

## BRITISH COLUMBIA.

[This department is in charge of R. E. Gosnell, who is permanently engaged as a regular member of THE COMMERCIAL staff, to represent this journal in British Columbia. Parties in British Columbia who wish to communicate in any way with this paper, may apply directly to Mr. Gosnell at Vancouver.]

VANCOUVER, Feb. 20.—Very little can be said about the business situation just now. We are between seasons—too far from spring to benefit by the prospects of trade and too near it to enjoy the advantages of winter. Trade, on the whole, is not so good as last month, and collections are far from being as good. The stoppage of building and public work generally is making itself felt among the smaller traders, who depend upon wages being earned for prompt payment. There is little being done in the building line except the finishing of large buildings in the inside.

A good deal is being banked on the prospects of the coming summer, which are dependent largely upon the tourist travel superinduced by the holding of the World's Fair; the large amount of railway construction in view, and the rush to the mining country in the spring. All of these are likely to have an important effect. In regard to the first, the C.P.R. and other carrying lines are making ample preparations for the travel to the coast, which will come as a consequence. In regard to the second, reference was made last week to the large amount of money to be spent by the C.P.R. in all parts of the province, both in new lines and in repairs. The Nelson & Fort Shipping & Railway Co. has let the contract for the construction of the bridge across the Pend d'Oreille river, in British Columbia, to the San Francisco Bridge company. The bridge will be 510 feet in length of a cantilever pattern, and will comprise three spans. The tenders are already in for the rest of the line to the Nelson. Contractors were asked to figure upon 150,000 feet of solid rock, 200,000 feet of loose rock, 400,000 feet of gravel, 750,000 yards of gravel, and the removal of 2,300,000 of timber. All arrangements have been made for the immediate commencement of the Burrard Inlet and Fraser Valley railway, and the necessary deposit has been made in the bank. It is said also that the contract has been let, subject to the legality of the Vancouver bonus by-law, which is now being tested. There are some half dozen or so of railway charters being applied for in the West Kootenay, but about which there is no certainty as yet.

In regard to the mining development a great boom is expected, more especially in the Slocan and Lardeau districts of west Kootenay. The Nelson Tribune estimates that there will be at least 10,000 prospectors in there this season. Considerable mining development is also expected in southern Okanagan.

The salmon canning industry will be unusually active this season too and very extensive preparations are being made. It is said, however that the British Columbia and Alaska canneries will do as last year, enter into a combine to limit production and thus hold the market steady.

Little is to be expected in the lumber trade, unless it takes an unexpected turn for the better. The attempt to form a shingle trust, referred to several weeks ago, has fallen through owing to the failure of one of the firms to come in.

If the Crofter scheme goes on there will be considerable activity on the Northern coast from Victoria north, as some subsidiary schemes of development are likely to be brought into development.

A good deal has been said in press and in parliament about British Columbia's share in the general expenditure and revenue of the Dominion and the fact that she gets very little out of the Federal exchequer in return for her contributions to it. The returns show that in

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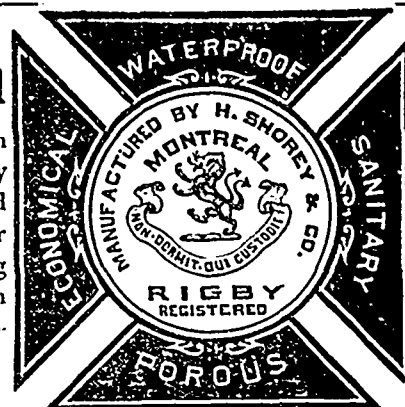
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regard to the two great sources of revenue, customs and excise, the average per capita tax throughout the Dominion is \$5.92, while that of British Columbia is \$16.97 per head or three times what is paid by the balance of the Dominion. There is food for reflection in that statement.

### B. C. Market Quotations.

EGGS—Eggs are steady at 25c.

DAIRY PRODUCTS—Butter of good quality is scarce. Creamery is selling according to quality at, from 26 to 29c; dairy, of which there is very little fit to eat, runs from 20 to 24c; cheese is steady at 13 to 13½c.

MEATS—Remain firm. Following are quotations: Hams, 16 to 17c; breakfast bacon, 17 to 18c; short rolls 13½ to 14c; backs, 15½ to 16c; dry salt, long clear, to 12½ 13½; pure lard, 50 pound, 16 to 16½c; do, 20 pounds, 16½ to 17c; lard, compound, 15½ to 16c.

