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CANADIAN NORTHERN

Britain's Plans for Reconstruction

Continued from Page 8

efficiency in their operation. As in the case of the iron and steel industry, and Allied trades in Canada, the war has been responsible for the emergence into a flourishing condition in England of many industrial, and commercial concerns, which were not doing particularly well, prior to 1914. And to go further, as the war has involved the complete cutting off of former sources of supply, and an elaborate system of government patronage, it would seem but natural that those interested in the iron and steel trade, the electrical, and chemical industries of England should continue to expect special treatment from the state after the war has been finished.

Demands for Protection

Accordingly, it is not surprising to find the special departmental committee of the British Board of Trade in giving evidence on the iron and steel industry before Lord Balfour, testifying as follows:—

"The majority of the departmental committee are of the opinion that the capital necessary for the re-organization and extension of the British iron and steel industry, will only be forthcoming if there is some security for a reasonable return upon it, and for this purpose they recommend (a) anti-dumping legislation; (b) the imposition of customs duties upon all imported iron and steel, and manufactures thereof; (c) for this latter purpose maximum, general and minimum rates of duty be imposed which shall be readily variable according to the changing demands of national policy; (d) that every endeavor should be made to co-ordinate the economic policy of the United Kingdom with that of the Dominions and Empire generally."

All this might have been written here in Canada by a special committee of the C.M.A. There is also a fine touch of Imperialistic arrogance in this recommendation from the iron and steel trades committee: "That alien interest should not be allowed to acquire iron ore deposits of the British Empire (the Wabana deposits in Newfoundland are of great magnitude and importance) and that an adequate survey of the natural resources of Great Britain and the British Empire generally should be undertaken."

This also, one finds the electrical trades urging. "The prohibition of the importation of enemy goods for a period of three years after the war except in certain cases, . . . and the imposition of import duties sufficiently high to protect efficiently the electrical industry."

In the representations of the chemical trades it is also claimed that "development cannot be maintained after the war if German competition should again be unrestricted."

Fiscal Recommendations

The extent to which such recommendations influenced Balfour of Burleigh's committee in drawing its conclusions, may be estimated in the following propositions included in chapter 9 of its report, under the caption, "Fiscal Policy":

"(1) Some governmental action should be taken to promote and safeguard the development in the United Kingdom of industries of a special or 'pivotal' character (i.e., industries on which other and larger branches of industrial production of substantial national importance are dependent), or which, whilst essential for munition purposes, are not of sufficient importance to ensure their development without such state assistance.

"(2) Some government assistance should be given to industries other than those mentioned above, which are important for the maintenance of the industrial position of the United Kingdom, where such assistance is proved to be necessary because of the inability of the industries to maintain or develop themselves by reason of undue foreign competition, inadequate supplies of raw materials, or any other causes.

"(3) A serious attempt should be made to meet the declared wishes of the Dominions, and colonies, and of India, for the readjustment and development of their economic relations within the United Kingdom.

"(4) An effort should also be made to develop trade between the British Empire and our Allies.

"(5) Subject to agreement with our Allies in the matter present enemy countries should not for a time at least, be allowed to carry on trade with the British Empire in the same unrestricted manner as before the war, or on terms equal to those accorded to Allies or neutrals."

In another place, dealing with evidence submitted on the problem of an adequate supply of raw materials for British industry, Lord Balfour's committee recommends the establishment of an Intelligence and Advisory Bureau, "securing the detailed and systematic collection, examination, and dissemination of information as to the needs and resources of the Empire in respect of minerals and metals, of economic and military importance." It is also urged that "the object to be kept in view, should be that the Empire may be capable in an emergency of being independent in respect of the supply of every essential commodity of any single foreign country or possible combination of foreign countries."

In the face of some of the foregoing recommendations favoring various measures of protection, it is interesting to note the statement of this committee concerning taxation. It says:—

"The most important permanent instrument of taxation, both from the point of view of revenue, and as regards its effect upon production and the scale of personal expenditure will, however, continue to be the Income Tax." But notwithstanding this observation the tone and expressed purpose of the committee's proposals on the question of Fiscal Policy point (1) to a preferential arrangement within the British Empire with the hope of extending a measure of that preference to the present Allied countries; and (2) to a complete ostracism of the present Central Powers for a defined period after the war, as set forth at the Paris Conference. Needless to say, these aims are hardly in keeping with President Wilson's conception of international readjustments after the war, and this fact is likely to have considerable bearing upon the final results of any Allied conference upon that question.

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The new Manitoba Parliament Buildings, around which many political storms have centered in the past and in which political storms will probably centre in the future, has been carried thus far towards completion.

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