

Canada's Growing Trade

CANADA has entered upon her nationhood. It behooves her to be all and do all that becomes her as a nation. On the side of trade and commerce this means among other things that attention must be given to (1) the development, the husbanding and the proper use of her natural resources; (2) the manufacture of raw materials into articles of the finest workmanship; (3) the disposal and sale of these on the most advantageous terms and in the best markets of the world; (4) the importation at best rates of all that we must receive from abroad.

Natural Resources

For purposes of illustration let us consider as sources of wealth, the soil, the mines, the forests, the fisheries, the water power of our rivers.

If we are to be a great people we must gather from the soil all the wealth it so lavishly provides. We must do this without the waste that springs from neglect or ignorance. It requires no wise man to perceive that we have not yet attained the possible. Only a small fraction of the land is under cultivation, but this is not to be wondered at since the country is new. Unfortunately what is under cultivation has in many cases been imperfectly tilled. It is quite possible under ideal conditions and wise guidance to make two blades of wheat grow where one is now found. Nor is this all. Every year tons of straw are burned and worse than this the soil is robbed of its most necessary possession—the phosphorus—and no effort is put forth to replace it. Some day we shall learn to use to the last ounce the products of our grain fields, to turn to another of our great resources, the phosphate fields, and there get something to replenish the land. We shall also learn, under a wise system of agricultural training, to use to the best advantage every foot of ground; to restore lost power through proper rotation of crops and adequate fertilizing. This is only a beginning. We must learn how to save every pound of hay, how to turn swamp lands into fruitful fields. There is much to be done before the soil will, year by year, give us all of its wealth, or before we shall learn to use wisely what it does give.

Turning to the mines we have another great source of wealth, but here again there are evidences of waste. Somebody has said that Germany would make a fortune out of our dumpheaps. A short time ago there was discovered in the rocks of Wisconsin that which will yield millions to the state treasury. We have not yet found our wealth. We are only making a rough beginning. We must learn to use to the utmost what we have for here there is no possibility of replenishing wasted stores.

Of our forests we have wasted much. The old fences in Ontario yet bear testimony to our prodigality. We must save what is left and should enter at once upon a vigorous campaign of reforestation. Conservation is a good word and has no better application than in this field.

Our fishing industry was once our pride, and may be again if we are well guided. Nobody can deny that we have not derived from our fisheries all that we should have received. Not only have the fishing rights been sold for too little but the by-products have been thrown away. We have been exercising the rights of first-comers and using up the best without regard to consequences. We have resembled a herd of cattle that has just found its way into a new pasture. We have run hurriedly from point to point grasping for the

best, and have ruthlessly destroyed or wasted more than we legitimately consumed. We have tried to get rich in a day.

In the water power of our rivers there is untold wealth. A little of it has been turned to advantage, but there is enough yet available to supply all our manufacturers and farmers with light, heat and power, and there might be in some parts of the provinces suburban railways operated at trifling cost. We are only at the beginning of things.

Manufactured Articles

This reference has been made to our resources in order to lead to a second topic. We are too ready to ship out of our land our raw materials. "Why send out wheat at a dollar a bushel, and buy back biscuits at thirty cents a pound?" Our duty is to sell not only our labor but our brains and our skill. As it is now we give away much raw material for skilled workmen in other lands to work upon and slip back to us at a fabulous price. The time has come for us to think of converting our raw products into finished materials. If our straw stacks were in Germany they would be used. If they had our flax fields these would yield a princely sum over and above the price obtained for the flax. A survey of the items on our customs tariff will convince any one that there are hundreds of articles that we could make with profit to ourselves, if we were only fully alive to our opportunities. Why ship hides? Why buy sugar? Why import binder twine? We have gold, silver, iron and every metal worth mentioning. How much of the finer ware is made in Canada? Our mountains are the storehouses of the world, and our mountain streams the source of magnificent power—why should we not be a nation of manufacturers? This applies particularly to Western Canada.

