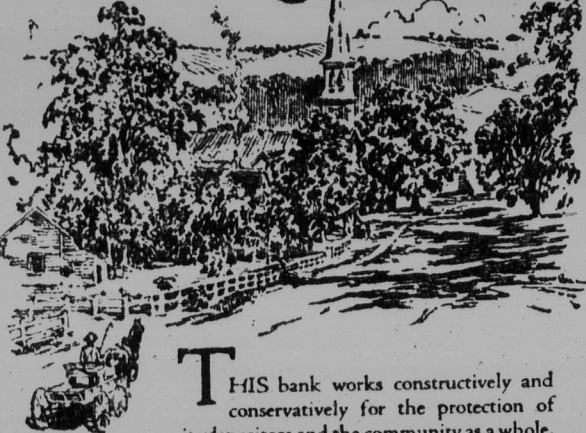


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H. T. REID WRITES INTERESTING LETTER ON TRIP TO THE WEST

THE OBSERVER,
Hartland, N. B.
Dear Sir:—
I have collected a few impressions of the West. If you think readers of The Observer might find something of interest therein use them as you think best. Wishing you continued success,
Yours etc
H. T. REID.
54 Elm street, Toronto,
May 18, 1925.

A WORD FOR THE WEST

When I left New Brunswick in March the Maritime campaign was at its height. Mr. Belding of the St. John Telegraph-Journal was then somewhere in the west on a tour, the object of which was to bring our problems personally to the attention of influential men and organizations in the west. It was therefore with a great deal of interest that I looked forward to visiting the prairie provinces. As my business would keep me there two or three months, I hoped to be able to hear these issues discussed at some length. Nor was I disappointed. On every occasion I took the opportunity of introducing the subject. Something of what I heard in this connection might be interesting matter for eastern minds. The westerners are extremely practical. First of all a project appeals to him in proportion to its likelihood of bearing useful results that is for the west. But this by no means excludes his sense of patriotism—for a prosperous west means indirectly

prosperity to Canada as a whole. But of one thing there is no doubt. To him western Canada comes first and last, and he presents sound arguments for his case.

I suggested that Eastern Canada might reasonably expect a greater proportion of the western carrying trade. If Canada is to support what practically amounts to three trans-continental railway lines, it would be good Canadian business to use them from one terminal to the other within Canada. By doing this we would be assisting the railways in cutting down average costs and preparing the way for lower freight rates, which after all is one of our outstanding national problems today. Coal from Alberta is being kept out of a Canadian market on account of excessive freight rates, which under present conditions are unalterable. For similar reasons eastern products are being excluded from the west. The answer was definite. Other things being equal the west would prefer to ship through the ports of St. John and Halifax. Against this however is the matter of freight rates, port services—that is terminal facilities for handling large shipments quickly, and also in general as better ocean service is available from American ports. The general trend of argument was that quicker delivery was made through southern routes by agents who work in conjunction with both rail and steamship services. In other words, as conditions are at present, it is a better business proposition. The west, itself, is faced with problems of first magnitude. Essentially agricultural markets are the first consideration. I am satisfied that the West will seek these markets in whatever direction and by whatever channel will promise best results for themselves. And who is to say they should choose otherwise. But one idea I have had dispelled. There is no conscious animosity directed against the Maritime Provinces. Rather there was exhibited the liveliest interest in our welfare. Many a kindly ex-Maritime I met, and these are people who are today helping to shape the destiny of this part of Canada. I wonder if we realize how tremendously the West has responded to the appeal for help in Nova Scotia mining areas. Personally I saw many, many instances where individual farms were contributing through all their employees. The westerner is practical. But he is generous to a fault. Therefore if the Maritime Provinces wish to appeal to their western neighbors they should do so on business grounds with a minimum of sentiment. Its up to the east first of all to put their house in order. By this I mean that once we have attracted western trade we should see we are in a position to cater to it. A campaign of publicity is a good thing but in this connection steps should be taken to make certain that Halifax and Saint John are developed and capable of handling unlimited shipments satisfactorily. In the matter of freight rates stronger representation should come from the East. In the matter of grain routes the west has a real problem of its own. Characteristically they are very outspoken in the matter. This refers to the northern grain route via Port Nelson to Hudson Bay. At the present time only about 90 miles of rail is required to complete the line to the sea outlet and give it a fair trial. Both great parties in Canada have approved of the necessity of this work and the west now wants action. I was told that by shipping from Port Nelson to Quebec a cheaper and quicker method of transport would be available than the present one via the Great Lakes to Montreal. Why then is there this hesitation over completing the line. There was no disguising the position as far as the West see it. For them to ship from Port Nelson to Quebec does not suit certain interests in and around Montreal. This is the general impression whether right or wrong.

In the matter of manufactured goods the west is almost entirely dependent upon outside markets. There is a general feeling that protection which is being preached as the panacea of all evil by the central manufacturing provinces is a cat of a different color when applied to the west. This is how they see it. The west thinks in terms of wheat. Say wheat is worth \$1.50 per bushel. A pair of boots (typical of any necessity) can be bought from the United States for \$4.50 or 3 bus. of wheat. Similarly they ought to be bought at the rate of \$4.50 from Ont. or Quebec. But the American article

(Continued on Editorial page)

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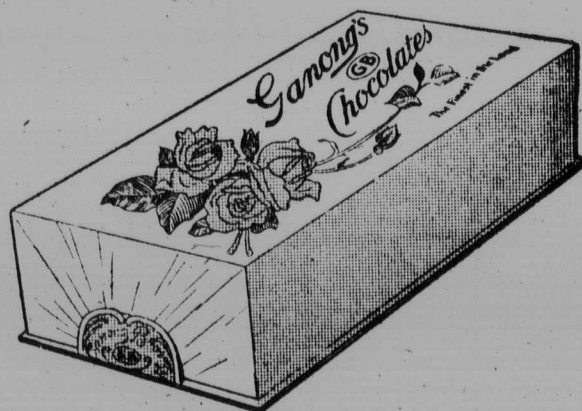
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