

Our English Page

The Prospects of Marketing Swedish Goods in Canada

is the subject of the following article contributed to the Journal of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce for the United Kingdom by the Swedish Consul in Vancouver, Mr. Axel J. Stahl, which contains many useful hints to Swedish exporters and suggests a practical solution of the important question of co-operation between the various exporters in order to reduce overhead costs.

IT is rather difficult to draw a clear picture of the marketing conditions in Western Canada for Swedish manufacture while the present business depression is felt so intensely here, as well as in other parts of the world.

Swedish manufacture, in various commodities, has a very good reputation throughout Canada, and there is no reason to believe that a lively market could not be established here, even under the present business conditions, although competition is very keen from England, America, Germany and also Belgium. Vancouver, being the leading city of British Columbia, as far as business is concerned, is crowded with representatives for all commodities of any value, including some of Swedish origin. The result is that every representative is having a rather dull existence and there are few who work at a profit.

If we consider the marketing here of Swedish-made Diesel engines (Full Diesel and Semi-Diesel), we find that all the various makes are represented by different parties, who, as a sideline, also represent makes of other origin. The same conditions also prevail for the iron and steel trade, for the steel wire-ropes market, for manufactures of iron and steel and various other commodities.

A means of obtaining a more effective market for Swedish manufactures would be to establish a Swedish Trading or Central Depot, at which exhibition and warehousing could be undertaken on joint account for the various Swedish exporters who wish to be effectively represented in the Western part of Canada. The suggested Central Depot could in turn work a certain territory, appoint sub-agents and arrange satisfactory propaganda for the specialities exhibited and carried in stock. By careful and gradual building up and making the enterprise known, such an arrangement would give very satisfactory results after a few years, as prompt delivery could in most cases be made from stock and correct information could be given concerning such commodities as, owing to size and cost, could not be kept in stock.

At present, all representatives have their overhead costs, and in most cases they have, in order to maintain their representation, to order

a minimum supply of the goods they require from Sweden, this being kept down to the smallest possible value, owing to payment being demanded against documents and their capital being small. If the overhead costs of the various representatives were added up it would be found that a Central Depot and exhibition could be run at a much lower cost and give much more satisfactory results.

It should be clearly understood that it is extremely difficult to effect any sales without being able to deliver from local stock, except, of course, when it is a question of large units, when naturally stock would be more or less prohibitive. The conclusion is easily drawn, viz., that if an agent, no matter how capable, has a certain engine or implements in stock, which he wishes to sell, and if he is lucky enough to accomplish this wish, he has to wait ten to twelve weeks before another engine can arrive from the factory, unless, of course, he is in a financial position, and also has enough courage, to keep a certain number of sizes in stock.

A central Depot would not in any way handicap old agents, who could get what they wanted from the Central Depot, after having given satisfactory proof as to their financial ability to pay for the goods or their responsibility to be trusted with consignment stock. Whenever they sold a certain article they could instruct the Central Depot to have same shipped to their client, wherever he might be, without having to disturb the small sample stock they had already received to carry for their individual exhibitions.

The B. C. Electric Co. has instituted such a Central Depot, where they receive orders, and from which they supply the various small dealers and electrical contractors in the province at wholesale prices and also customers direct at prices which allow the retailer a certain margin.

As far as shipping facilities are concerned, the Johnson line plies this port regularly almost all the year round, giving an excellent service at very reasonable rates, and as the Johnson line carries one large shipload of grain after another from Vancouver, they should be entitled to return freights from Sweden to Vancouver. An effort could pos-

sibly be made by the Board of Trade in Stockholm to make certain arrangements, say, Canadian grain against Swedish commodities for public consumption, such as sectional steel, hollow drill steel, steel plates, shafting, saws, axes, mechanics tools, Diesel engines, tinned fish, greaseproof and wrapping paper.

I may further point out that although Germany has no official Consul appointed for British Columbia, great efforts are being made to introduce German-manufactured goods on this market, and credit is given in a rather liberal way. German-made beams, channels and angle irons are coming in large quantities to Los Angeles and in several cases are re-loaded and shipped from there up to Vancouver. Direct shipments also come from Germany. A large number of the ironmongers here carry German-made goods, but a good supply also comes from Czecho-Slovakia.

In the textile line, the silk, as a rule, comes from China and Japan, and the manufactured goods from France and Czecho-Slovakia.

The Swedish cut glass industry should be able to work up a market here, but this can only be done by exhibiting the goods and commencing by taking small orders and delivering from stock. We have here good bonded warehouse facilities where the goods can be kept under bond at very reasonable rates. One is also allowed to have the goods in bond on your own premises under lock and key. Swedish sawmill machinery is becoming quite popular, but so far no installations have been made in British Columbia. In the State of Washington, on the other hand, which is our nearest American neighbour, inquiries have been made for such machinery.

