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PULP, PAPER AND LUMBER.

What Removal of Duty Would Mean to Canada—Within Few Years Many Large Mills Would be Located in Dominion, Says a Publisher.

The development of export trade in Canadian pulp and paper gives additional interest to an announcement by Mr. John Norris, chairman of the American Newspaper Publishers' committee on Paper, that it seems probable that one of the proposals to be made by the United States Trade Commissioners will be in favor of the free admission of Canadian paper and the removal of the retaliatory duties levied under the Payne-Aldrich tariff on wood pulp entering the United States from provinces that forbid the export of pulpwood cut on Crown lands. A year's experience shows that this retaliatory clause is simply a "stuffed club." The provinces that forbid export of pulpwood from Crown lands have not been penalized. The export of pulpwood from privately owned lands has gone on just as usual; in fact, the exportation has increased, while the United States importers have had to pay on the wood pulp brought over under the retaliatory clause a duty of $1.67 per ton.

The taste of retaliation they have had during the past year seems to have induced the publishers to close up their ranks for a demand that all duties on wood pulp and paper from Canada be wiped out, provided the people of Canada remove the restrictions on the export of pulpwood, which it has been shown do not effectively prevent the export of pulp wood, but merely drive those exporting it to cut privately owned instead of Crown lands.

What Removal of Duty Would Mean to Canada.

Would the absolute removal of the United States news print duties be of value to Canada? A publisher who knows the conditions of the trade thoroughly says that it would mean the transfer to the Canadian side of the border within five years of many large paper mills, and would unquestionably make Canada the largest producer in the world of news print.

It is thought, according to Washington dispatches, that negotiation from the United States side in the present tariff conference, will be to accept the policy of the Canadian provinces with reference to the wood and wood pulp situation, on the ground that it will not really affect American consumers of wood pulp, owing to its being limited to the product of those lands which were not staked by settlers by a certain date.

This is not considered a satisfactory way of dealing with the problem here, and there is good reason for believing that should the State Department assent to the maintenance of a restrictive policy by accepting the plan of merely exempting the wood and pulp produced on Crown lands staked before the date mentioned, the situation will be little, if at all, helped.

British Capital Interested.

Half a dozen lumber mills in British Columbia have been united under one control by Colonel Dempster, of Dempster Hall, Warwickshire, and Sir George Doughty. The mills will be enlarged as the result of the British capital invested in the enterprise. Among the companies are the Cascade and Nelson, the Yale and Columbia, the Drummond and the Munday companies which have a combined capacity of 150,000,000 feet. The present area of timber limits upon which they will operate is 240 square miles, and the estimated standing timber is 3,500,000 feet, but the area will soon be greatly increased by new purchases and reservations.

The Quebec Province Limit Holders' Association have forwarded the following resolution to the government: "That inasmuch as it is impossible to finance the organization of pulp or paper industries in this province with a shorter term than twenty years, the government be asked to guarantee that no increase of dues on raw material coming from Crown lands for pulp or paper industries in Canada shall be made for twenty years."

Another Big Pulp and Paper Company.

The Red Fir Lumber Company has completed its agreement to build at Roche Point, B.C. The company is capitalized at $400,000, fully paid up, and was organized four years ago. It owns about 11,000 acres of timber land, half of which is held under the old leases. The new mill at Roche Point will be an exclusively cedar mill, the company having been cutting up red cedar only for some months past and having opened up an extensive market for its products. The mill will have a capacity of 100,000 feet per ten-hour day. It will cost $150,000 and electric power will be used.

The Powell River Paper Company, with a capital of $10,000,000, is being formed.

The Embry's new plant is in course of construction at Powell River, about seventy-five miles north of Vancouver city, and when in operation it will employ at least 4,000 men. The company has leased thousands of acres of pulp and timber areas, and it is the intention of the promoters, who are mostly United States capitalists, to commence operations by May 1st next. The sum of $4,000,000 will be expended on the entire plant, as the management intends to establish both here and abroad, a large business.

A party of American capitalists have purchased 456,320 acres of lumber and pulp land in Labrador for $200,000. The area is situated on Sandwich Bay, 200 miles south of Hamilton Inlet. It is said that there is not less than 700,000,000 feet of saw log lumber on the property, and five times the quantity of valuable pulp-bearing timber. The New York syndicate intimate that they will at once begin operations on the property.

THE WESTERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The "house-cleaning" of recent years, to apply a familiar but expressive term to the transformation of the Western Assurance Company's business, is thus commented on by so excellent an authority as the Post Magazine, of London:—

"Revision of risks and reduction of liabilities, which have been in progress during the last two or three years, are happily eventuating in what promises to be a new era of prosperity for this company. With a lessened income, of improved quality, the company is in a position to earn substantial profits in its fire department, in place of the uncertain and widely fluctuating results recently accruing from a larger business, particularly susceptible to the conflagration hazard. The cutting down and weeding out processes have been resolutely carried on, and in consequence, the fire revenue, which was £602,095 in the San Francisco year, has been reduced by £168,444."

