

IMPORT DUTIES AND FREIGHT RATES

Is Railway Nationalization Advisable? Further Comments on Mr. Beer's Article

The following letter comes to *The Monetary Times* from Mr. A. L. Crossin, president of the Winnipeg board of trade:—

"I have read in *The Monetary Times* with much interest Mr. Beer's timely contribution to that better understanding of the underlying principles of import duties which is essential to a proper reconstruction of our present commercial relations. Mr. Beer asks that the tariff be framed by a non-political body of experts on scientific principles to achieve given results. This demand must meet with general approval. It is really what Western Canada has been asking for years. Mr. Beer has rendered a valuable service in pointing out that import duties and freight rates are divisions of the same subject.

Nationalization of Railways.

"While not declaring himself, Mr. Beer seems to favor nationalization of railways. I have yet to be convinced that it is to the country's interest to take over the railway lines, and believe that we can solve our tariff and freight problems better without the responsibility of operating our railroad systems.

"With our much heavier burden of national debt, increased taxation, new trade arrangements and problems of immigration—to say nothing of the expected keen competition for trade on the part of European countries—it is fairly obvious that a higher degree of business efficiency is essential to our prosperity. This efficiency can only be achieved by a very thorough technical training and a wider knowledge of the principles of trade and operation of tariffs. Better facilities for the commercial education of the younger members of the business community is the duty of the hour. Not only must our schools and colleges give closer attention to commercial education, but I believe that boards of trade might usefully establish lecture courses for the benefit of the staffs of commercial houses. These courses might cover such subjects as foreign trade, money and exchange, commercial law, banking, accounting and auditing, transportation, natural resources of the country, as well as lectures on the different lines of business.

Co-operation Between Interests.

"Then we must have co-operation between producers, merchants, railways and bankers, who have hitherto for the most part regarded their interests as mutually hostile. The recently formed committee on agriculture and commerce, in which farmers meet the city business men for the discussion of their common interests, is an outstanding illustration of the possibility of such co-operation to the immense advantage of the community. This committee's conferences have already rendered a unique service in promoting a better understanding amongst men who are, after all, fellow-citizens of a common country, and who are beginning to realize that our mutual interests are much larger than those of individual concern only."

Mr. R. McKenzie, secretary-treasurer of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, Winnipeg, writing *The Monetary Times* in regard to Mr. Beer's article, says:—

Not Enough Consideration.

"Such questions should receive the greatest possible attention, and I am convinced that important trade questions have not received the consideration that they deserved in the past, and that there has been a tendency to suppress any opinion that did not conform to business views of the section of business interested that were beneficiaries of our tariff."

The following companies have increased their capital stock: Rose and Lafamme, Limited, with Dominion charter, from \$75,000 to \$125,000; Automatic Paper Box Company, Limited, with Dominion charter, from \$125,000 to \$200,000; Leadlay Manufacturing Company, Limited, with Manitoba charter, from \$40,000 to \$200,000; Hogg and Lytle, Limited, with Ontario charter, from \$150,000 to \$300,000; Prudential Coal Company, with Quebec charter, from \$20,000 to \$49,000; Green and Mitchell, Limited, with Saskatchewan charter, from \$2,000 to \$20,000.

WESTERN WHEAT, 5 INCHES HIGH

Crop Conditions Observed by The Monetary Times' Representative—Decrease in Wheat Acreage

Monetary Times Office,

Winnipeg, June 5th.

A decrease of approximately 15 per cent. in the wheat acreage in Western Canada is the estimate arrived at by *The Monetary Times'* representative after a three weeks' tour of the prairie provinces, though in some cases the figures furnished would indicate a decrease of possibly 20 per cent. To make up for this, the indications are that there has been a heavy increase in acreage sown to oats, barley and flax, so that, on the whole, there should not be more than a 10 per cent. decrease from the 1915 acreage sown to all grains.

Seeding is completed in Western Canada. Spring has been somewhat backward, but present conditions are favorable and the 1916 crop is off to a good start. In several localities wheat was noticed 5 inches high and there has been no setback to date.

A great deal of the seeding this year was put in on stubble on account of so little ploughing being done last fall. With favorable weather conditions this may come along all right, but is more or less of a gamble.

Canadian Northern Was Busy.

Along the Goose Lake line of the Canadian Northern Railway good crops were reaped last year. The farmers generally are prosperous, and are erecting good buildings and have modern equipment. Several implement men report this to be one of the best territories in the west. The Canadian Northern Railway run a good service between Saskatoon and Calgary, and report a heavy freight business at practically all seasons of the year. An automobile salesman, whom *The Monetary Times* met on this line, reported that he could not get cars quick enough to supply the demand. Many of the farmers, he said, were buying a better class of car this year than usual. There was grain congestion on this line during the winter, but the wheat is now fairly well out, although there is a quantity still to be moved in this district.

On this line of the Canadian Northern Railway at Drumheller, Alta., 85 miles east of Calgary, are located valuable coal fields, which are producing an excellent sample of soft coal. These mines did good service last winter in supplying need in many points in Saskatchewan and Alberta during the very severe weather when there was a coal shortage in the west.

Outlook in Southern Alberta.

The Monetary Times, in discussing conditions with the branch manager of a prominent implement house, with headquarters in Calgary, received an encouraging report of this great south country. This gentleman had just returned from a 700-mile automobile trip. All of this country had a record crop last year, and many farmers are in good shape. The implement business had been better with his firm than it had been for five years, and collections were good.

Saskatchewan Cities Optimistic.

The Monetary Times found conditions in Regina to be fairly good. The Robt. Simpson Company have just opened their splendid building to take care of their mail order business in the west, and will ultimately employ about 400 people. The Imperial Oil Company are at present at work on a large plant and refinery in Regina to cost about \$1,500,000. Loan company managers report that they are now loaning money again, but that there was little demand for loans, especially farm loans. Payments were being met satisfactorily also. In Moose Jaw, which is an important Canadian Pacific Railway centre, conditions were found to be fairly good.

The Eastend Townsite Company, Limited, with Saskatchewan charter, has reduced its capital stock from \$200,000 to \$25,000.

The following companies, with Saskatchewan charters, have changed their names: The G. V. Oberholtzer Company, Limited, to Hydro City Shoe Manufacturers, Limited; the Berlin Trunk and Bag Company, Limited, to Canada Trunk and Bag, Limited.