

## British Import Embargo and Canada's Opportunity

By FREDERICK WRIGHT.

A new fact must be faced by Canada, owing to the Lloyd George import embargo, namely that she has lost, through the exigencies of war, a large export trade for the next five years, reaching in value in round figures \$40,000,000 per annum, though this is but a small part of the merchandise exported last year from this country, which amounted to \$446,427,600 (including munitions, but excluding coin and bullion the total exports of Canada for the year ending November 20 reached the huge sum of \$1,973,565,600). The list of excluded commodities contains about twenty articles which effect this country, from machinery to apples. This embargo against Canadian exports should be accepted in the best spirit in this country, and, as a matter of fact, it is by the thinking people, but somehow or other our producers, manufacturers and exporters, who have made splendid profits since the war started, on the greatest trade boom that Canada has ever experienced, have come to look on anything that interferes with those profits, come the interference from where it will, as some kind of injustice. No doubt some men, particularly those interested, will think this too sweeping a statement, but the main facts are well proved in the keen anxiety shown by those who might be effected, on receipt of the first news of the embargo, and when the list of prohibited articles was published in the exultant "thank goodness" of those not touched and the growl of the effected ones who even went to the extent of urging the Premier and Sir George Perley to interfere, which to say the least, must have put our representatives now attending the Imperial Conference in an embarrassing position. Such a selfish spirit is not good advertising for this country.

But the British import embargo, while it will serve as a temporary check on some of our export trade, will also do much to develop the industries of this country. It will have forced us to take stock of ourselves industrially and commercially; it has suggested to us how to solve our own problems of shortages and high prices, and has pointed out the way to develop new markets for our commodities.

As already mentioned, Canada, last year, exported over a billion dollars worth of goods, at exceptionally good profits, but this huge trade is abnormal for Canada and when peace comes a reaction will set in, and unless we find new markets our export trade figures will drop to less than those of 1913, the year previous to the war when the value of our exports stood at around \$400,000,000. It would, therefore, be wise for the manufacturers and exporters of this country to make a more intelligent study of the investigations that the Department of Trade and Commerce has been making with the idea of securing new markets for Canadian products. Strange to say the valuable information acquired by the commissioners of the department has been used very sparingly even by those it would most benefit, and when a national conference was called by Sir George Foster, to study the problem, so little response was made that the meeting was finally called off. Canada has much to learn in this respect, if she would conserve her forces so that when one market is closed she can find other markets with the least possible delay and cost. For instance, there is no good reason why the British embargo should stop the production or manufacture of any of the articles prohibited. If the commercial forces of the country were properly organized new markets would at once have been found. But the truth is that considering its good resources and central geographical position and the valuable and up-to-date commercial information now in the archives at Ottawa waiting to be used, this country is the most backward of the modern nations in commercial enterprise.

The exports of Canada during this last year show big profits, but in normal times returns from produce and fruits have been comparatively very low. Mr. Sanford Evans who knows more about wheat and its marketing than most men, has stated more than once that Canada for many years has had the unhappy knack of marketing her wheat at the time of the year when prices were lowest and supplies were biggest, with the consequence that though she grows the best wheat in the world she on an average gets the lowest prices. During the same period she has been shipping her best farm produce, such as cattle, cheese, butter, eggs, and fruits at prices low enough to be retailed in London, or any part of England,

cheaper than could be bought in the stores in Montreal or Toronto. A lack of business acumen is shown when such a condition of things is allowed to exist in the export trade of a country. There is no doubt that if the war had not intervened and forced prices sky high, the producers of this country would have been compelled to adopt more economic methods of marketing their commodities, as indeed they will be when peace comes with its reaction in prices.

Thus perhaps the consumer in Canada will be shown more consideration, as indeed he should have been from the first, and with more profit to the producer. One of the principal reasons, of high prices for foodstuffs in Canada, for the last few years, and the exceedingly high prices of to-day, is this same short-sighted policy of exporting without any sense of demand with correspondingly poor returns, which had to be made up by high prices from the poorer qualities left in Canada and sold to the Canadian public. For be it understood that the inspection in England of imported cattle and food stuffs is rigid. One ventures to say that if the policy of catering to the home market first was adopted there would be a much larger consumption of home grown and home fed produce. At least this has been the experience of all progressive productive countries.

In an intelligent catering for the home market first the producer will get a better grasp of the needs of the consumer and will grow accordingly, and the same intelligence carried further afield to other markets will give correspondingly better returns.

To sum up, the great lessons that the British import embargo should teach us, in Canada, are to grow, breed and manufacture all we can, first for the home market; second for the requirements of the Old Country, the rest of the Empire and our Allies, and third, for the foreign market. But start with the home market or reverse the present system of the home market being catered to last of all.

