

Commissioner Cannot Make Sales

To make the best use of the Canadian trade commissioners, our manufacturers should write, all of them sending samples, price lists, catalogues, particulars of packing, weights, measurements, etc., stating fully by letter just what policy they would like to adopt. At the same time, they should ask for all the suggestions the commissioner can offer as to the best methods of getting into the particular market under review. On request, the commissioner will use his best judgment to find a suitable general agent or territorial agents. This will be done of course without prejudice and the commissioner is not liable for the subsequent success or failure of the agent in making sales or for his financial responsibility. Furthermore, the commissioner cannot be expected to actually go to buyers and make sales although that will probably be the result of his original efforts to develop a connection for the manufacturer.

By watching the Weekly Bulletin it will be noticed that the Canadian trade commissioners pay visits to Canada from time to time and, while here, are indefatigable in their efforts to personally meet as many manufacturers as possible and tell them of conditions in their land while learning the manufacturer's point of view here.

By the trade commissioner service, the government has done its share in providing a practical channel by which the Canadian manufacturer may seek foreign markets. However, as previously pointed out, the commissioners are not sales agents and only provide an important step on the way towards getting into the export field.

Through Advertising

Several Canadian manufacturers are firm believers in the merits of introducing their lines abroad by advertising in export and foreign publications referring buyers to the export manager at the company's head office. No one doubts the merits of well placed and strongly worded advertisements. It is not the purpose of this article to suggest the names of suitable publications. Newly appointed export managers can best find out by consulting the advertising managers of the bigger exporting manufacturers or by taking the confidential advice of the trade commissioners.

The merits of this plan of seeking foreign fields is that it brings the buyer directly in touch with the export manager. The demerits are that it is a costly experiment and somewhat cold blooded inasmuch as it eliminates the personal equation and the benefits of salesmen's visits. However, such advertising in conjunction with the personal efforts of foreign branches or agents is excellent.

Through Export Commission Houses

Most merchandising problems are met as they come up. In the days of Queen Elizabeth, the English manufacturer sought foreign markets for his goods through the medium of trading and commission houses which owned or chartered ships. This system proved satisfactory and the export commission houses extended their branches and foreign connections to provide the maximum trade channel required by the manufacturer. As time went on the foreign sales and the work of ocean carriage became separated and has continued so.

In the United States, export commission houses are very numerous. The head offices are found principally in New York but their branches and connections extend around the globe. In Canada, the principle is newer as our real export work is in its infancy. Nevertheless the medium is a well established one even here and offers the Canadian manufacturer yet another channel for seeking foreign markets.

It is probable that no two export commission houses operate on the same basis—certainly not on the same percentage of remuneration for all commodities. But they are all ready to push the export sales of a manufacturer at a minimum of expense to the latter and it may be assumed that the foreign branches and associate offices will do their best to find local markets in their respective countries for

any Canadian commodity which can be submitted to them in good shape. These foreign offices are familiar with the competition or will soon find it out by trial. It may be argued that one house cannot sell leather goods, foodstuffs and pianos to advantage but the big commission and trading companies have proved that they have done so for many years by the simple expedient of operating different departments.

The benefit to the manufacturer in utilizing the services of an export commission house is that he concentrates his efforts with one Canadian office and ceases to worry over the technicalities of foreign trade and embarrassments of foreign language. Their branch houses and foreign associates become his agents—as long as they "make good."

The demerits of this system is that there is no way of closely checking up the export commission house agents to see if they are making a maximum effort, but this is difficult with any agents abroad, even those appointed by the personal visits of the export manager.

UNION OF ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES

Assessment and Taxation Discussed by President Marshall— Mayor Hardie, of Lethbridge, Favors Western Union

THE 16th annual convention of the Union of Alberta Municipalities was held in Lethbridge, Alta., November 9-11. The president, Mayor Marshall, of Calgary, laid emphasis on two points. Of the two, an appeal for greater latitude in taxation matters, or in the now famous remark of Mayor Hardie, "More Home Rule for Cities," was the more important. The second was that a travelling secretary be appointed to visit the various municipalities, give any assistance necessary, and keep the organization alive generally.

There was nothing more important in the mind of Mayor Marshall than the question of assessment and taxation. The municipalities were about to come into possession of a vast amount of property by reason of the operation of the Tax Recovery Act, and he hoped that this point would be considered at some length by the convention. A broadening of the powers of taxation was necessary, said the president. The municipalities at present were more or less hemmed in by provincial legislation, and in their efforts to remedy this they had been none too successful in getting the sympathetic ear of the government, who were likewise confronted by the problem of financing.

A. J. H. Donahue, of Edmonton, president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts, urged that a committee be appointed to deal with problems of a common interest such as public health, taxation, etc. Their municipalities had "fallen heir to miles and miles of subdivisions" which they wanted to see thrown back to acreage. In this problem they asked for co-operation from the Union of Alberta Municipalities in meeting this important question.

More Freedom for Cities

Mayor Hardie read a paper on "City Home Rule," which strongly urged broader powers for the cities. "We must have a wider range of taxation," he said. In his paper Mayor Hardie pointed out that the annual levy for the budget in all the cities of Alberta is becoming a very serious and heavy burden on the ratepayers, because of the fact that the live tax roll is gradually narrowing down to a smaller number each year by reason of vacant lots falling to the city, and from year to year, unless some filip of increase in population which will build homes, the reduction of the live tax roll will be accelerated because more vacant lots will come to the city due to the increased rate caused by the former delinquencies or relinquishment of vacant lots. To meet this grave state of affairs now hanging over the heads of every city in the province, Mayor Hardie believed the government should immediately grant the cities the right of home rule