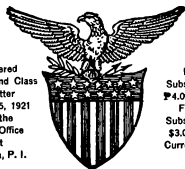


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The British World View of Commerce

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Ottawa Again

With the publication of the so-called "secret" Dominion schedules in the middle of the month, it is possible to form a rather more complete picture of what the Ottawa Conference means, though it is still exceedingly difficult to make any estimate of the benefits that British trade will receive. On the face of it some of the concessions made by the Dominions and India appear reasonably certain materially to assist our goods in competition with those of foreign countries, while in others the benefits conferred remain full of uncertainty. In addition there are a few points arising from the Ottawa agreements which leave an unfortunate impression. For example, it is stated by the trade interests concerned that the Canadian tariff concession on battery plates over $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick is quite valueless, since plates of such dimensions are not manufactured; and it was stated in the House of Commons that the United Kingdom duty on copper, imposed under the Ottawa agreements, was equivalent to no less than 55 per cent *ad valorem*, a serious matter particularly for the British electrical industry.

However, it is virtually impossible to draw any hard and fast conclusions about the results, in terms of increased total British exports, that may follow the agreements, although for each Empire country the value is given of the trade covered by the various concessions. A very great deal is bound to depend on the spirit in which the agreements are carried out, but in a number of instances at any rate there has been a positive lowering of the tariffs against British goods.

International Trade

The survey of world trade up to the end of last June, published in the *Board of Trade Journal*, throws some light on the appalling contraction that is taking place. The percentage decline in the value of exports (in dollars) of the gold standard countries during the first half of 1932, compared with January-June, 1931, amounted to no less than 37.1, against 32.8 for the non-gold standard countries, the figures for imports being 34.4 and 33.9, respectively.

Another table shows the percentage decreases, as compared with 1929, in values of the imports for home consumption and domestic exports of 18 principal countries in each of the half-yearly periods from 1930. The United Kingdom decline for the first six months of this year was, in imports, 39.2 per cent, and only five countries—Japan, the Scandinavian nations and Switzerland made a better showing than this. Some of the percentage decreases are colossal—for instance, the United States (67.3), Australia (67.6), Germany (65) and

Canada (63.6). In domestic exports the United Kingdom decline is 47.9, and again there are only five countries with a lower figure, while the United States, British Malaya, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Canada are all over 60 per cent.

A comparison of the first half of 1932 with the same period in 1931 also indicates that the United Kingdom decline (13.5 per cent) is substantially less than the average for all countries specified (23.9 per cent). Australia and Japan on this basis show import increases, while on the export side Norway and Australia show increases, the United Kingdom and Japan alone of the rest having reductions of less than 10 per cent. Austria, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia have declines between 42 and 43 per cent and Germany, France, the Netherlands and the Belgo-Luxemburg Economic Union between 35 and 40 per cent. In all these statistics it should be noted, however, that the conversion into sterling has been made at par.

In the light of such an appalling drying up in the flow of trade the World Economic Conference when it meets will at least have no excuse for failing to realize the desperate need for taking immediate steps to stop the general calamitous contraction of purchasing power.

Canada

Canada's new shipping route to the United Kingdom from Port Churchill, which was successfully tested last season by two shipments of wheat, has this year been inaugurated on a commercial basis, and for the past two months vessels have been engaged in the transport of grain from the vast fields of Manitoba and Western Canada via Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait, thus effecting a saving of over a thousand miles as compared with the distance from Montreal via the Great Lakes. This new route will be, of course, a great factor in the development of the Canadian grain trade with the United Kingdom and the Continent, but there are possibilities in other directions, not the least being that by the recent extension of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway to the port of Moosonee on James Bay, Hudson Bay is now connected with the industrial districts of southern Ontario and Quebec.

Moreover, attention has been directed in Western Canada to the possibility that the Hudson Bay route may eventually become a link in the "short circle" route from Europe to the Far East, the distance from London to the Far East via Port Churchill being less than half that on the route via Suez, and shorter than that via New York and San Francisco; while in regard to the United States grain trade, it is interesting to note that Minneapolis, an important centre of the American business, is so situated that if the Hudson Bay route were ever

used for the transportation of northern United States products a saving in mileage similar to that gained by Western Canada might reasonably be expected.

Denmark

There is no doubt that this publicity has had and is having an excellent effect, and that British exporters will find it even easier to make headway in these two Scandinavian markets than they did before. But without in any way wishing to make a hasty generalization, one may say that the British exporter will find the Danish market, under present conditions, easier to handle than the Swedish. The average Dane is so very conscious of the fact that the Anglo-Danish trade balance is heavily against England, that he is quite willing to buy British goods, even when Danish are available. If only British exporters can be assured that the Valutakontor (the centralized foreign exchange office) will not place obstacles in their way, the market for British goods is certain to expand still further. But it needs constant pressure and much hard work.

