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British Columbia and the San Francisco Exhibition

Large Number of Tourists Visiting Our Terminal Cities, Going to or Coming from Panama Exhibition, This Year Can be Made to Benefit the Province if Organized to Receive Them.

Thoroughly apart from considerations of advantages to be derived by British Columbia from the Panama Exhibition at San Francisco, to be opened some time this month, by displaying its wares and opportunities on the grounds there, the question of taking advantage of those travelers who will enter the portals of our terminal cities of Vancouver and Victoria, either going to or coming from that exhibition, should be engaging our closest attention and receiving our best thought. Traffic officials have stated that present bookings indicate a flow of travel estimated at 160,000 people. A comparative safe estimate of the total number of visitors who will enter and leave this Province during the length of the exhibition will be close to one-quarter of one million persons.

If this large tourist travel (the beginning of which is not so very many weeks away) is handled aright, it can be made to redound to the financial and commercial benefit of both cities of Vancouver and Victoria, and can be made to yield certain permanent results. What British Columbia needs supremely is population, placed either on the land or in industry, and capital to develop its resources. In a countless variety of ways that will readily occur to the ingenuity of our citizens, these sight-seeing, pleasure-seeking travelers may be made to minister to these needs, and it depends upon the manner of handling this traffic if only temporary benefit is to be derived from it.

The matter of this tourist traffic is not only of sufficient importance to engage the attention of the business interests of both Vancouver and Victoria, but also the two municipal councils, and it might be taken hold of to advantage by the Provincial Government.

The nationality of this traffic will be almost exclusively Canadian and American, with the vast majority of the latter. The war has cut off practically all European travel to the exhibition, and at the same time has cut off Europe as a playground for American tourists. Americans will

have to use their own back yard and Canada as a playground, with the added attraction this year at San Francisco.

The railroads that enter Vancouver are preparing for heavy schedules, and are sparing no effort to attract passengers to their particular lines and to look after them well when they get on their roads. It is likely that tourist agents will be placed in Vancouver and Victoria by the railroads in order to be of service to their travelers. The railroads appreciate the value of tourist travel to the full. It means not only the immediate traffic profits, but increased freight movement, and a certain permanence of traffic in the years to come which is the direct result of handling this traffic aright. A conspicuous instance of a city being built up on tourist traffic is that of Los Angeles. This city is not only the strongest financially and commercially in Southern California, but is even threatening San Francisco as the most populous city on the Pacific Coast. Its rapid rise is attributable in part to its exceptional position climatically, but is chiefly due to its tourists, who came to see, but remained to be conquered.

If the railroads and steamship lines see the importance of this tourist traffic, why cannot the terminal cities of this Province appreciate the advantage which might be gained, both financially and commercially, by the careful nurturing of this traffic?

It is too big to be handled by commercial and industrial bodies, who, perhaps for lack of resources and organization, cannot be held up to the full measure of their responsibilities. The work of boards of trade should supplement the work that should be carried on as part of the cities' activities. Both the city of Vancouver and Victoria should appoint a paid reception committee, composed of bright, smart, good-natured young men, whose only motto should be service to the tourists and to the cities in whose employ they are engaged. In this as well would be the service to the Province as a whole. This committee, headed by an experienced tourist agent, should meet every visitor coming to our cities with a welcome, an offer of service in getting properly housed and fed, persuading him to stay over and see what we had to offer, and trying to get him to take some short trips, and seek to

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