

Clergue, Thomas J. Drummond, Charles S. Hinchman, Edmund O. Trowbridge, J. Tatnall Lea, Charles E. Orvis, William H. Plummer, Francis B. Reeves, John T. Terry, Charles D. Warren.

THE BIRMINGHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

We acknowledge the receipt, through the courtesy of a subscriber in Birmingham, of a copy of the "Commercial Year Book of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, with a trade index of its members." The book, which is one of 300 pages, compiled by the secretary, G. Henry Wright, F.C.I.S., acquires added interest for us from the fact that its introduction is furnished by Professor W. J. Ashley, now Dean of the Faculty of Commerce in the University of Birmingham (and a member of council of the Chamber), but formerly professor of Political Economy in Toronto University.

That the incorporated Chamber of Commerce of Birmingham is an influential body may be inferred from the facts that in addition to elected members from among the merchants of that great city the council embraces (ex-officio) the mayors of Aston, Smethwick, West Bromwich and Birmingham itself; the presidents of the Coventry, Dudley, Kidderminster, Walsall, North Staffordshire, Wolverhampton and Worcester; various members of Parliament, among them Joseph Chamberlain and Evelyn Cecil; and several Birmingham organizations of industrial and other kinds. That it is no part of the intentions of the Chamber to hide its light under a bushel appears when we are told that copies of the Year Book have been sent to the English, foreign, Canadian and other colonial boards and chambers, to the British ambassadors, consuls and consular agents, to the principal town clerks in England, to 1,000 home and foreign clubs, and to 2,000 merchants outside the Chamber.

It is a book worth having, too; and since this one is labelled "First Year of Issue," we conclude that its appearance, as, indeed, its title implies, will be an annual event. There is not as much about the trade of Birmingham among its statistics as one would naturally expect, for the great bulk of the 136 pages given to this department consists of Board of Trade figures relating to the trade of the whole United Kingdom. But pages 109 to 112 give entertaining particulars of the different manufacturing output of Birmingham and District, which designation includes the counties of Warwick, Stafford and Worcester, on all which the town of Birmingham abuts. And pages 64 to 66 give tables of the number of persons employed in different trades in this district compared with the whole number in the Kingdom. The arrangement or re-arrangement of official Board of Trade figures of production, import and export—a laborious work—is skilfully done, and will make the book one to which many will turn with satisfaction who desire to know readily the bearing of such figures upon principles or facts. Pages 118 to 125 on inter-imperial trade are valuable. And we call attention to Mr. Wright's occasional heading, entitled "Memorandum."

In the Trade Index, which portion of the book occupies about one-third of the whole, the names of firms or companies who are members of the Chamber are given, with their addresses, telephone numbers, telegraph code used, etc., in parallel columns, and arranged under descriptions of the kind of business done. The enterprise of the Board in this publication has been well supported by advertisers, for we have counted ninety-eight pages of advertisements—a good proportion of them full-page ones. There must be twenty or thirty towns and villages whose trade goes to make up the district totals. Really, as the touring Canadian Manufacturers discovered in their recent visit, so outspread are the manufactures of that marvellous Island that one cannot go five miles in any direction without seeing the stack of a furnace or the chimney of a coal-pit or factory. It takes a whole page to enumerate the products of Birmingham, but other places near have a repute for some specific output, as Redditch for fishhooks and needles;

Coventry, for silks, watches and motors; Walsall, saddlery and harness; Atherstone, felt hats; Bilston, brass founding and japanned ware; Cradley Heath, chains and anchors; Tamworth, earthenware and terra cotta. Wolverhampton and Dudley have, of course, long been famous for iron and brass goods of many kinds.

It would be easy to go on, did space and time permit, quoting from this very full volume. And we should like to quote largely from the admirable introduction. But a good purpose will have been served if we have induced those in Canada who have been so fortunate as to receive a copy to peruse it with care. For, if a single district of the Midlands can present such an array of industries, whose products go everywhere in the world, what should we think of Britain's aggregate industries supposing we could get an adequate view of them!

—The city of Hamilton shows a growth in the last twelve months of about two thousand in population and \$3,000,000 in the value of property assessed. Although the increase in number of her citizens is not so great as Hamilton had a right to expect, a growth of something like ten per cent. in property and income assessment is nothing to be ashamed of. The assessment department figures are given below: Real property, \$27,161,313; business assessment, \$3,874,025; income assessment, \$1,536,325; area assessment, \$78,035; total, \$32,649,698. The assessment of the previous year totalled \$29,734,484, so that the increase amounts to \$2,915,214, or nearly 9.8 per cent. The figures of population for the two years are here compared, showing an increase of 1,989: Population, 1905, 59,547; population, 1904, 57,558.

—Many people in Northern Ontario would appear to be on the hunt for diamonds in that region, judging from the several samples of rock supposed to contain diamonds which are making their way to the Geological Survey at Ottawa. So far, none of the samples have proved to contain the genuine article, but have crystals of other minerals, garnets being one of the varieties. Work will shortly be done by the Geological Survey to locate the source of the drift diamonds, which have been found to the number of about twenty. These precious specimens drifted away from their original home, but their discovery proved the existence of the diamond in not remote places; and it is to be remembered that experts believe there will be great diamond fields discovered some day in Nipissing, Algoma, or adjacent districts in New Ontario. Some of our experts have already been sent into the district.

—That the feeling in favor of municipal ownership of utilities, whether well or ill-founded, is becoming recognized as a real danger by some of those interested is shown in the address of Mr. W. Caryl Ely, president of the American Street Railway Association, at a convention in Philadelphia on the 28th ult. He said: "The question of municipal control of street railways and other public utilities may soon become an issue in municipal politics. In several instances, indeed, it has already been interjected. This is due to a mass of censorious statements in the public press that none of us has taken the trouble to deny, but we can keep quiet no longer; we must refute the statements or suffer by them. Some believe that this wave of sentiment that is sweeping over the country will subside in a short time, but it will not. It is for us to stop it or we will be swept away. At the last analysis the question resolves itself into this: Can or cannot municipal ownership, under our present form of government, successfully operate street railways? The answer is, emphatically, it cannot. All this theoretical and academic talk that we hear is so much wind. Municipal ownership of trolley roads under our present form of government is impracticable. It is municipal socialism the demagogues are shouting."

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