FRUITS—Fruits in all lines, except oranges, are scarce and dear. Coast apples are from \$1.50 to 1.75 a box, and Eastern Canadian apples, in barrels, \$6. Oranges are plentiful and cheap, navels at \$3.75 and seedlings \$2.75; lemons, (Cal) \$4.50 to 5; Sicilies, \$6; peanuts, Virginia, 12c; California peanuts, 10c; cranberries, \$12 for Cape Cod and 40c for natives; dates 7 to 9c; figs, 10c. Y. N. Stewart has introduced the Japanese Pumelo, a large orange like fruit, and is selling them at 50c a box of a dozen. They are said to be valuable as appetizers.

GAME, POULTRY—Both are scarce and high.

VEGETABLES—On account of the cold severe weather vegetables of all kinds have gone up. Fraser river potatoes are \$35 a ton, and Ashcroft's \$40 a ton; Californian onions are 3½c; B. C. onions, 2 to 2½c; turnips, beets and carrots, \$15 a ton.

FISH.—There is a fair supply of fish. Prices are: Salmon, 10 to 12c; codfish, 6 to 7c; flounders, 4 to 5c; sturgeon, 4 to 5c; bass, 4 to 5c.

COAL.—J. W. Harrison writes as follows with reference to the present condition of the San Francisco coal market: "During the week there have been arrivals from the coast mines aggregating 8,819 tons, and foreign sources 11,313 tons. The market remains steady, as there has not been a large influx of coal to disturb it, in fact the amount being consumed is in excess of the quantity coming to hand. Jobbers are not liberal bidders for coals for future loading, as they fear a large fleet of vessels heading this way, to move the present season's crop, most of which will be coal carriers. Hence they believe low prices will prevail, and in or

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inary cases this would be the result, but inward rates of freight for coal must rule fairly high when ruling grain freights are so low. The inward and outward freights combined must pay ships a fraction over running expenses or they will avoid this port. The list of coal carriers from foreign sources to arrive here in the next 90 days is certainly very small, and there are certain grades which will show very light stocks within that time. They may not be absolute necessities, but they must strengthen the prices of other coals. The severe winter in British Columbia is seriously interfering with coal shipments, as it impedes deliveries at tide water.

DRESSED MEAT, LIVE STOCK, ETC.—Fresh meats have advanced all round. Butchers are contracting for their supply up to June with northwest ranchers. So far as can be learned the supply up country is quite insufficient, largely on account of the severe winter. Prices are: Live steers are quoted 5½c; cows, 4½c; dressed beef, 9c; sheep, 6½c; mutton, 13½c; hogs, 7½c; pork, 10½c; calves, 7c; veal, 11½c.

FLOUR, FEED, GRAIN, ETC.—Flour has remained steady since the advance. Feed has advanced about one dollar a ton all around. Hay has gone up to \$18. Quotations are: Flour Manitoba patents, \$3.50; strong bakers, \$5.20; ladies choice, \$5.50; prairie lily, \$6.00; Oregon, \$5.50; Spokane, \$5.65; Enderby mills—Premi-\$5.65; three star, \$5.25; two star, \$5.00; oatmeal eastern \$3.4; California granulated in gunnies, \$4.35; National mills, Victoria, \$4.25; rolled oats eastern \$3 to \$3.25; California \$4.10; National mills \$3.65; corn meal \$3.10; split peas \$3.5; pearl barley \$4.50. Rice—The Victoria rice mills quote wholesale Japan rice per ton, \$77.50; China rice do \$70; rice flour, do, \$70; chit rice, do, \$25; rice meal do, \$17.5; chopped feed, \$32 per ton; bran, \$24; shorts \$25; Man. oats, \$25 to 32; B. C. oats \$26; wheat \$27 to 32; oil cake, \$40; hay, \$18. Wheat is quoted in car lots for feed No. 2 regular at \$22 to 25 per ton; oats \$25 in bulk and in sacks \$25; chop barley \$25. California malting barley, \$26 to 27 f.o.b. in San Francisco. California chop, \$32 to 33. The Western Milling Co quote bran in car lots \$20.50 per ton; shorts, \$21.50; barley chop, \$25; rye, \$33; patent

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