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The sudden death of the Hon. Ralph Smith, Minister of Finance in the government of British Columbia, takes from the government its most experienced legislator and from the executive council one of its most conscientious and ablest members. The loss will be severely felt by the government as well as by a very large number of people in the province who were fortunate to have the genial and sturdy Ralph Smith as a personal friend.

He came to the position of Finance Minister, as he frankly acknowledged, with but limited experience in financial affairs. His attitude toward his portfolio was one of humility. He sought aid and advice of all who could be of assistance. Yet his experience of affairs and his knowledge of men, together with his large capacity of common sense and native shrewdness invariably led him to do the right thing. He could not be imposed upon and he could not be stampeded, and several cases of both occurred during his three months' tenure of office. In an unostentatious, common sense way he effected numerous savings in the administration of finance which inured to the benefit of the province. By dint of hard work he had cleaned the slate of all matters which had been held in abeyance incident to a change in government, and was preparing the budget to be presented to the session of the House and devising schemes of economy and ways and means to enlarge the revenue when his departure came. The keynote of his policy was to act with considerable measure of liberality toward that which would stimulate and encourage industry and production, but to be adamant toward any form of expenditure which did not confer a large public benefit or promise an economic return. Such a policy is the essence of the Common Place; yet the ills of the province are directly attributable to the failure to pursue a like policy.

Common sense, native shrewdness and an open mind, with conscientious effort, will go a long way toward making an efficient administrator. All of these the late Ralph Smith possessed in remarkable degree. His unselfish activities which characterized his public life, inspired devotion in those with whom he came in contact and the editor of this journal is happy to be counted among them.

Money from the United States has been seeking investment in Canada in steadily growing amounts. The outbreak of war naturally brought a stop to investment from that source as well as from Britain, but after the readjustment and the subsequent prosperity induced by the war, money commenced to flow across the boundary line. It had not begun to assume large proportions until about last summer, when several large enterprises were undertaken involving the expenditure of considerable sums of money in the Dominion. British Columbia has been favored particularly in the timber and allied industries and mining.

When President Wilson suddenly handed the German Ambassador his passports, financial interests were naturally apprehensive with the result that negotiations in progress between Canadian opportunity and United States capital were held in abeyance. Several instances of this are known in Vancouver. The natural inquiry is what effect will the present condition or the event of the United States declaring war on Germany have on the investment of American funds in British Columbia enterprise and development.

It was at first thought that the German citizen or the German-American would start riots and in other ways seek to create a reign of terror with the destruction of property, etc. for the purpose of delaying the giving of assistance to the Allies. This idea has been greatly dissipated because of many precautions having been taken and the general expression of loyalty of the hyphenate to his adopted land.

The second contingency may possibly be an embargo against the exportation of capital. In view of the large supplies of gold and the effect of a federal reserve banking system which has hardly been called into use and which is capable of an expansion in credit of several billions of dollars an embargo on capital or credit would be at most only temporary and would appear unlikely of being instituted.

There remains, however, the probability that the shock of war, as just at present the shock of the severance of diplomatic relations upon things financial, would certainly tend to create uncertainty which in the circumstances would preclude investment not only in Canada or British Columbia, but in the United States itself except in the securities of the United States government. We venture the opinion that in the event of the Republic becoming a belligerent, the flow of capital for British Columbia enterprise would be only temporarily interrupted. It is conceivable on the other hand that in the case of newsprint or mining of mineral to be used in making of munitions, that the American government may stimulate and encourage capital to take hold.

The expansion of the shipping of the ports of Vancouver and Victoria renders the business of marine insurance of something more than theoretic interest. The paper read before the Insurance Club of British Columbia recently by Mr. B. G. D. Phillips has great interest to all those engaged in the business of insurance and has particular importance to a growing number of agents who will be called upon to write marine risks and to a growing number of merchants who will engage in shipping goods to the ports of the world.

In a short time another paper will be read by the same gentleman from the practical point of view of a marine agent in Vancouver. Both articles we hope to present to our readers in full, but we must ask their pardon and indulgence in that we have not the space in a single issue to give an entire article. The first article, therefore, will appear in three installments, the first of which is on page eleven of this issue. Subsequent installments will appear in each succeeding issue until both articles have been presented in full.