, and wage cut-throat competition against all lines outside the Conference. As a result it is alleged the Russian volunteer fleet, plying between New York and Libau, was driven out of business and the Russian-American line was forced to make terms with the Conference and enter its membership.

Steamship Companies Involved.

The defendant companies, their capitalization, and the ports between which they chiefly ply are as follows:—

The Allan Line Steamship Company, Limited, plying between Liverpool, Boston and Philadelphia, and Glasgow and Montreal, capital	$ 3,220,000
The International Mercantile Marine Company, a holding company, capital	120,000,000
The International Navigation Company, a holding company.	
The Anchor Line (Henderson Bros.), Limited, plying between New York and Glasgow, capital	2,875,000
The Canadian Pacific Railway Company, plying between Montreal and Liverpool, capital	200,000,000
The Cunard Steamship Company, Limited, plying between New York and Boston and Liverpool, capital	10,000,000
The British and North Atlantic Steam Navigation Company, Limited.	
The Hamburg-American Line, plying between Hamburg, New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, capital	31,250,000
The Holland-American Line, plying between New York and Rotterdam...........Capital	unavailable
The North German Lloyd, plying between New York and Bremen...................Capital	unavailable
The Red Star Line, plying between New York and Antwerp.	
The White Star Line, plying between New York and Liverpool.	
The Russian East Asiatic Steamship Company, Limited, plying between New York and Libau ....Capital	unavailable

To Restrain Trade.

The complaint charges that the defendants "for some time past have been engaged in the United States, and principally in the southern district in New York, in an unlawful combination to restrain the commerce of the United States." One of the provisions of the alleged agreement between the companies stipulated that whenever the monthly accounts of any line showed that it had exceeded or remained below its agreed percentage, it should either raise or lower its rates to effect a redistribution, with the express stipulation that wherever possible rates should be raised rather than lowered.

System of Forfeits and Fines.

The alleged contract exacted from each of its signatories the deposit of a promissory note for an amount equal to £1,000 for each one per cent. of traffic allotted to the signatory upon withdrawal of any members without permission from all other members, this deposit to be forfeited. It was also subject to forfeit if any member failed to pay his £4 fine for each excess passenger. All forfeits and fines were to be divided among the members not penalized, and all matters in dispute were to be referred to an arbitrator, who was given the further power of imposing a penalty of £250 on any member who disobeyed any provision of the contract.

Conspiracy to Destroy Competition.

"After the adoption of this contract," said District Attorney Wise in a statement issued, "it is charged that the lines party thereto held a meeting at which it was agreed that they should act together to eliminate and destroy competition, and that for the accomplishment of this purpose a committee of three, consisting of agents in the United States, should be created with power to select steamships to be known as fighting steamers, and to advertise such fighting steamers to sail at the same time and from the same port as the steamers of competing lines, and to advertise rates far below those advertised by such independent lines."

These practices were put into effect to such good purpose, the Government charges, that the Russian volunteer fleet was driven out of business and the Russian-American line was only able to enter the service through membership in the Conference, which it was forced to join in Cologne in September, 1909.

WORLD'S GOLD AND SILVER.

Canada is Third Silver Producer and Eighth in the List of Gold Mining Countries.

According to the final estimate of Mr. G. E. Roberts, director of the United States Mint, the total production of gold throughout the world in 1909 was $454,422,900, compared with the preliminary estimate for 1910 of $454,874,000. Canada was seventh in a list of twenty-five in 1909 and eighth in 1910. The total silver product in 1909 was 201,-215,633 fine ounces, compared with a preliminary figure for 1910 of 217,788,714 fine ounces. Canada in both years was third in the matter of silver production, the figures for the first three countries being:—

Country—	1909. Fine ounces.	1910. Fine ounces.
United States	54,721,500	56,438,695
Canada	27,878,590	32,878,590
Mexico	73,949,432	72,574,220

Decline in Australian Gold Production.

Australasia, which has been on a declining scale in the production of gold since 1903, when its output was officially estimated at $89,210,100, falls to $71,007,900 in the final estimate for 1909 and to $65,602,600 in the preliminary estimate for 1910. As a result of this loss and the falling off in the United States, together with the fact that South Africa has not maintained the rate of increase of recent years, the world's production in 1910 was but slightly, if any, greater than in 1909. Present conditions in the principal gold mining countries do not promise an increase in production at the rate of the last decade. The great gain of the last ten years has been in South Africa, and while further increase there may be expected, the scarcity of labor and other difficulties will make the rate of increase comparatively less, while elsewhere production is scarcely holding its own. When the natural expansion of industry, commerce and wealth is considered, all fears of an embarrassing supply of gold may be dismissed.

World's Gold in a Hole.

That all the gold which has been mined since the beginning of the world could be contained in a hole 37 feet in depth and of the same dimension in breadth, was the statement made by Mr. J. B. Tyrell, M.A., F.G.S., in the course of an instructive address on "The World's Gold Supply" to the members of the Toronto Canadian Institute.

Two thousand years ago, he said, mining was conducted in Portugal, but a dearth in the supply of slaves had led to the suspension of operations. Following the death of the Emperor Augustus, little had been done to increase the world's supply of gold until Columbus' discovery of America had thrown open a rich, unmined continent to the Western explorer. Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Mexico alone added $187,000,000 to the world's exchequer during the 16th century, and altogether, from 1492 to 1848, $3,000,000,000, nearly all the product of placer mining, had gone to swell the world's supply. The placer mines of America, the lecturer said in conclusion, were now nearly exhausted, but the development of mining machinery had rendered the gold-seeker independent of placer deposits, for science had shown how to extract the precious metal from its most secret hiding-places.

APPLICATIONS TO PARLIAMENT.

The Standard Trusts Company will apply at the next session of the Manitoba Legislature for an Act to amend its Act of incorporation. Messrs. Mulock, Loftun, Armstrong and Lindsay, of Winnipeg, are the company's solicitors.

The Manitoba Permanent Loan Company will apply to the Manitoba parliament for an Act of incorporation. Messrs. Hull, Sparling and Sparling, Winnipeg, are acting for the applicants.

Application will also be made at the next session of the Manitoba Legislature for an Act to incorporate a life insurance company. Mr. Antonin Dubuc, Winnipeg, is solicitor for the applicants.