

Progress of Victoria in an Active Year

Annual Report of Victoria Board of Trade Shows Developments in Shipbuilding, Lumbering and Trade and Commerce—Need to Attract Tourists.

Messrs. J. O. Cameron, president; J. L. Beckwith, vice-president, and F. Elworthy, secretary, of the Victoria Board of Trade, presented the annual report of the board for the calendar year at the annual meeting held on April 10th last, at the board rooms, and follows:

"Progress has been made in the re-establishment of returned soldiers in civil occupations. The patriotism of those employers who promptly reinstated their pre-war employees can not too strongly be commended. Their action has helped to relieve local congestion arising from the great number of men who took their discharges here, but who enlisted in other parts of Canada.

"The Dominion and Provincial Governments have assisted in soldier land settlements, in advancing capital for industrial enterprises, and the establishment of employment bureaus. To men for whom employment could not be found financial assistance has been given through the Patriotic Aid Association. The Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment provides facilities for men who are unable or reluctant to follow their pre-war occupations to qualify for other spheres of usefulness. A soldiers' housing scheme also is available through the city and municipal corporations.

"It will be seen, therefore, that substantial efforts have been made to demonstrate in a practical way appreciation of the services of the men who so valiantly did their part in upholding the traditions of the British Empire.

"During the past twelve months twenty-one wooden vessels were launched in Victoria, eighteen by the Foundation Co. and three at the Cholberg Shipyard, thus completing the contracts with the French and Norwegian Governments respectively.

"In the eighteen vessels for the French Government machinery was installed. The Norwegian vessels were schooners, each about 1,500 tons d.w., or 1,100,000 feet of lumber.

"This construction gave employment to a large number of men who, about the time of the last launchings, expressed the desire that shipbuilding should be established in Victoria on a permanent basis. The proposal was referred to a special committee of the Board of Trade, who recommended the formation of a company to construct and operate a fleet of wooden barquentines suitable for carrying lumber. This plan was submitted to Sir Henry Drayton in November last, when he visited Victoria in connection with the Victory Loan, as worthy of Federal Government assistance. The proposal was presented as a practical plan for immediately relieving the unemployed labor situation, and subsequently furnishing facilities for increasing British Columbia's lumber exports. Some weeks later, on the invitation of the Hon. S. F. Tolmie a delegation proceeded to Ottawa and the result was the Federal Government agreeing to loan the sum of \$700,000, provided a company was formed with a subscribed capital of \$300,000. The incorporation of Victoria Shipowners, Ltd., followed, and the stated capital has been subscribed. Arrangements have been made with the Cholberg Shipyard Co. to construct four wooden barquentines estimated to cost \$250,000 each.

"The Harbor Marine Co. are building two 8,100-ton steel ships for the Dominion Government. The hulls are about 90 per cent. and 70 per cent. completed, respectively.

"The importance of the lumber manufacturing industry in the city of Victoria has considerably increased during the past year. Some of the advancements made are worthy of special mention, viz.:

"The sawmill of the Moore-Whittington Lumber Co., Ltd., was destroyed by fire in December. Work on the

erection of a new and larger mill was started immediately and pushed with all possible speed until it is now completed. This new mill will considerably increase the production of lumber at Victoria.

"The new company styled 'Canadian Puget Sound Lumber & Timber Co., Ltd.', was organized during the past year and has taken over the mills and the other properties of the Canadian Puget Sound Lumber Co., Ltd. The new company, after thoroughly overhauling and repairing the mills, began operating to full capacity about the middle of last year. This is reputed to be one of the best sawmills in the Province. It is located on the upper part of the Inner Harbor, having safe dockage at the mill wharf for ships drawing up to twenty-two feet of water, and with the rails of the Canadian Pacific Railway extended into the mill yard this plant is admirably located for shipping its output by water and rail.

"The Cameron Lumber Co., Ltd., has also carried out extensive improvements on their mills, at the foot of Gorbally Road, one of the most important of which is the building of a spur track from the Canadian National Railways into their yards, so that now cars are loaded directly from the sheds, for all parts of Canada and the United States.

Statistics published by the Provincial Government show that the total lumber produced in British Columbia during the calendar year 1919 was 1,758,330,000 ft. b.m., or slightly less than for the year 1918. However, the total value for 1919 was considerably in excess of the year 1918.

"It is to be noted that the total production of the mills in Victoria and vicinity was considerably more during 1919 than for the previous year. And unless some unforeseen obstacle intervenes to prevent, the year 1920 will show an output of lumber and the forest products far in advance of any previous year, both in quantity of production and in the market value thereof.

"A conservative estimate of the value of the products of the lumber and shingle mills located within and contiguous to the city of Victoria is at least one million dollars per month, affording employment for several thousand men.

"The outlook for an active demand for all kinds of lumber is bright, and those who have studied the market conditions advance the opinion that the supply cannot overtake the demand under two years, which would assure the activity in this industry throughout the Province for a considerable time. The city of Victoria must share in the general prosperity as well as particularly in the activities of the plants within her limits.

"The canned salmon pack of 1919 for the entire Province amounted to 1,393,156 cases, being 223,000 cases less than in 1918, when a record total was secured.

"Fraser River only furnished 158,718 cases out of last year's total, including but 29,628 cases of sockeyes; and only 64,346 cases of this species were packed on Puget Sound, demonstrating the immense falling off that has taken place, due to overfishing in the past at these points.

"The total pack for the Pacific Coast, Siberia and Japan, amounted to 8,840,514 cases, which was materially less than in 1918 and 1917. The greatest falling off was in Alaska, and with the object of preserving the fishing, considerable restrictions are being put into effect which will probably result in permanently smaller packs being secured there than in recent years. For British Columbia, on the contrary, the Dominion Government, notwithstanding the serious falling off shown at several points, is enacting new regulations in the opposite direction, viz., allowing an unrestricted number of fishing and cannery licenses, relying on its ability to lengthen the close season if found necessary; but with the individual catches already reduced by the increased number of boats fishing, it can easily be seen what serious opposition on the part of the fishermen would