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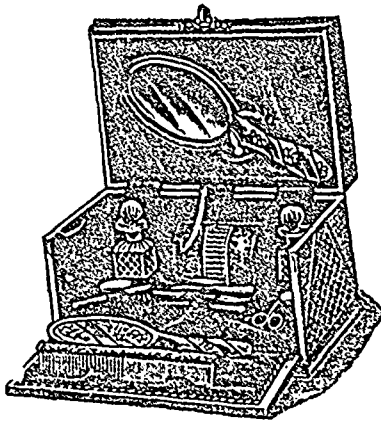
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41 Princess Street,

WINNIPEG, MAN.

Business Situation in British Columbia.

It is difficult to speak of the trade and industries of British Columbia just now without its sounding like boom talk, and difficult to crowd into small space information bearing on the rapid development of the country. If it were not for certain checks to trade and commerce British Columbia would be double the population she is at present. Generally and very briefly the situation may be sized up as follows: In the lumber industry according to R. H. Alexander, manager of the Hastings mill, who is probably the best authority on such matters in British Columbia, the demand for lumber is very great and constantly increasing and no complaint can be made on that score, but owing to the annoying competition on the coast, lumber is still sold at unremunerative prices. Peru, Chili, and even Australia must buy British Columbia lumber and the demand would be just as heavy at \$1.00 more per thousand as it is now, but owing to the cut throat policy of the lumber mills on the coast there is no immediate prospect of the price of lumber advancing. The gigantic lumber trust which there has been so much talk about is not practicable.

Evans, Colman & Evans, exporters, wholesale coal, etc., are responsible for the statement made to your correspondent that there is enough cheap coal afloat to supply the San Francisco markets for two or three years, in consequence of European vessels, attracted by the seductive freight on wheat from America, cutting coal freights from the old country here to ridiculously low figures and going back with wheat, thus averaging up on the trip. San Francisco has up to the present time been importing large quantities of Vancouver Island coal, so that the bountiful harvest is not an unmixed good.

G. I. Wilson, a prominent canner, and others, inform your correspondent that although last season was a splendid salmon season the industry appears to outsiders more remunerative than it really is. A fortune made in one season may be lost in the next, and foolish men rush in sometimes where angels fear to tread. A cannery company must have stability and sound financial backing to succeed. There are five new canneries starting up next season and it is feared the business will be seriously cut up, as the fish will have to be divided amongst 45 canneries instead of 40.

The farmers have had beautiful weather to harvest their crops and the crop of hay, oats, and roots has been far more abundant than in any previous year. This is the news from every farming section in the country. But, the farmers are complaining. They say: "We have such a limited market and out-

side competition is so keen we are obliged to sell our produce at very low prices."

As far as the mining industry is concerned, "Hope lives triumphant in the human breast." If any one spoke disparagingly of British Columbia's mineral wealth he would be looked upon as a croaking crank.

Your correspondent has interviewed a large number of men recently returned from the mining country and whose opinions are worth their weight in gold. A prominent bank manager, considered the most shrewd and cautious financier in Vancouver said to your correspondent: "Trail Creek gold mines is the only proposition that has not been exaggerated in the press of the province." Alderman Shaw who has a reputation for expressing himself conservatively says: "The South Kootenay country is marvellously rich in ore. The astonishing statements made by the press are not exaggerated. The War Eagle and L. Roy stock starting at 8c is now selling at \$2.50. Both companies declined to sell to English capitalists for \$800,000 for each mine, because they are shipping 100 tons a day, running \$50 to the ton in gold. It costs them \$20 to smelt in Montana and they have \$30 clear, or \$3,000 a day profit. They have enough ore in sight to last them one year to say nothing of what is not in sight, which means a sure million for them. There are 20 other mines just as promising in the district and the indications in the Boundary Bay country are even more hopeful. This is why I say that South Kootenay's mineral wealth has not been exaggerated." E. J. Clarke, capitalist, formerly of Toronto, says: "A man cannot make an exaggerated statement about South Kootenay." There is at present excitement all through the mining country. Decomposed gold quartz has been found at Eburne, a little settlement on Lulu Island an hour's drive from Vancouver, assaying thousands of dollars to the ton. The excitement over the find is intense. Every inch of ground is staked out for miles in the vicinity, as old miners say that underlying the whole Delta including Sea and Lulu Island, where the great flood wrought such havoc in the memorable month of June, are rich veins of gold quartz. Until Jack McLeod brought up gold ore on an artesian well drill assaying \$11,000 to the ton, no one dreamed that gold could be found around here, away below the sea at a depth of 150 feet. Word comes that Nakusp is deserted, that rich gold quartz has been struck in large quantities near the town and that the excited citizens have rushed off to the scene of the find. In fact, there have been so many well authenticated reports of rich finds lately that it has turned everybody into an optimist, and all believe in the approaching boom prophesied by your correspondent in a recent issue of The Commercial.

Earl P. Stanley, the prominent mining engineer of San Francisco, in an interview with The Commercial representative said: "British Columbia is the greatest mineral country in the world. I have gone over the mine sections four times; I have made a study of the mines of this country and of every other country, and I have come here to locate and have brought my blankets with me. There is more mineral wealth in the province of British Columbia than the United States of America ever produced or ever will produce, but the people of this country will not be convinced and the British people are allowing Americans to walk off with the wealth of their country. Every paying proposition in the province is frowned by Americans. There will be great excitement here next year but the boom will not strike the province until about three years. When it does come it will be the greatest mining excitement of modern times."

Several prominent men were interviewed about railway connections, tending to keep the trade of the province for British Columbia. The opinion of many was that if the Crow's Nest Pass was railed it would benefit Winnipeg more than the coast. The popular plan is to extend the Arrow Lake branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway around Arrow Lake, build a line from Nakusp to the Columbia and Kootenay Railroad running between Robson and Nelson, and then on in as direct a line as possible to Trail. Opinions, however, were divided. Engineering difficulties would be encountered in both routes, but leading Canadian Pacific Railway officials inform your representative that not only South Kootenay but West Kootenay will in due time be networked with Canadian Pacific Railway rails.

Traffic is increasing very fast on this division and as far as freight is concerned, particularly eastward, it will be the banner year since the inauguration of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In recapitulating the lumber outlook, though not so favorable for the miller, is not at all discouraging to the local trade, for the demand is growing enormously and every ship circulates thousands of dollars in this province. The same may be said of the coal industry, and as for the salmon industry, although hereafter there may not be so much money in it for the canners, the province can depend on getting \$3,000,000 and upwards each year out of the fish business including the halibut, frozen salmon and sturgeon exports.

The farmers have beautiful weather and abundant crops, what more could they want? Let them turn their roots, hay and cats into feed and they can all find a profitable market for butter and swine and cattle. They need educating, that is all.

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