Shipping

When our raw materials and our manufactured articles are ready for the world's markets, who is it that acts the part of carrier? Not the shippers of Canada but those of the Motherland. Fifty millions a year sent out of our country as tolls might well have been circulated here if we had a merchant marine. A great nation must be more or less self-contained. In a recent number of a contemporary magazine a writer uses these words and they are commended to our readers:

"Taking all our ocean ports on both coasts; it is a fairly moderate estimate that this country's business placed in the hands of the steamship men last year something between thirty and fifty million dollars."

Colliers in discussing the question says:

"The greater part of it went out of Canada, that much is clear. Out of 9,137,328 tons of freight carried to and from our sea ports, we Canadians carried for ourselves only about one million tons—most of that on very short trips between Canada and Newfoundland or some American coast port. On the basis of ton miles, we carried probably only a fiftieth part of our own traffic. Out of the twenty-four and a half million tons register of the ships entering and leaving Canada in that year, Canadian vessels represented only about four and a half million tons—chiefly small sea-going craft employed on short trips, or in the fishing trade. It was the British bottoms—6,766 of them, with a registration of 13,342,929 tons—that carried all but a puny fraction of our trade, and that have collected and are still collecting all but a few dollars out of the millions we have paid for ocean freight in the last forty years.

"In other words, the rough fifty million dollars a year which we pay the steamship companies is another one of our Canadian exports, but not one to be proud of. It means fifty million dollars withdrawn in one form or another from circulation in Canada—fifty million dollars being paid every year in interest on foreign capital, wages to foreign workmen in foreign ship-

yards and foreign factories, and as dividends to foreign shareholders. A very little of it may be spent in Canada for supplies bought in the Canadian port. A few Canadian shareholders may get dividend notices, and a few Canadians may be on the wage roll of the steamship offices in Canada. But the big part of it is lost to this country."

Importation

A merchant marine would serve the purposes of importation quite as well as purposes of exportation. It is bad enough to have to pay a single duty. It is folly to have to pay a double tax. It is not even necessary that a merchant marine be owned by the government, although those who believe in government ownership would favor this. There is no reason why the government should not enter upon a venture of this kind. There might be difficulty in getting Canadians to enter the navy. There will be none in getting them to enter into first-class merchantmen. Newfoundland alone could furnish sufficient officers and sailors for a fleet, and the West Indies could be relied upon to furnish deck hands.

A Programme

So a good Canadian programme for the extension of commerce includes:

The husbanding and development of all our resources and the avoidance of waste.

The manufacture of as many articles as possible, where we can do this at a saving.

The export and import of goods in our own vessels.

And to these ends must all good legislation and all endeavor look.

Unprogressive Communities

Some towns and country districts wonder why the wave of progress does not overflow their locality. Generally they assign any cause but the right one. Bad luck, competition of neighboring districts, lack of shipping facilities—in short, all the items in the list of handicaps—are mentioned. But in nine cases out of ten the main cause is lack of community spirit. Enthusiasm, energy and an atmosphere of success cannot exist if one hand is raised against another, if there is mutual jealousy and suspicion. When one man determines that no action of his shall help another man in the same village to become well-to-do, it is reasonably certain that such a community is doomed to inertia and gradual disintegration.

When a town's leading citizens discourage the proposed entrance of new enterprises it is generally because they fear new blood. Unable to see three feet before their faces, they determine that if possible they will remain the "leading citizens." Of the qualities of such leadership it is unnecessary to speak. Such men are the worm in the apple. No town which contains them and allows them to dominate can thrive. Hospitality to new enterprises and new ideas is the first requirement for a community to success. What is expressively called "boosting" if not carried to excess, does much for any town. It promotes co-operation and democracy. The splendid unity of spirit which is generated by enthusiasm over athletic contests in our schools and colleges may well serve as a timely hint to those who wish to make their communities progressive. Frequently all that is needed is a get-together club which shall take in every person who is willing not only to hurrah for progressiveness, but to contribute thereto his own elbow-grease.