

### RAILWAY BOARD RESERVES DECISION ON EXPRESS DELIVERY CHARGES.

The application of Toronto merchants and manufacturers for the extension of the present free delivery service to the present corporate limits of the city, and urging the cancellation of the manifest fee of ten cents charged on all express shipments from the United States was received by the Dominion Railway Board in Toronto last week. It was shown that there were 592 merchants in the outlying districts who were refused free delivery. Mr. M. K. Cowan, K.C., who represented the Toronto Citizens' Express and Freight Campaign Committee claimed that under the charter of the express companies they were compelled to make a personal delivery to the consignee. In other places in Canada where the population ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 there was a free delivery, while in Toronto there was a population of seventy-five thousand unserved. He admitted that the express companies were entitled to a fair return for their labor and money invested, but as they were public utilities they did not have the right to discriminate between two merchants who may happen to be separated by a boundary line.

Mr. Angus MacMurchy, who represented the Dominion Express Company, claimed that the Railway Commissioners had never ordered a railway or express company to inaugurate an additional service at a loss. There was no discrimination so far as his company was concerned. He produced figures to show that the company was giving a service in some of the outlying districts, the business of which was not sufficient to reimburse the company for the trouble. The delivery area of Toronto covered twenty square miles, in three square miles of which eighty per cent of the business was done by the company.

Mr. MacMurchy pointed out that the population in the area clamoring for the free delivery system was very sparse. According to statistics, figured on the basis of five to a family, the population of East Toronto per acre was four families; North Toronto, one family, and Earlscourt and Northwest Toronto, five families.

The Commission reserved judgment on the case.

### THE MARITIME COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Maritime Commercial Travellers' Association was held at Halifax on Dec. 8, at which officers were elected for the coming year. Mr. James C. Jones succeeds Mr. J. E. Petrie as President. Messrs. A. Meloe Fraser and D. McKinnay were elected Vice-Presidents, and Messrs. G. E. Faulkner and R. S. Ritchie, Secretaries of the Club at Halifax and St. John respectively. The membership of the club for 1916 shows a slight increase during the year being 1,270 as compared with 1,243 in 1915. Out of a total of ten deceased members during the year no less than four died in the service of the Empire. The financial result of the business of the year, as presented in the annual report of the Board of Management, shows an increase of \$9,349.70 in the accumulated funds, and that the total resources now amount to \$128,056.18.

### SHORT WEIGHT LEGISLATION.

Following representations made in connection with the investigation of the rising cost of living the Federal authorities have promised that legislation will be introduced next session to strengthen existing laws regarding short weights in canned goods, package goods, etc. It was disclosed during the investigation that in most canned goods and package foods the net weight was considerably less than the consumer thought he was buying. The weight of the tin or the weight of the cardboard boxes in nearly every case is included in the ostensible contents weight for which the customer pays. Furthermore it has been shown that the proportion of water in canned goods is unduly high.

With a view to enable consumers to ascertain just how much net contents they are really paying for, the proposed law will, it is understood, require the manufacturer to explicitly state the net weight on the label. Other safeguards against "legal fraud" will also be incorporated in the new legislation, which will be modeled on the pure-food laws enacted some time ago in the United States. The legislation if enacted will be a practical and effective step towards meeting an important contributing factor to the increased cost of living.

### THE NEWSPRINT INVESTIGATION.

The United States Trade Commission has been investigating the alleged newsprint shortage and as Canada is a big factor in the supply of news this country is vitally concerned with the outcome. Several Canadian papermakers attended the hearing. According to the plan now tentatively adopted under the leadership of the Trade Commission, a distribution of print paper is apparently to be planned and carried out through the efforts of a joint conference representing manufacturers, consumers and the Government as embodied in the Trade Commission. There seems to be a feeling that in this case some good results may be arrived at in the direction of mitigating prices and equalizing supplies.

The points upon which the Commission especially desired light were listed as follows:

"Measures susceptible of bringing about a more equitable distribution of paper among publishers.

"Measures susceptible, in the view of the witnesses, of preventing prices from rising to prohibitive levels?

"The feasibility of co-operation between large publishers and manufacturers.

"The desirability of an embargo on exports.

"The possibility of publishers profiting in the long run by refraining from entering into contracts covering a long period of time at a fixed price.

"The possibility of small publishers profiting by adopting the plan of co-operative buying."

Statistical data relating to the print paper industry was laid before the hearing by the Trade Commission and it was explained that the facts therein contained would form the basis for the Commission's report. These facts were accepted at the hearing as conclusive evidence.

### Net Receipts Grow Slowly.

The statistics presented by the Commission showed briefly that market prices this year have increased to a much greater extent than contract prices, but constituted such a small proportion of the total deliveries of manufacturers that the net receipts per ton at mill showed only a small advance. Recent renewals of contracts have ranged from \$3 to \$5.50 f.o.b. mill and market prices have been reported as high as \$10 delivered.

