

Factors In St. John's Prosperity

Much is Anticipated on the Completion of the Valley Railway Connection With the Transcontinental—Activity in Industrial Lines During the Past Few Years Will Lead to Further Expansion—Fishing, Agriculture and Shipping Keep Things on the Hum.

The title of this page implies that St. John is prosperous, and that is true. It is not due to any one industry or group of industries, but to many causes. There is one marked difference between St. John and many other cities, in that there is less difference in the state of labor in winter as compared with the summer. When the sawmills and some other activities slacken or cease operations in the fall or early winter there is the winter unemployment between seasons, for laboring men, as is found in many cities.

St. John is looking forward to still greater activity on its water front this winter and thereafter, as a result of being linked up this year with the new national transcontinental railway. The branch from McTavish Junction on that line to Fredericton will be made fit for heavy traffic, and will give connection via the St. John Valley Railway to Westfield, and over the Canadian Pacific from Westfield into the city. A heavier bridge is to be built over the St. John river at Fredericton to carry the traffic of this through line, and as the traffic grows, St. John will naturally derive a benefit, especially in the winter season. The same railway and its connections will also benefit the local trade of the city, since it traverses the rich St. John valley.

Another factor that will make for the prosperity of the city when the plant is completed is the great dry-dock and ship-repair plant, while for some years there will necessarily be a considerable annual expenditure on harbor improvement. Having connection with the Canadian Pacific and the two government railways the prosperity of this port must necessarily be directly related to the movement of ships and cargoes, and the general growth of Canadian trade.

St. John has a number of large industries, represented by the lumber and pulp mills, the sugar refinery, the cotton mills, the various iron works, nail works, brush factories and others, but it has also a large number of small ones, which in the aggregate give regular employment to a considerable portion of the people; while its central position as a trade distributing centre en-

dures a large wholesale business the year round.

It is now very freely conceded by manufacturers and business men that prohibition is today a factor in St. John's prosperity. There are those who resent such legislation as too drastic and too great an interference with individual rights, but a return to the open bar and the conditions that formerly prevailed would be negated by an overwhelming majority. The result of sobriety is seen in greater reliability of employees, and better home conditions for great numbers of families, which means better business all round.

Of course the people are after all the chief factor in a city's prosperity, and the disturbing foreign element is not found in St. John. It was not unusual some years ago to lament the fact that all the immigrants landing here in winter went straight on to the west. Subsequent events have shown that this, so far as the east is concerned, was not an unmixed evil, and there is a growing feeling that all newcomers should be carefully scrutinized before they are accepted as citizens.

During the war period prosperity came to St. John because munition plants received very large contracts and great quantities of war materials and food came to the port for shipment overseas. Work was plentiful and wages high, and as a military centre the city also derived much business from the constant presence of large numbers of troops.

The change in the conditions has not caused any hardship, for in one way or another the labor released has been absorbed into other occupations and there has been no falling off in general trade throughout the province. That trade is the more steady and profitable because the farmers had a good year, and a fine farming country tributary to St. John and draws supplies therefrom. Nor is St. John indifferent to the growth of other towns in the province, since whatever helps any part of the province is helpful also to the chief city and its trade. The tradition that the city desires to "hog" everything is not only untrue but a reflection on the foresight of the people, who fully realize that a thriving city needs a progressive and growing country around it.

In comparison with that of other cities the debt of St. John is very small, and is represented by assets of

real values. Many improvements are needed, and must be provided, and when the city gets back the money it spent to provide facilities for a national port there will be funds to expend on other needed and important services.

We must not overlook the fisheries of St. John harbor as a factor in its prosperity. The fish taken include in their season gaspereaux, shad, salmon and sardine herring, and one of the city's newest industries is a large sardine factory of modern equipment. Not only do the fishermen profit by this industry but the sale of fishing privileges to fishermen brings considerable revenue to the city. Moreover, considerable quantities of fish taken in the bay are handled and cured by St. John houses for the Canadian and export trade.

St. John factories have considerable foreign trade in addition to goods shipped throughout Canada, and such men as Mr. W. S. Fisher, president of the Maritime branch of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, assert with confidence that St. John will have a great future as a manufacturing centre. Whatever the future may develop the city is today prosperous, and facing the problems of reconstruction with cheerful confidence. The present year will bring it added facilities, for enlarged trade, some important construction work of a public character, and the much needed opportunity to get back to something like normal conditions for the shipment of the large quantities of lumber stored in mill-yards and wharves.

A DOUBLE EXPLANATION

One morning a woman walked into a village grocery store with a majestic stride. It was easy to see, says the Argonaut, by the earnestness of her expression, that she was somewhat disturbed.

"This," she sarcastically explained, throwing a package on the counter, "is the soap that does the washing itself. It's the soap that makes washing a pleasure. It's the soap—"

"That isn't soap, madam," interrupted the groceryman, examining the package. "Your little girl was in here yesterday for a half a pound of cheese and a half a pound of soap. This is the cheese."

"U-m, that accounts for it!" said the woman as the light of understanding began to glow. "I wondered all night what made the Welsh rabbit we had for supper taste so queer."

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