

Belgians Open Bid for Trade With Canada Here Tuesday

16 Industrialists Arrive to Explore Possibilities of Increasing Business—Hope For Tariff Deal Eventually

Belgium's bid for expansion of her trade with Canada will get under way here tomorrow with the presence in Montreal of 16 Belgian industrialists and businessmen, forming a commercial mission sponsored by their Government.

Ultimate goal of the mission is a preferential agreement with Canada for their exports, the mission laying the foundation of what they hope will result in closer trade relations between the two countries.

The mission arrived in the Canadian Pacific liner Montcalm from Antwerp. The members, headed by Lucien Graux, president of the Central Industrial Committee of Belgium, and Vicomte Alain du Parc, chief of commercial expansion section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, left the ship at Quebec and came on to Montreal by train yesterday.

Interviewed on arrival at Quebec, Mr. Graux, acting as spokesman for the party, said: "Our goal is the opening of the Canadian market for our products to a greater extent than is the case today. We believe here is a wide field yet to be explored in our trade relations, and we hope for more preference in Canada."

The party leader admitted that a new trade agreement with the Dominion was the ultimate hope, "but that, of course, is not our job. We intend to study thoroughly every avenue through which trade

might be expanded. Right at the moment our country buys four times as much from Canada as the Dominion buys from us. There is a variety of Belgian products that could be well used by Canada if given preferential treatment."

Iron and glass are two main exports of the European country, which wishes to exchange industrial products for Canadian raw materials. Textiles also come under the important items for which this trade mission is seeking an expanded market. Canada now buys much of her glass from Belgium. "but this sale could be increased," Mr. Graux stated.

He pointed out that the balance of trade between the two countries gave Canada the decided advantage. "I think it could be more equitable, as we have many industrial products that should be able to find a ready market in this country. We need your wheat and we buy it, but we must sell in return."

Members of the mission intend to confer with businessmen in Montreal and Toronto, and to see Government authorities in Ottawa.

No small part of the programme is propaganda for Belgian products. The current Belgo-Canadian week is designed to acquaint the Canadian public and Canadian purchasers with the European country and its industries. Mr. Graux expressed satisfaction at the co-operation being given the mission here.

He stated that Belgium had already sent trade delegations to other countries, particularly Norway and Finland, and they had met with marked success, he said. "I hope that our visit to Canada may bring the same results."

One member of the mission expressed the belief that it was time Belgium knew more of Canada and the Dominion more of Belgium.

Serious work by the mission will

not begin until tomorrow, following the Victoria Day holiday. Yesterday the party was taken on a visit to the farm development being undertaken by Baron Louis Empain, young Belgian millionaire, at Oka. Later the members drove to Ste. Marguerite in the Laurentians north of Montreal where Baron Empain has built a hotel. They intended to spend the night there.

An active part in this trade mission is being taken by the Belgian baron. He was closely connected with the plans made for the reception of the party here.

Questioned about conditions in his own country, Mr. Graux, leader of the mission, said at Quebec: "Business has opened up considerably, and while there is still much to be desired in the way of recovery, a good improvement has been noted. The depression in Belgium was serious. However, we are now on the way out."

In his opinion a general lift in business conditions throughout Europe was apparent, "and a trend toward more open exchange between countries."

He said he was not afraid of war. "I don't think it will come," he stated.

He admitted that Belgium was in an awkward position with regard to the rest of Europe if war did break out. "We have been invaded all through our history," he added.

The mission will remain in Canada for two weeks, and during that time will be mainly concerned with furthering trade relations, with the exception of a short side trip to Niagara Falls. The party will return to Belgium by the liner Montclare, sailing from Montreal June 5.

Baron Silvercruys, Belgian Minister to Canada, and M. Heine, consul at Montreal, met the mission on arrival here.

Members of the party in addition to Mr. Graux and Vicomte du Parc are: Henri J. P. Beliard, Colonel Jean Boels, Rev. Sebastian Braun, Henri Crombe, Pierre de Mot-Morel, Rene Destree, Edmond Henquin, Alexander Osterrieth, Charles Rosel, Jacques Thomas, director of the Belgo-Canadian Association; Louis van Halsberghe, Lucien Vertongen, Frederic met den Ancxt, secretary of the mission.