The average cost figures obtained from principal Canadian mills, it was reported, was about \$4.50 per ton less than the average for the United States mills in 1916. Both Canadian and United States averages showed no increase in cost during the first half of 1916 as compared with 1915. These averages represent more than 80 per cent of the total production of newsprint of United States mills and about 75 per cent of the total production of Canadian mills.

The Commission explained that in revising the cost figures shown by the books of the manufacturers so as to arrive at the true cost of producing newsprint paper the following important changes were made:

All interest charges, inter-company profits and and transfer profits were eliminated. Depreciation charges were computed by the Commission and substituted for those shown by the books of the manufacturers. Stumpage charges were reduced in a few cases where found to be excessive. Such items carried in profit and loss accounts as profits on the sale of screenings and of waste material, and discounts on purchases, were credited back to costs. All of the revisions made in the costs as shown by the books of the manufacturers resulted in a deduction of \$1.48 per ton from the average cost for 1915, and \$1.15 per ton for the first half of 1916.

### Profits Per Ton Higher.

Selling expenses of the mills, it was reported, were lower in the first half of 1916 than in 1915, and profits per ton were higher. The percentage of profits on net sales was declared to be no index of the rate of profit on investment. Figures on the book investment, revised where information showed inflations in capital, the rate of profit for nineteen United States companies in 1915, was averaged at 5.92 per cent, as compared with 9.34 per cent for fifteen companies in the first half of 1916. These profits, it was explained, were obtained from the total business of these companies, most of which are engaged mainly in the manufacture of newsprint paper. The rates of profits on the cost of investment, if it could have been obtained, the Commission stated, would probably have been somewhat larger than the rates on the revised book investment.

The information gathered by the Commission also showed that in some cases jobbers made large profits on buy-and-sell transactions, but no commissions

were above 5 per cent. The margins of profit were higher as a rule on transient than on contract business. The deliveries used to make these computations were made directly from the mill to the publisher and did not pass through the jobbers' warehouse, so that the cost of business was much less than for sales from stock.

The Commission also reported that both production and imports increased substantially in the first half of 1916 over the two preceding half-year periods. After deducting the exports, which also increased, the quantity available for domestic consumption in the first half of 1916 was 17 per cent greater than in the first half of 1915, and 9 per cent greater than in the second half of that year. Deliveries more than took care of this increase, for the stocks on hand at all points decreased 10,340 tons during the first six months of 1916.

### NEW BRITISH FLOUR SCHEDULE.

The British Government order regarding the percentages of flour that must be extracted from wheat of various qualities is expected to increase the yield of wheat by 8 1-2 per cent. The order came into force as regards milling on November 27—that is to say, on and after that date no wheat may be milled except in accordance with this schedule. On and after January 1, 1917, only flour milled in accordance with the schedule may be used for making bread or any other article of food.

A subsequent order will be issued requiring periodical returns of stocks of wheat received and of flour and offals milled, and of all stocks in hand on the date the milling order came into operation—i.e., November 27.

Communications as to these two orders should be addressed for the present to the Board of Trade (food supplies) Gwydyr House, Whitehall, S. W.

The following is the schedule of percentages of flour that must be extracted from wheat of various qualities, as listed below:

	Per cent.
English . . . . .	76
Choice Bombay . . . . .	78
Australian . . . . .	78
Blue Stem . . . . .	76
Walla Walla . . . . .	75
No. 2 Red Western . . . . .	76
No. 2 Red Winter . . . . .	74
No. 2 new Hard Winter (1916) . . . . .	76
No. 1 Northern, Duluth . . . . .	75
No. 1 Northern, Manitoba, old crop . . . . .	76
No. 2 Northern, Manitoba, old crop . . . . .	75
No. 3 Northern, Manitoba, old crop . . . . .	73
Choice White Karachi . . . . .	75
Soft Red Karachi . . . . .	75
Rosafe, 62 lb. . . . .	73
Baril, 61 1-2 lb. . . . .	74
Barletta-Russo, 61 1-2 lb. . . . .	74

### GOVERNMENT LIQUOR STORES IN SASKATCHEWAN GO.

The Province of Saskatchewan voted unmistakably strong against the continuation of liquor stores in the province under government control. When prohibition went into effect a year and a half ago, and bars were abolished throughout the province, the government undertook to ameliorate the situation by providing liquor stores in the towns and cities under government jurisdiction. At the same time the organized liquor interests were forced out of existence, so that when the referendum was taken last week, the province was almost unanimous in its answer that the liquor store system should be abolished. The government has promised that the twenty liquor stores now in business will close on December 30th never to open again. Every vestige of the traffic is now abolished.

### DEALINGS IN METALS PROHIBITED.

The British Government has issued an order prohibiting all dealings on the London metal exchange. This action has been under contemplation for some time, and means that all future purchases must be made through official channels. For some time the London copper market has been fictitious. Dealers have had to secure a permit from the government in order to trade in over 50 tons. Electrolytic copper has continued to advance on the London metal exchange up to the present time, despite the fact that little metal changed hands. The British government supplies more than 95 per cent of of munition factories in Great Britain with the red metal when it is needed.