British Overseas Trade

For the first nine months of the year, imports amounted to £520,215,226, which shows the heavy reduction of £101,131,802, as compared with the corresponding period of 1931. It is interesting to note that towards this greatly reduced

figure, manufactured goods contributed £69,548,100, the chief goods affected being apparel and textiles, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals and manufactures, pottery and glass, and leather. One important group, manufactured oils, fats and resins, showed an appreciable increase, and in the raw materials class there were several groups showing advances over the 1931 figures, the chief being raw cotton and undressed hides and skins.

Exports for the nine months have fallen off by £21,283,125 to £271,107,476. Manufactured goods at £206,832,201 were less by £14,234,829, and although the majority of the important groups showed declines, the most important cotton yarns and manufactures, actually increased by nearly £5,600,000 on the 1931 figures of £42,716,920. Raw materials exported declined by £2,891,696 to £31,807,636, coal being the product most affected, although there was a noticeable fall in exports of other minerals, the oils, fats and resins group, and undressed hides and skins. Exports of food, drink, and tobacco were down by £2,348,911 to £23,441,752 the only class in this group showing an increase being grain and flour.

Re-exports for the nine months amounted to £39,028,120, a decrease of £9,227,300, the heaviest declines taking place in food and drink, undressed hides and skins and apparel.

The apparent adverse balance of trade for the nine months was £210,079,630, which shows a reduction of £70,621,377 on the first nine months of 1931.

Do Something To Save Philippine Birds

"Rizal was not in favor of killing birds not fit for food as was proved one time when he prohibited an officer of a boat from shooting them.—" Filomeno Acopiado, a one-time pupil of Rizal's at Dapitan, as quoted by Serapio J. Datoc in the *Tribune* magazine, Sunday, January 1.

Everyone interested in the preservation of birdlife in the Philippines would do well to seek every occasion to explain to the common people what good birds do and how wanton it is to kill them for sheer sport, the useful birds should be killed only to eat, and then not in quantities promising their extinction or at times when they are breeding and raising their young. This seems a petty subject for treatment in a review of the kind the *JOURNAL* is, but truth is that preservation of birdlife is so essential that hardly anything transcends it in importance. Truth is too that birds by thousands are wantonly killed throughout the Philippines all summer long.

As soon as schools dismiss for the summer vacation, troops of idle boys go about the country killing birds wantonly; not birds to eat, not birds whose mangled little bodies they can pick up and take home with them to brag over, but birds they shoot with sling-shots in bamboo clumps where they must leave them dead for ants and vermin to devour. No boyhood sport could be more wanton or more cruel than this, the prime vacation sport for so many Philippine schoolboys that the wonder is there are any birds left in the islands at all.

A snake will easily escape these boys, a bird hardly ever; a troop of boys, ever more accurate with their sling-shots, will return to a bamboo clump day after day until the last harmless bird nesting in it or taking refuge in it has been killed.

And why? For one reason, the boys are utterly idle and their leisure utterly undirected. For another, apparently the little catechisms informing their morals have nothing

to say about killing birds: He who marks the sparrow's fall is preached unto them, but not, apparently, as an avenger of the sparrow. Nor can we say the schools have frowned down wantonness toward lower creatures enough when it is with the vacation season that the war upon the birds begins. If you object to having the birds on your place killed, you are put down by the boys as a harsh neighbor who should be outwitted; they therefore get track of the hours you keep, and kill the birds while you can not watch them. Not one seems to understand why, for any reason, moral or otherwise, he should not kill birds.

The bill, of course, is paid by the crop-maker. If the practice is not soon checked, and that effectively, balance between bird and insect life in the Philippines will be destroyed and crop pests now unheard-of will appear. Individual effort at restraint of the boys is useless, the vice is too prevalent, too popular for that. Nor would law do any good. Moral tutelage is the only remedy; the new community assemblies might be good places for the preaching to begin, but everybody who can catch the real attention of a boy can do a little. As soon as there is a general consciousness among grown-ups that birds must not be wantonly killed, boys will catch the notion from their elders. The real fault is grown-up indifference. Without law the government might help a little. It could get something out to the people through the community assemblies, and it might get some towns to encourage, with prizes, the boys' natural interest in birds by rewarding studies of the birds by the boys—ways of fostering their life instead of taking it. Parents, church and school have failed so far of inculcating in boys intelligent and merciful ideas about birdlife.

The least observation, during vacation, will reveal to anyone how grave the question is. The sling-shot and air gun threatens our birds with extinction.