But this reduced income produced a clear profit of a quarter million dollars, for the loss ratio was only 47.7 per cent. of the fire premiums, instead of a previous year's ratio of 71.4 per cent. This loss ratio of last year was, indeed, the lowest of any year since 1860 for the company. In marine, too, a very decided betterment is shown, an unfavorable balance in 1908 being converted into a favorable balance of over $50,000 in 1909. Abandonment of the insurance of hulls on the Great Lakes has produced this result, just as the leaving non-paying fields in the United States altered the aspect of the Western's fire business.

Interest and profit on investments, amounting in all to $87,000, raised the total surplus on the year's operations to $393,000, the largest in the history of the company; a most gratifying result. The Post Magazine goes on to say: "The large paid-up capital of £513,347 ($2,565,000), the preferred portion of which has this year received a dividend of seven per cent., affords in the meantime all the protection that anyone can reasonably require; and this strong and courageous undertaking is to be congratulated on the progress made since the events which shook it to the foundation a few years back."

ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE CORPORATION.

The Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation, one of the three oldest insurance companies in the world, having been incorporated in 1720, has opened its Canadian head office, in its building, corner St. Sacrament and St. Francois Xavier street, in Montreal. Mr. H. Vincent Meredith, assistant general manager of the Bank of Montreal, will be the first chairman of the board of the Canadian branch of the company.

The standing of the company is of the highest. For honorable dealing, it has been always distinguished, and its financial strength is undoubted. The scope of its operations has widened during its long career, till it now includes fire, marine, life, accident, burglary, plate glass, motor car, and fidelity guarantee. Besides an extensive clientele in Great Britain, it has branches in the United States, Europe, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

Fire premiums for 1909 amounted to $3,846,000; marine, $1,112,000; life, $1,475,000, and the total revenue of the year approached $8,000,000. The amount of shareholders' capital paid-up in cash is $3,440,000, and the shares stand at 190. The life assurance fund stands, we observe, at $15,570,000.

The gentleman chosen as Canadian manager of the Royal Exchange Assurance, is Mr. Arthur Barry, who has had long experience in fire business in the Dominion. He has been for a long period inspector of risks in Canada for the Phoenix Assurance Company, of London.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA.

New Timber Legislation—More Settlers Wanted—Vancouver Money By-laws to be Reduced—Business Good.

(Staff Correspondence.)

Vancouver, December 10th.

General business conditions for this time of year are very satisfactory. Merchants report trade excellent with an increase over that of last year. It is noticeable that cash stores enjoy large business. This may be the result of inducements to get purchasers to the stores, and payment is made for large quantities of goods in cash. Small grocers are suffering as a result of departmental houses and large dealers cutting prices. Not only is there more money available for necessities, but much money is being spent on all sides.

New Timber Legislation.

When the legislature opens next month, important legislation affecting timber interests will be introduced based on the recent report of the forestry commission. With the increasing value of timber, it is not improbable that rentals or royalties may be increased, a reason for this being the establishment of a department. The chief fire warden, in his annual report, also recommends that a small tax be levied to meet the cost of fire protection, pointing out that much of the timber is held by speculators residing outside the province. The recommendations of the commission, if carried into effect, will result in a very large expenditure, as a complete cruise of crown granted timber is advised, a thorough system of fire protection urged upon a permanent basis, and the vigilant patrol of railway lines suggested. The chief fire warden would have the permanent staff increased, by the appointment of divisional fire wardens and men to fill the combined positions of fire warden, game warden and timber guardian. An important recommendation of the commission is that the reserve on unalienated timber should be continued indefinitely.

More Settlers Wanted.

At the meeting of the Vancouver Board of Trade on Tuesday evening, a lengthy resolution was carried, urging the provincial government to establish a department of agriculture and immigration, and also that the Dominion government be petitioned to prepare the lands in the railway belt for settlement. The incoming population has been flocking to the cities in British Columbia and to some extent present prosperity is built upon the country's future. The growth of the population on the land is not as rapid as it should be. Up to the present, the lack of railways has prevented any but the pioneers taking up land, and many of these have become discouraged in their long wait for transportation facilities. The Grand Trunk Pacific now gives means of access to the Bulkley Valley and will soon be across the province; the Canadian Northern will supply a line north and south, and the Great Northern Railway will help out the districts between the Hope Mountains and the Kootenay. With these lines on the mainland, and the Canadian Pacific Railway extensions and the Canadian Northern Railway on Vancouver Island, many holdings should be taken up. The market is already here for produce of all kinds, with good prices.