There is nothing but the best feeling shown by Canadian people towards the Swedish populace here and, as a matter of fact, there is no ill-will shown towards Germans and German manufactures, and the people at large are perfectly willing to buy a German-manufactured article, providing the quality is good and the price reasonable. It would be well to point out to Swedish exporters the necessity of conforming with the Canadian Customs House stipulations with regard to customs house invoices, which have recently been changed, resulting in some confusion when clearing the goods, which has been done so far on condition that correct invoices are finally procured, when a certain refund will be made.

Dumping prices should not be shown on any invoices, for instance, a piece of machinery is invoiced at \$100.00; trade discount is 35 per cent., leaving \$65.00. Above this there is an extra for the representative of 15 per cent., leaving a net price of \$55.25. The goods will not be cleared at this price through the customs, but will be, cleared at an import price of \$65.00. On the other hand, had the price been stated, gross \$100.00, less 45 per cent., there would have been no objection.

For your information, I may state that there are about 80,000 Scandinavian people living in British Columbia (the total population being 700,

000). There are in all estimated to be about 40,000 Swedes in British Columbia, of which number 12,000 to 14,000 live in Vancouver and neighborhood. A good many of these Scandinavians, especially the Swedes, are naturally fond of Swedish tinned fish, but although it can be had here, the prices are prohibitive. By instituting a Central Depot, as mentioned above, this could be overcome.

New Canada—Sweden Line Opened.

A new line between Canada and Sweden was officially opened when a Swedish liner sailed from Gothenburg to Montreal on her maiden voyage. The new company is the Swedish America Mexico Line, which intends to have regular traffic between the Americas, where ports of call will be in Canada and in Mexico and Sweden, where the liners will dock at Gothenburg, Malmö, and several of the Baltic ports. The Korsholm, a motorship, was the inaugurating liner, sailing from Gothenburg with a cargo of 1,500 tons from Baltic ports and 450 tons from her home port. Heavy ice in the Baltic hindered a heavier cargo, and it is expected that the boats will sail with full loads when more Baltic ports are ice-free. The line works in co-operation with the Norwegian-American Line, and the next steamer was the S.S. Idefjord, leaving Norway. The Swedish motorship Odensholm followed later.

Radio Communication Increasing.

Radio as a means of communication between Sweden and the United States is becoming increasingly popular, according to a report by Count Adolf Hamilton, head of the Swedish government telephone, telegraph, and radio board. Thus the sending and receiving station at Grimeton near Gothenburg on Sweden's western coast exchanged 4,592,199 words in 1930 against 1,945,367 in 1921.

Prospecting in Arabia.

At the request of the Kingdom of Hedjaz, the Swedish government geological survey took steps to equip a prospecting expedition to search for oil and minerals in Arabia. The expedition will be made up of members of the geological survey group and engineers of the Electrical Prospecting Company.

Swedish Youth Leaders Visit America.

Mr. Hugo Cedergren, general secretary of the Swedish National Council of the Y.M.C.A., came to America for a four-months stay as a delegate of the World's Conference of the Y.M.C.A. to be held in Toronto and Cleveland this summer. He is accompanied by his wife, who is a daughter of Prince Bernadotte, a brother of the King of Sweden. Mrs. Cedergren is also vitally interested in the youth of her

country and is president of the Young Women's Christian Association of Sweden, and a member of its World Committee.

American Exhibitions of Milles's Sculpture.

A comprehensive exhibition of Carl Milles's sculpture was opened June 1 for a period of six weeks in St. Louis. It included most of the sculptor's works; pieces having been sent there not only from Sweden, but from England, Holland, and Germany. The Swedish artist has been invited to exhibit in the Toledo Museum of Art at a later date, and a large exhibition in New York in the autumn is also being planned.

Among the sculptor's major moccissions at present is a bronze statue of General Robert E. Lee for Dallas, Texas. A bronze model of his design is now on view in the Art Association of Dallas.

Stockholm's New City Plan Open to International Competition.

Sweden has, in spite of all her own splendid architects, opened to all the world the opportunity to submit plans for rebuilding the lower Norrmalm section of Stockholm. The streets in a part of this quarter are still as they were laid out according to a plan adopted in the seventeenth century. They are now to be widened in order to relieve traffic congestion, and Sveavägen is to be extended to Gustav Adolfstorg, one of Stockholm's most important squares.

Not less than 90,000 kronor has been considered necessary by the city government as money prizes for the successful designs in the architectural competition.

Be sure of your Facts.

Before we let ourselves to inquire into the reason for an assumed state of facts, it would be well for us to ascertain whether or not the thing assumed is really so. A great deal of valuable time is lost because of not doing this. Long arguments are framed in favor of this cause or that, as accounting for what does not exist. It was two or three thousand years ago that a wise man gave a caution in this line, when he said: "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." There is no use in trying to find out the reason for what has no existence. The man who is seeking to learn why the politics or morals of today are worse than those of former days is on the wrong track to start with. He is like a man who attempts to settle the question why the oxtams of our fathers were a more rapid mode of conveyance than a modern express train. An American humorist has said: "It's better not to know so much than to know so many things that ain't so." Only the truth is worth accounting for.