

Sidney & Islands Review AND SAANICH GAZETTE.

Publisher and Editor: Alfred Cunningham.

Issued every Thursday at Sidney, B.C.
Price \$2.00 per annum, in advance.

All advertisements must be in The Review Office, Berquist Building, Beacon Avenue, not later than Wednesday noon. Letters intended for publication in The Review must be accompanied by the writer's name.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1918

CANADA'S NEED OF A MERCANTILE MARINE

One result we hope to see materialized will be the creation and development of a mercantile marine fleet and we trust a beginning will be made without the least possible delay now that the war is over and merchants are able to expand again. In the matter of coastal facilities, Canada holds a unique and extraordinary favorable position with her immense mileage of coast lines, abutting on the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. She already has numerous excellent flourishing parts, like Vancouver and Victoria on the Pacific side and Halifax, St. John's and Quebec on the Eastern side. From a marine development point of view every prospect pleases and encourages the idea of the advantage and desirability of expansion. So far the Canadian mercantile marine has consisted of a few coasters on the East, trading with the United States, New Foundland and the West Indies, and the magnificent fleet of Canada's premier railway, the Canadian Pacific, which for years has maintained a service de luxe with the Orient. Just before the war the Canadian Pacific Railway substantially enlarged its ocean-going fleet by building three splendidly large modern vessels (and purchasing a few others to supplement the service). These were placed on a new run, between Eastern Canadian ports and Europe. Whether these fine ships are still in existence we are unaware—they may have been lost in the war. On the Pacific coast, the home of the C.P.R. marine enterprise, this enterprising company, as we have pointed out, has maintained for years a regular mail and passenger service with Hong Kong and an intermediate freight service. It has done this for the reasons it initiated its Atlantic service, to complete its railway connections with the Orient and Europe. It has also maintained an efficient service on the Pacific coast, covering the local ports. During the war the marine services of the C.P.R. suffered terribly, the ships of the fleet having been commandeered by the Admiralty. Consequently the C.P.R. flag practically disappeared from the Pacific and the Atlan-

tic, and on the Pacific as friendly rivals the Japanese ships came in, until today, with the disappearance of the Blue Funnel Holt freight line, through Admiralty reasons, the Japanese, hold the monopoly.

For the moment the blue ribbon of the Pacific is no longer in the hands of the C.P.R., but, we trust, in a short time, we shall see the famous Empress boats on their former run, as the premier mail and passenger line to the East. We have no fear of friendly Japanese marine rivalry as long as Canada makes up its mind to meet it, and therein lies the danger. Scarcely a day passes without a Japanese ship arriving at Victoria or Vancouver, as will be seen from the recently published reports of Japan's two premier shipping companies, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha and Osaka Shosen Kaisha, their trans-Pacific services have repaid them handsomely. So much so that they will keep on the trans-Pacific run modern vessels, for handling the passenger and freight trade, which were originally intended for service between Japan and Europe and withdrawn owing to the dangers of navigating those waters during the war.

Owing to and while the war lasted Japan reaped a harvest with its mercantile marine. The competition of English and Canadian vessels disappeared, the American service slackened and the Northern Pacific being free of the enemy, Japanese ships were able to navigate to Canadian and American Pacific ports without danger. The trade was large indeed, and freights ruled abnormally high, so every Japanese ship that could be spared was put on to the trans-Pacific run. Hence the number of Japanese ships coming and going from Victoria today, laden inward and outward heavily with freight and passengers. So it behoves the C.P.R. and the Holt line, one of the finest freight lines in the world, to get their fleets again on the Pacific as soon as possible, to obtain a legitimate share of the carrying trade.

And we should like to see the Canadian Northern Railway branch out and put on a fleet of modern steamers on the Pacific. Undoubtedly it would pay them as it has proved in the past a mine of wealth to the C.P.R. This is one instance where a wealthy corporation might start in to increase the Canadian marine. The Grand Trunk might do likewise, but its activities before the war were limited to occasional European sailings, charterings and lake services. It might also take a part in the development, and is quite able to initiate both a European and Pacific service.

Then, as an essential factor in the development of the Canadian marine, must be established later, a well equipped, capacious navigation school, that will train Canadian youths as navigators and engineers. The Government of British Columbia might set an example to Eastern Canada by initiating such a school, as there are plenty of youths in Western Canadian ports willing to enter the mercantile marine if proper facilities in learning the art of navigation and the granting of certificates for promotion are offered them. It would not cost the provincial exchequer much to start a first-class navigation school, would be money well spent considering the object, and, indeed, like other navigation schools, could soon be made self supporting. It should be possible, but it is unfortunately not so at the moment, for any Victoria or Vancouver lad to receive in either city a first class education in navigation at a Government marine school. With its two lead-city sea-ports, one the capital, it is high time the Government of British Columbia provided such facilities and it should set about introducing them at once. We commend this matter to Premier Oliver, for without a Canadian born and trained personnel it is hopeless to expect a development of a Canadian mercantile marine.

The recent announcement made by the Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, pleased us immensely and must have given much satisfaction to those that go down in ships and have business on the great waters and those, who like ourselves, are interested keenly in the idea of a Canadian mercantile marine. He stated recently that contracts have now been placed with shipbuilding firms across Canada for the construction of thirty-one steel steamers ranging in

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It is expected that in addition to the types of vessels for which contracts have been passed, larger vessels of 10,500 tons were built, and plans are in course of preparation for these. They will probably be built at Halifax and Vancouver yards.

The Minister says that it is the intention of the Government to operate its vessels after the war on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Great Lakes in conjunction with the Canadian National Railway system.

The delay hitherto in laying keels and completing ships is due to the fact that all the ways were occupied with the construction of ships for the Imperial Munitions Board. As rapidly as these ships are completed their places are being occupied by ships building under the Government programme.

Although the prices paid for the vessels are substantially higher than in Great Britain, they are being constructed at prices which compare favorably with those being paid for similar types in United States yards.

Plates and shapes, which are at present obtainable only in the United States, are being purchased for the same prices as are being paid by the United States Government, and although substantially lower than prices obtaining in the open market at the time of purchase, they are materially higher than prices heretofore ruling in Great Britain.

These ships with the C.P.R. fleet at sea again will form a substantial and encouraging beginning for the future Canadian mercantile marine.

THE GRAVE OF EDITH CAVELL

Nothing touched the hearts of the British people more during the dark and dreadful days of the war than the martyrdom of Nurse Edith Cavell, who was done to death by the Germans. She was the ministering angel to the sick and wounded British and Belgian soldiers, and also to not a few Germans! She was ruthlessly shot in public execution by her Hun torturers because she was accused of harboring and assisting Allied soldier refugees to escape from Belgium. The penalty inflicted was death, which was most barbarously administered in Brussels. The grave of this saintly and courageous woman has now been discovered in the national cemetery at Brussels. It is believed to have been definitely located from a German plan of the cemetery in the hands of the Belgian authorities, and on Tuesday the British community held a commem-

ation service at the grave.

The service was attended by the British Minister, who laid on the mound of earth a wreath from King George and Queen Mary, inscribed "In Memory of a Brave and Splendid English Woman."

Sir F. S. Villiers deposited a wreath bound with British colors in the name of the British legation and colony and Brand Whitlock, the American Minister, added a tribute of his own. The Spanish Minister, the Belgian Foreign Minister and the members of the legation's staff were present at the ceremony.

One of the first acts of King Albert after his re-entry into Brussels was to visit the cemetery in company with Queen Elizabeth, who laid a wreath on Miss Cavell's grave.

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