### CANADA'S DUTY IS CLEAR.

Mr. Sanford Evans, who recently gave a very illuminating address before the Ottawa Board of Trade on "Wheat and its Marketing," in discussing the British import embargo and its effect on Canada, draws some very interesting conclusions, which are worth repeating. In part they read as follows:

"We are told that the problem is one of ocean tonnage; therefore, Canada's duty is clear, since to the extent to which she can supply essentials she can effect the release of more tonnage than can be accomplished in any other way. On the basis of what Canada has consumed in the past we can work out our own probable requirements this year, but we can restrict the variety of our own diet if by concentrating on the production of essentials we can better accomplish the two-fold purpose of having enough for our own health and comfort and also the reserves that will materially relieve our Allies."

"Our efforts must not be confined to wheat. In winter wheat districts the seeding time is already long past, and in spring wheat districts the safe seeding time is at best short. We can never seed all our land to wheat in this country, even with much more fall ploughing than was done last year. After we have done our best with wheat there will be a great deal of planting time and abundance of land to be used in other ways. The new provisions in Great Britain may lessen her demand for oats and barley. Moreover, an appeal on a few things like wheat, oats and hay would reach only a limited number of producers. There is the man and the woman who could work the small piece of ground. And Great Britain needs more than wheat, oats and hay."

#### — Advised to Grow Beans.

"To take only one example. She is receiving every week shipments of peas and beans from China, Japan, the British East Indies and Madagascar. In as far as Canada could offer suitable supplies it would release two-thirds of the freight room now so employed. Canada has never produced enough beans for her own consumption, and there never has been such an opportunity to lay the foundation of a permanent export trade in canned beans."

"Our plans should be laid to produce the things needed in the proportions to which they are needed. Anything else is economic waste of seed, labor and land. Lloyd George does not apparently contemplate

calling upon us for potatoes. In an average season Canada has been producing more potatoes than she requires. After taking into account exports and imports and making allowances for seed, there was available for the use of the people of Canada, during the five years before the war, on an average, about three times the quantity of potatoes per head of population than was available for the people of the United States. Moreover, the quantity of potatoes thus available per head of population for every day of the whole year was greater than the allowance made by lumbermen per day for their shantymen in winter time.

#### Must Eliminate Waste.

"Waste must be eliminated as far as possible. Every bit of everything should be turned to good account. If Great Britain takes no apples from us we will, with an average season, have about one million barrels to spare. For this excellent food-stuff to be wasted would be a crime. To what extent can apples be used as a substitute for other things that would occupy land this season. Experts can tell us what is possible, if the people are willing to respond."

"Another most important point for consideration and organization is that of seed. Unless some steps are taken to locate the present supplies and suggest means of obtaining seed much less planting will be done than could and should be done."

#### Advocates Food Supply Commission.

"By what exact agency this planning and organizing is carried on does not, perhaps, matter, so long as the work is done. I, myself, have from the beginning of the war advocated a food supply commission for Canada, but if the department of agriculture by itself, or in co-operation with other departments, is taking hold of the problem systematically and aggressively an important result can be accomplished. One thing is certain, however, and that is that planning and effort on a different scale and of a different kind from any adopted by this country up to the present time is required. It is not a question for this year only. The new British plans for home production cover five years. The whole nature of our market in Europe will be altered, perhaps radically, and we must be equipped and alert to adapt our production to the changing needs of the market."

### MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE AND THE EMBARGO.

Sir George Foster in an interview on the Lloyd George import embargo said:

In many lines our exports will be cut down. In the matter of timber and fruits and fish and agricultural implements we shall be most largely affected, but on the other hand all our staple food supplies will be required to the maximum of our production, and we shall cheerfully make the best of the situation, sustained by the feeling that in sharing the troubles and sacrifices we are more intimately associating ourselves with the Mother Country and the Empire at large in the common purposes of the war.

"I wish it could so work out that we in Canada would do what we have not yet begun to do, namely, to sacrifice some of our pleasures and indulgences and expensive and unnecessary modes of living, and so keep pace voluntarily here with what becomes compulsory in the Mother Country. Later, and perhaps not very much later, it may become compulsory here, for it surely is not right for us to diminish by extravagant and wasteful methods of living and by declining to submit ourselves to restrictions which touch no essential point of health or real comfort the precious and essential supply of food and other materials that are becoming so necessary to the success of the war."

"Lloyd George has struck the big note of the war—it will enter every ear and will appeal to every loyal heart within the empire. The first shudder at the grave situation revealed will be succeeded by a courage and determination, armed by a knowledge of the real truth, which will work its will to victory with sure and certain steps."

### LOBSTER PACKERS AT OTTAWA.

A delegation of lobster packers from Halifax, who interviewed the Minister of Trade and Commerce, at Ottawa, regarding the British Embargo on lobsters learned that the embargo "restricts only fifty per cent of lobsters." The delegation consisted of Hon. Mr. O. Melanson, Shediac; J. A. Neville, Halifax; Richard O'Leary, Richibucto.