

BRITISH CONSULS WILL WORK.

Specimen Replies to Invitation From Dominion
Ministry of Commerce.

The excellent effort to set the British Consuls in the United States at work for Canada that was made by the Department of Trade and Commerce last winter, is pretty fully described in the monthly report of the department for May, just issued. The department's circular letter was replied to by most of the British Consuls in the United States, of whom there are fifty-three. All professed great readiness to serve the interests of Canada.

Sir Richard Cartwright's inquiry was sent out in January. The earliest reply was dated January 15th. It took the Consul at New Orleans until May 1st to indite his reply, and the acting Consul at Savannah considered the matter until May 29th. The answers are all interesting, and one, at least portentously serious. There is a delicious touch of pomposity in this sentence: "You will please look upon this letter as the expression of my own personal views; and not necessarily those of His Majesty's Government."

The circular letter assumed that the services of British Consuls were always available whenever the Empire's trade might demand, and asked:

(a) What suggestions can you offer seeking to bring about more intimate commercial relations with Canadian business men?

(b) Have you had much correspondence with Canadian firms? If so, has it resulted satisfactorily or otherwise?

(c) Do you think you can assist Canadians to extend their market in your district?

Assurance was given to the British Consuls that, should they so desire, all official publications issued by the Canadian government should be forwarded them regularly. Very general thanks was expressed in the replies therefor, which has led for the first time to all the more important of the British Consular offices in the United States being furnished with a large number of official Canadian publications. Here are some extracts from replies:

Chicago Post Suggested.

Mr. Alexander Finn, Consul General at Chicago:

"I beg to remind you that soon after my arrival at this post I wrote you offering the services of the staff of the Consulate at Chicago, with its vice-consuls at six large cities in other States, in any way that might be useful to you, as I have always considered myself as representing the whole Empire and at the service of any and every British subject from wheresoever he might come. I consider that all representatives of the departments of governments in the Empire, on visiting a town, should make the consulate their headquarters, and if resident in the town should have their office with the consulate. Most of the correspondence that we have had with Canadians on business has been with persons seeking agencies in Canada for American goods."

Nothing Doing at Boston.

Mr. Wyndham, Consul at Boston: "Canadian: do not, so far as my own experience of nine years as a British Consul of the United States proves, avail themselves of the assistance of British Consuls. I have never had during my consular experience, any inquiries from a Canadian merchant. From the other colonies, from Australia and India such inquiries are often received and are as promptly attended to as similar inquiries from Great Britain. Such assistance as is in my power I will gladly give to any Canadian firm seeking markets for their goods in my consular district. I shall be pleased to receive from your office any official publication you may desire to send me, which will be filed here for the use of Canadians in this district. I believe there are residents in Boston and its vicinity about 150,000 Canadians."

The correspondence opened with Mr. Wyndham had immediate effect, for Mr. Wyndham shortly after stated that he had certain inquiries which he could not answer as he had no data to fall back upon. Upon the same being furnished him, Mr. Wyndham replied that he had already answered the inquiry correctly.

New York Always Ready to Serve.

Sir Percy Sanderson, K.C.M.G., Consul General at New York: "I know of no valid reason why Canadians should not avail themselves of the services of British Consular officers and commercial agents, although in practice they do so less than residents in the British Isles. The services of this consulate general are and always have been at their disposal. Correspondence with Canadian firms has been very small considering the proximity of the Dominion and the extent of the trade between the two countries. I have little doubt that assistance could be given to Canadian to extend their market in this country if they would state their requirements."

Always Ready at Galveston.

Mr. Horace D. Nugent, Consul at Galveston: "His Majesty's Consular officers are the public servants of the Empire at large. It should be our pleasure to hold ourselves ready at all times to assist the commercial interests

of our fellow Britons, whether in the United Kingdom or the colonies. Nothing would give me greater pride than to feel that I had helped to extend the trade of the Dominion. I would suggest that it should be made known as widely as possible through official publications, Chambers of Commerce &c., that British consular officials in this country will take pleasure in answering Canadian commercial inquiries. I have had very few inquiries from Canadian firms, but I do not think any business has resulted. Our consulates only make an annual report, and it would be better for the prospective Canadian buyer or seller to address a letter of inquiry to me."

Portland Regrets Absence of Reports.

Mr. Laidlaw, Consul at Portland, Ore.: "I am often called upon by Canadians for advice; not so often about commercial matters relating to Canada, but more often as to land and tariff questions. It is not the province of a British Consul to encourage the trade of Americans to the detriment of British trade. I have never looked upon myself as merely the representative of a section of the Empire."

"If Canadian business men would make their desires known they would assist in every way practicable. A consul cannot make business or work up business, but he can make suggestions and answer inquiries which might lead to this. I have had exceedingly little correspondence with Canadian firms. I regret that none of the departments of the Canadian government have ever thought of sending their reports to this office for my information unless specially inquired for. Not even changes in tariff are notified."

San Francisco Interested and Surprised.

Mr. C. W. Bennett, British Consul General at San Francisco, under date of January 18, 1906, states, in reply to the circular: "The circular interests me because all that tends to the consolidation of the component parts of the Empire must be the wish of every subject of the Empire. It surprises me because I gather that an impression seems to exist in some quarters that British Consular officers take no interest in colonial questions. I never made any distinction whatever in giving assistance to all subjects of the Empire. A large trade between British Columbia and San Francisco already exists. It is presumably in the hands of business men to see the opportunity offered and seize it. Any assistance asked for I will be most happy to give whenever possible."

Don't Ask Philadelphia too Much.

Mr. Wilfrid Powell, Consul at Philadelphia: "I shall be glad to assist in bringing the fact home to Canadians that a British Consul is not appointed to his post merely for the purpose of assisting people in or from the mother country. Firms in Canada should address their requirements to the consul, taking care that the inquiry is made in fullest detail in order that the consul may be able to obtain if possible equally full information. We have had a considerable amount of correspondence on commercial matters with Canadian firms and business men, in some cases evidently with satisfactory results, judging from letters received. Canadians might receive some benefit from the assistance of consular officers provided they do not expect them to act as representatives of their firm, or as sometimes the case, as commercial travellers. Moreover, information must not be sought for of a nature that a consular officer cannot properly obtain or ask for."

Small Prospects at New Orleans.

Mr. H. T. Carew-Hunt, Consul at New Orleans: "I am always ready to do anything in my power to assist Canadian commercial interests in my district. I would suggest that a list of the British Consular officers in the United States should be sent to the various boards of trade and chambers of commerce throughout the Dominion, with the information that the services of such officers are at the disposal of Canadian merchants to promote Canadian trade interests. Similar lists might with advantage be sent to other institutions. I have had little if any correspondence with Canadian firms, though I do not think that Canadians could at present extend their market to any appreciable extent in my district."

Savannah Tells of Wrong Impressions.

Mr. A. Harkness, Consul at Savannah Ga.: "For the last few years very few trade inquiries have been received at this consulate from Canadian traders owing, no doubt, to wrongful impressions apparently entertained by them on the subject. I should be glad to have it understood that no hesitation or reluctance should be felt by Canadian inquirers who are desirous of assistance from the consular officers in this district. There is some export trade from the ports of this district to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, mostly in yellow pine lumber, rosin, turpentine, &c., but comparatively little business is done in direct Canadian imports, as such goods of Canadian origin as are consumed here come, as a general rule, by way of New York and Boston. Improvement in the present conditions might be hoped for in the near future if a proper effort is made in the right direction."