

WHAT THE CANADIAN EXPORTER CAN DO FOR THE TRADE COMMISSIONER

The meagre information frequently furnished by Canadian exporters places a serious handicap on the Trade Commissioner in his efforts to market their products.

A general statement, therefore, of the facts about the exporter, his banking references, whether he is already engaged in foreign trade, and for what period and to what extent, are some of the essentials which should be given in the first letter either to the Department or to a Trade Commissioner, particularly the latter. He also wants general data about the commodity which the exporter wishes to sell in that particular market, noting any special advantages pertaining to the line offered, particularly as compared with well-known articles of the same type from other countries. He also wants to know exactly what the manufacturer is himself willing to do to place his goods in the new field; the basis on which sales would be made to the importer or on which goods could be offered for sale by a recognized agent, and the commission that would be paid the latter; what would be required of an importing house or agent in order to obtain the agency for the line; whether the manufacturer would send consignment stock or samples and in what quantity; whether he is prepared to advertise or to co-operate in advertising and to what extent; the facilities possessed by the manufacturer for export shipment, and the kind of supervision that is exercised by him over the packing of goods destined for a distant market.

PRICES

Prices should never be quoted from an interior manufacturing point in Canada. Where quotations c.i.f. port of destination are not practicable, they should be given f.o.b. steamer, but it is strongly recommended that prices should be quoted c.i.f. This is a most important point, as the foreign buyer has no definite knowledge of the charges likely to be incurred if quotations are f.o.b. cars at port of shipment, and freight rates from some interior point in Canada to the seaboard are unobtainable in foreign countries. He has no means of knowing insurance rates, or the elements that enter into the fixing of the premiums. As a rule he is unable to obtain a quotation of an outward freight rate at an inward port, as the general practice of steamship companies is to refer a request for a freight rate from (say) Montreal to Auckland to the agent in the former city, although an approximate rate may be quoted. The foreign buyer is at a distinct disadvantage unless prices are quoted c.i.f.

DISCOUNTS

Discounts should be printed, or typewritten, preferably on a folder or slip accompanying the catalogue. In submitting an illustrated descriptive catalogue to prospective customers the importer should not be placed in the position of having to disclose the exact terms on which the goods are offered to him.

GROSS AND NET WEIGHT

A knowledge of the gross and net weights per unit quoted is essential. Without these the prospective purchaser is unable to estimate laid down costs.

SUMMARY OF POINTS TO BE NOTED

The fullest possible information in regard to the commodity and complete details on the following points would greatly aid the Trade Commissioners in the

Walter Berchtersg.

intelligent handling of inquiries addressed to them as to the introduction and subsequent marketing of Canadian goods on behalf of exporters:—

1. Cable address, code used, and special code words not in the regular code books.
2. Bankers' references.
3. (a) The basis on which prices are quoted, whether c.i.f. main foreign ports; f.a.s. Canadian ports; or f.o.b. vessel.
(b) Are prices in Canadian or American funds?
(c) If prices are c.i.f. and transshipment has to be made, are such items as consular charges and disbursements at port of transshipment and/or unloading for account of buyer?
4. Are quotations firm, or subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in costs of raw material?
5. On what quantity basis are quotations made? Can prices be reduced on quantity orders, and if so how much?
6. Are orders subject to acceptance by exporter?
7. What brand do lines bear, and are these to be sold under this brand in foreign markets?
8. What is the nature of packing? Heavy wooden crates, boxes, new bags or burlap?
9. Are lines stocked and available for immediate shipment? If not, how long after receipt of order will goods go forward?
10. What are your terms? Is there a special discount for cash?
11. What is the gross and net weight in pounds? Measurement in cubic feet?

With the foregoing information on hand, supplemented by recent catalogues and descriptive literature, and, if not too bulky, samples—not necessarily a full range—Trade Commissioners are put in a position to give at short notice the best service to Canadian exporters and can either place them in communication with reliable importers or recommend suitable agents.

REQUEST FOR ENGINEERING CATALOGUES AND TRADE JOURNALS FOR CHINA

H. A. SCOTT, CANADIAN TRADE COMMISSIONER

Shanghai, June 2, 1937.—The Engineering Reference Library of Nanking has requested the co-operation of this office towards securing catalogues and general trade literature of Canadian engineering establishments. This library is in reality a special branch of the National Library at Peiping, but in order to meet the needs of the technical and scientific departments of the National Government it was transferred to Nanking, the capital, in September, 1936.

The types of literature desired are briefly as follows: technical and trade journals, house organs and bulletins, and engineering catalogues. In addition, photographs of engineering interest would be welcomed.

At present the library is receiving regularly from European countries and the United States over 400 publications of the type described, but the director states that so far Canada is poorly represented in their collection.

Canadian engineering firms or institutions who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity for making their products and services better known in China are asked to write to "The Director, the Engineering Reference Library, 942 Chukiang Road, Nanking, China." It would be appreciated if this office could be notified when such action is taken.