

The Chronicle

Banking, Insurance and Finance

ESTABLISHED 1881. PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY.

F. WILSON-SMITH, *Proprietor and Managing Editor.*
Office:

406-408 LAKE OF THE WOODS BUILDING,
10 St. JOHN STREET, MONTREAL.

Annual Subscription, \$3.00 Single Copy, 10 cents.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 30th, 1919

THE GENERAL FINANCIAL SITUATION.

(Continued from Page 533)

among leading London financiers which advocated the tying of a string to borrowings from abroad in Great Britain in the interests of British exporters received scant attention. The war has changed that state of affairs considerably. There is now abundant evidence of a desire for close co-operation between British trade and finance, and even, astonishing as it may seem to some of us who knew the ways of the British manufacturer in the old days, of a willingness on his part to meet the requirements of the customer and get away from the "take it or leave it" attitude, which has been his characteristic for generations. The whole question raised by Sir Charles Gordon is obviously beset with difficulties. There is no doubt that by reason of its geographical situation, and its facilities for constant communication the United States possesses an enormous advantage in the Canadian market and in many lines American standards have definitely become Canadian standards. But it is also certainly true that "we must not think that it is possible for British statesmen to encourage a preferred policy in regard to Canada, unless we are prepared to reciprocate." How it will be possible to work out this problem remains to be seen, and the fact should not be overlooked that there are possibilities of friction in endeavouring to arrive at a solution.

The trade returns for the month of April which appear in a new and considerably improved form, indicate unmistakably the development of the process of re-adjustment from war to peace conditions. In both exports and imports, the figures show a decided falling-off from recent months, exports showing the lightest total for any April since 1916 while imports are the lowest since February, 1918. In regard to imports, it may be noted that these, as well as exports are markedly affected by the cessation of the munitions industry, since very large aggregates of our imports in the last year or two have represented raw materials and finished parts used in that industry. Exports at \$64,489,159 compare with

\$71,161,652 in April, 1918, and \$91,152,361 in March, 1919, while April imports were \$54,255,219 against \$78,623,941 in April, 1918, and \$71,749,569 in March, 1919. As regards the character of our trade, there is a decided falling off in our exports of agricultural products, these being \$23,004,124 compared with \$31,180,400 in April, 1918. The decrease in this item, which has been notably in evidence for several months, is, of course, to be accounted for by the lessened pressure for food-stuffs abroad as a result of the war. Animal products (which include leather), are on the other hand much higher than a year ago being \$15,838,677 compared with \$8,359,173. Of the other classifications of our exports, the most interesting feature is iron and steel which is reported at \$6,388,248 compared with \$3,227,523. This, it may be hoped represents a developing trade. With regard to imports, apart from the downward drop in iron and steel products, due to the cessation of the munitions industry, there was during April a large decrease in the import of films, textiles and textile products. This is probably to be attributed to the difficulty in securing these materials and not to any lack of demand. It is well known in trade circles, for instance, that British woollens are exceedingly difficult to get at the present time.

PROSPEROUS YEAR FOR SAVINGS BANKS IN NEW YORK.

Speaking at the annual meeting and luncheon of the State Savings Banks' Association of New York in the Hotel Biltmore, Samuel H. Beach, president of the Association, who is also the president of the Rome (N. Y.) Savings Bank, declared that the savings banks were never so prosperous in their history.

He said that since December 1, 1917, money simply flowed into the institutions from all sources, but particularly from laboring men and thousands of women workers. He said that the people had been taught the lesson of thrift by the Government, and this was clearly shown in the constant increase of deposits.

The speaker added that wages had been raised in most industries, with the result that workers had more funds to put away in the banks. He emphasized the fact that despite the increased cost of living there was tendency among the people to save their money, although they did not show a desire to stint themselves and purchased luxuries as well as necessities. He said this was a good sign and augured well for the future.

Mr. Beach said that there was an actual net gain of \$55,000,000 over deposits in banks this year in comparison to a year ago. There is on deposit in various savings banks in New York at the present time \$2,000,000,000.

"The aggregate deposits on January 1, 1919, passed the two billion dollar mark, an actual net gain of \$55,000,000 over last year."