

PACIFIC COAST COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Proposed Steel Mill—Homesteads Being Taken Up—
Lumber Contracts

(Staff Correspondence.)

Vancouver, May 16th.

What may result in the establishment of a steel rolling mill in Vancouver is the incorporation of the British Columbia Steel Works, Limited, among those interested being Messrs. F. L. Leighton, J. J. Banfield, Nicol Thompson, David A. Smith, Leon Melekov and H. W. Windle. A beginning is to be made with a mill to manufacture iron and steel from scrap. The promoters hope to increase the plant and eventually employing between 500 and 700 hands. It is felt that there is a field for this industry in British Columbia, the same as in the eastern provinces. No statement has been made as yet whether the stock is to be offered to the public, or whether the promoters are financing the concern. If stock is offered for sale, assurance should be given prospective shareholders that the industry has a fair prospect of making reasonable returns and that it is not merely a project whereby the initiators will make profit out of the flotation of the venture.

Taking up Homesteads.

During the past year or so there have been instances of how eager settlers are to get land for homesteading. When land has been put up for location, men have stood in line for days before the time specified. On May 1st, the government received applications from settlers for the 40-acre logged-off lots on Malaspina peninsula, and several men stood for days in order that they might be first to record. If good land were not held at exorbitant prices by speculators, it would not be long before the land in the lower part of the province at least, that may be cultivated with profit, would be taken up.

Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, who was a recent visitor on the coast, will return six months hence, to be present at the opening of the new Vancouver hotel. At that time he will probably be the guest of honor at a dinner to be given by the Vancouver board of trade. The Canadian Pacific is doing a large amount of work in the west, and British Columbia people from the eastern boundary to the west side of Vancouver Island appreciate the enterprise of this company in spending millions in development just now. The expenditure of large amounts of money to enable the company to take care of future business is in itself an indication of great faith in the future.

From Vancouver to Montreal.

One of the first boats to go through the Panama Canal will carry British Columbia timber from Vancouver Island to Montreal for the government harbor works at Toronto. This contract was about to be let to firms in the United States when an effort was made by the British Columbia Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers, Limited, to have the order come to this province. The representations made had effect, for contracts were awarded for 24,000,000 feet. This is all being cut on Vancouver Island, by the Empire Lumber, the Cameron Lumber Company which has an indirect connection with the former, and the new Ladysmith Lumber Company at Nanaimo. The Robert Dollar will load at the last-named company's mill; to provide accommodation, a large wharf is now being built. The timber will be shipped at intervals extending two or three years. It will mean much for the mills interested, for the contract has come at a time when the business was wanted. To get such business the request was made that in all government tenders the clause should be inserted that Canadian timber should be called for.

INSURANCE AGENTS AS ESSAYISTS.

"Life underwriting as a profession," is the attractive topic chosen for the prize essay competition of the Life Underwriters Association of Canada. Each contestant must be a member in good standing of a local life underwriters' association. Essays must be sent to Mr. W. Lyle Reid, Sun Life Building, Ottawa, from whom all particulars governing the competition can be obtained.

BUILDING UP HOME MARKETS

British Columbia Fruit Growers and Coast Cities—Zinc
Smelting Process

(Staff Correspondence.)

Vancouver, May 16th.

Determined effort is being made to induce the Woolsey, McAlpine, Johnson Zinc Corporation, of New York, to locate its proposed new electric zinc smelting plant at Nelson. Owing to zinc in ores in the Kootenay and Slocan districts, some of the mining properties cannot be successfully operated, since a satisfactory method to separate the zinc has not yet been perfected. There are huge bodies of low-grade zinc in developed and undeveloped mines of the Kootenay and Slocan, and if the new process is effective, an impetus will be given to mining in south-eastern British Columbia. In some of the operated mines at present, the zinc tailings are turned to one side and held for the time when profitable treatment of them is possible. The matter is an important one, and has been a subject of considerable action and discussion for some years, so much so that the Dominion government established an experimental station at Nelson in an effort to try out processes that might be used. Since the Johnson process has given evidence of being better than anything yet, the government discontinued the work at its station. The Nelson board of trade and the mining men of the district have been co-operating in an effort to interest the Woolsey, McAlpine, Johnson Zinc Corporation, with the result that Mr. Johnson, Dr. Struthers, his associate, and Dr. E. A. Barlow, of McGill University, who has been working on the matter for the government, visited Nelson this week. They went into the several matters in connection with the proposal in prospect.

Improving Fire Prevention Service.

Additional water mains in the wholesale district of Vancouver have been decided to be necessary by the civic waterworks committee, and plans for the augmentation of the present system are now being considered by the fire chief and the waterworks engineer, in connection with the subject of greater fire protection. Fire Chief Carlisle has strongly recommended more protection along the waterfront, and for years past has regularly included in his report the suggestion that a fire-boat be purchased. In addition to more mains and the purchase of a fire-boat next year, the fire chief has been instructed to bring in a report regarding the installation of fifty more hydrants in the downtown section, which he said were needed. It was shown at the Mainland fire that delay was caused in disconnecting hose from the one hydrant at each corner to hitch up the steamers, and the additional hydrants may be installed to obviate any such occurrence at possible fires in the future.

Helping the Producer.

Greater co-operation is being shown between civic and board of trade authorities on the one hand and the producer and the shipping and selling agencies of growers on the other. The complaint has been often voiced that while the Chilliwack and lower mainland districts, as well as the Okanagan, grew much fruit, it did not find a ready market on the coast, which was its natural market. Attention is now being paid to mutual interests in the province, and assistance is to be given the interior fruit grower to sell his product on the coast. Last year the Okanagan Central Agency was established on a co-operative shipping and selling basis, and its value was demonstrated. The manager, Mr. H. R. Robertson, has been asked to address the members of the Vancouver board of trade on the subject, and also to address meetings of growers on the lower mainland, the object being to establish similar agencies in districts that might benefit thereby. Mr. J. McMillan, clerk of the city market, is making a trip through the interior with a view to fostering produce trade with his establishment. The market idea was not strongly supported by the people at first, but of late considerable buying has been done there. The best interests of all can be served if provincial produce is bought in the city, for it means success to the small farmers and cultivators of small holdings which will give a producing population on the land, the result of which will be more substantial prosperity.

The Regina board of trade state that negotiations have been completed for the establishment in Regina of a red brick plant, which will turn out daily between 50,000 to 100,000 bricks, and employ from 35 to 60 men.