Dominion Government Send Notices.

Acting on petitions praying that timber be cleared from lands in the railway belt, the Dominion government has sent notices to some of the holders of leases, and they are so anxious concerning cancellation that a representative may be sent to Ottawa to ask for further time in which to take the timber off. It all points to the fact that the demand of the agriculturist is becoming insistent.

This is further indicated by the remarks of Hon. W. J. Bowser, attorney-general of the province, when he declared the policy that thorough surveys were to be made of the public demand close to and tributary to railways, so that settlers might have the fullest possible information. The government is of the opinion that there is plenty of first-class land still unclaimed, and for that reason will not do anything with the reserves to the north. Mr. R. E. Young, Dominion geographer, has proposed that the provincial and Dominion governments work together in supplying a complete detailed land map, such as has been published concerning the prairie provinces. This map is of the greatest assistance to those seeking for land, giving full information at a glance.

Vancouver's Money By-Laws.

The city council is to reduce the money by-laws so as to allow a little on next year's contingencies. The actual amount that the city may borrow is $4,471,378, and at the last meeting of the finance committee by-laws were recommended involving an expenditure of $4,764,000, an amount in excess of the possible. The council is to hold a special meeting and diminish the by-laws.

This year the British Columbia Electric Railway Company pays $57 to each of its employees, with a total amount of about $60,000. This will be the last year that this bonus is paid. It was initiated several years ago when Mr. J. Buntzen was general manager and was received with approval. Early in the present year, when the men were discussing an increase in wages, they declared themselves in favor of relinquishing their right to any bonus and get an increase in the weekly amount paid them. The bonus has been increasing each year, and is the amount over and above certain fixed expenditures. It is bound to increase for several years yet, whereas, the wages will not increase in the same proportion. The result is that the company will save money by the transaction, but wage difficulties will have to be adjusted from time to time. This company, with lines in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster, has been absolutely free from labor troubles in the past, and the situation now is being watched with considerable interest.

Fifteen hundred men are working on the pulp and paper mills of the Powell River Pulp and Paper Company, a large concern operated by American capital. The plants will be located on Powell River, less than a day's trip up the mainland coast. The pulp mills of the Swanson Bay Forests, Wood Pulp and Lumber Mills, Limited, (formerly the Canadian Pacific Sulphite Pulp Company) are being improved and will shortly be in operation after an idleness since June. This is altogether English capital.

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION.

Efficiency of High-pressure System Has Been Proved—Should be Prepared for Emergency.

Fire protection and prevention is one of the important questions which no city should neglect. It originated from a demand for improved conditions—the need of improved protection against losses caused by fire.

When confined and controlled, fire is one of the most important elements in our civilization, furnishing power for manufactories and transportation; in fact, it is an essential factor in everything which contributes to our comfort and the very existence of life; but it is an impossibility to keep it within its proper bounds, says Mr. J. E. Buchanan, chief of fire department, Winnipeg.

High-pressure System Efficient.

According to Mr. Buchanan, the efficiency of high-pressure system is proved beyond a doubt, and before many years all cities will possess a plant for the extinguishing of fires. This does not mean for a moment that fire engines are a thing of the past; they are as valuable to fire protection now as ever, and will continue as an auxiliary to high pressure, and with modern methods of handling high-pressure streams make it possible to handle same with speed and accuracy, and in case of fire not requiring 3½-inch hose they may be reduced to 2½-inch, still working of high-pressure system, giving streams of great solidity and force. Three and a half-inch hose has been successfully operated from the height of a five-storey building with good effect, and also from standpipes of buildings to a height of seven or eight storeys. The problem is solved for the proper handling of high-pressure streams. Great care should be exercised, owing to amount of water that it is possible to deliver through 2½-inch hose reduced to 1¼ nozzle; the damage to stock as a rule would be heavy.

Prepare for Emergencies.

It is better to be prepared for an emergency and never have it come than have it arise and not be prepared. We should always bear in mind the possibility of danger by fire, even considering instances which demonstrate them as such.

The chief aim of all architects, from fire standpoint, should be: First, to avoid conditions which would favor the starting of fires. Second, to observe precautions which would prevent their spread and facilitate their extinguishment. Modern requirements have constructed our business blocks, storey upon storey, until they have arisen to such lofty heights that, in comparison, the wonders of the Old World are dwarfed into insignificance. The fire equipments of to-day are insufficient to successfully cope with constructions of such dizzy altitudes; hence the introduction of high-pressure system, with its great force and quantity of water to prevent serious conflagration in our prosperous cities.

Annual Fire Loss Heavy.

When we consider the enormous loss by fire yearly, the thought suggests how best to overcome this loss. To be successful in this direction rests, to a great degree, in the