

40.

RECEIVED  
 MAY 1 1917  
 Int. Agr. Inst.

# The Journal of Commerce

Vol. XLIII., No. 18

MONTREAL, TUESDAY, MAY 1, 1917

Price, 10 Cents

## The Journal of Commerce

Devoted to  
**CANADIAN INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND  
 FINANCE.**

Published every Tuesday Morning by  
 The Journal of Commerce Publishing Company,  
 Limited.

Head Office: 35-45 St. Alexander Street, Montreal.  
 Telephone: Main 2662.  
 Toronto Office: 263 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.  
 Telephone: Adelaide 917.

**HON. W. S. FIELDING,**  
 President and Editor-in-Chief.

Subscription price, \$3.00 a year.  
 Advertising rates on application.

MONTREAL, TUESDAY, MAY 1, 1917.

### Special Articles

**Retail Selling and Mail Order Competition.**  
 By W. W. Swanson, Ph.D.

**Banking and Business Affairs in the U. S.**  
 By Elmer H. Youngman.

**The Excess Profit Tax as Amended.**  
 By H. M. P. Eckardt.

**Conditions in the West.**  
 By E. Cora Hind.

Editorials:	Page
Untimely Preferential Questions.....	1
Billions .....	2
The Budget.....	2
As To Posterity .....	2
Retail Selling and Mail Order Competition ..	3
Banking and Business Affairs in the United States .....	4
The Excess Profits Tax as Amended.....	5
Finance Minister's Budget Speech .....	5
Public Opinion .....	7
Mentioned in Despatches .....	8
Among the Companies .....	9
Montreal Stock Exchange.....	11
British Cattle Supply Co., Ltd., Prospectus.....	13
Golden Rule .....	14
Telegraph and Express Statistics .....	15
Where Accidents Occur .....	16
Food Control .....	19
Lumber, Pulp and Paper.....	20
Conditions in the West .....	21
Commodity Markets .....	22-23

## Untimely Preferential Questions

WHOEVER has recently been pressing the question of Imperial preferential trade upon the attention of the British Government has been doing no good service to the cause, or to the Dominion, or to the Empire. Desirable as that policy is from some viewpoints, there are few thoughtful people who, on calm reflection, will not see that the raising of the question, in the midst of the war's problems is a grave mistake. Even if the British Government were in a position to take clear and decisive action along the lines laid down by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, it would be unwise to bring forward at this time a question known to be of the most contentious character. Still more unwise is the raising of the issue when the British authorities are unable to make any declaration on the subject that is not marked by halting, indecision and doubt. The report of the committee headed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh gave but a hesitating support to the movement, and even that was not approved by all its members. Several days ago inspired cablegrams from England announced that the Imperial Government had accepted the policy of preference and that an official announcement of this was to follow immediately. The further announcement was awaited with some curiosity. Now that it has come we are not surprised to find that what has been agreed upon affords additional evidence of the mistake that was made when the question was raised for present consideration. It would almost seem that the Imperial Conference, having long ago disposed of the real business it had to do, is endeavoring to justify its continued existence by passing resolutions of some kind, and that it has found the question of preference a tempting one.

Mr. Lloyd George was expected to make the announcement in his Guildhall speech on Friday. His reference to the subject was brief and somewhat vague. We quote:

"We have decided that in future it is the business of British and Dominion statesmanship to knit the Empire in closer bonds of interest, of trade, of commerce, of business and general intercourse in affairs. We have considered this problem and decided that in order to develop those enormous territories in future it is necessary that exceptional encouragement should be given to the products of each part of the Empire. We believe that a system of preference could be established without involving the imposition of food burdens. We believe it can be done without that; and of course with food the scarcest and dearest this is not a time to talk of putting additional burdens on food. But for the purpose of a prefer-

ence that will not be essential. You can secure that by other means, particularly by taking the measures which other lands have taken for improving communication between one part of their dominions and the other. By these means the products of one country inside this great Imperial commonwealth can be brought more freely, more readily and more economically to the markets of the other.

"The Empire has infinite resources of wealth, minerals, food products and every commodity needful for man; and it is obviously advantageous, not merely to the particular country producing these products, but to every other part, including the United Kingdom, that these commodities should be developed to the utmost. This would enrich, strengthen and bind together the Empire as a whole."

With much that the Prime Minister here says there will be general sympathy, but he virtually declares the abandonment of the policy of preferential tariff that was advocated by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and his followers. Questions and answers in the British House of Commons on the same day afford a little more information:

Mr. Bonar Law said: "The Imperial War Cabinet has unanimously accepted the principle that each part of the Empire, having due regard to the interests of our Allies, shall give special favorable treatment and facilities to the products and manufactures of other parts of the Empire."

Mr. Outhwaite: "How did the war cabinet come to that decision when one part of the Empire—Australia—was not represented?"

Mr. Bonar Law: "The parts which were represented have come to this decision, which does not at present include Australia."

Mr. King: "Will any legislation be brought in to this end in the near future?"

Mr. Bonar Law: "I need not tell the House that there is no intention whatever of making any change during the war."

Major Hunt: "Does it apply to food?"

Mr. Bonar Law: "The resolution which I have read leaves the question open. It does not involve taxation on food."

The first thought that must come from the reading of these references to the question is: If no present action is contemplated, if nothing is to be done during the war, if the great Commonwealth of Australia has had no voice in the matter, if it is necessary to have "due regard for the interests of our Allies," why should any resolutions be passed now, why should any announcement be made, necessarily of a vague and inconclusive character? Vitality important is the last sentence of Mr.