

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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British Columbia Business Review.

March 22, 1892.

There is little unusual to report in business in any line. A day or two of cloud and rain has interrupted a long spell of beautiful summer like weather, which has made gardening and farming general along the coast. This has awakened the activities at an earlier date than usual and building, logging, fishing, farming and mining, etc., are well advanced, thus helping to remove the dullness as a rule incident to the season and this year in particular. There is a greater demand all round for labor, although it will be several months before the business community will feel the full benefits of wages distribution. Up in the interior the ranchers are beginning to turn out their cattle on the ranges, where the grass is growing again. On the whole the winter must have been an unprofitable one to the up country cattle men. As pointed out some time ago in these columns, the policy of the ranchers at the outset was to hold for high prices on the grounds that stock was scarce and a beef famine probable. As a result the butchers contracted for their supply from the Northwest and Manitoba, some of them as far ahead as May, the consequence being that ranchers in the interior found their stock on their hands to winter with the coast market already provided for. The stock wintered well on account of the mildness of the weather, but the season was long.

By the way, talking of stock, the new quarantine regulations which the Dominion Government seems bound to enforce are going to play "dead" in this province, especially in Victoria. It will not effect the mainland very much, because it depends almost entirely upon the interior and the prairies for its supply, but the island at certain seasons has to look to the other side for good meat, and especially at times when a freight blockade might occur or some other circumstances affect the quality or quantity of the beef supply. Butchers here regard the move as in the interests of the Northwest cattle ranchers who, they say, wish to control this market under pretence of protecting the Canadian cattle trade. If British Columbia was a cattle exporting province it could be well understood how such quarantine regulations would be necessary but for the next ten years, if ever, there is little prospect of a beef from the coast getting over the Rockies let alone to England. But if it were live stock imported from the other side are slaughtered upon arrival, or as soon after as possible and without danger of contact with home cattle. It is right to protect home interests to any reasonable degree, but, while usually there is no necessity of importing from the United States, there are times when it is very convenient and highly in the public interest to do so and, certainly British Columbia should not be placed at the mercy of such circumstances.

Interest in the fisheries never was so great and so practical as at the present time. Leaving out of consideration for the present time, the crofter scheme, which will shortly come to the front as a public issue, there are several other ventures on a more or less extensive scale. The British Columbia Fishing and Trading Co., which has been doing a rather good business in fishing as well as marketing, is endeavoring to enlarge the capital stock in order to go into the trade on a larger scale. The well-known businesses of E. H. Port and Wm. Vinen, New Westminster, are reported as having passed into the hands of an English syndicate Pretty & Co., who want a bonus to start in Vancouver, have undertaken the busi-

ness in Lulu Island of fish curing, drying, etc. It is also reported that some parties are endeavoring to get the free charter of the old Government St. Douglas under the pretence of exploring the fisheries of the coast. This, of course, would be unjust to those already in the business, and should not be allowed. It is reported that the Dominion Government has agreed to hand over the steamer to the Province free for such purposes, but any exploratory work should be done by the Government and not by private parties. Pending the general issuance of licenses, interim permits have been issued to a number of fishermen and fishing is already under way. The catch of salmon, however, is reported light. While on the subject of fish, it might be seasonable to remark that the whole matter of licensing demands reform. A very good export business could be done in salmon bellies smoked halibut and the like, but a supply cannot be obtained. Indians cannot sell their product without being licensed. Only fishermen with licenses will be permitted to fish at all and having a monopoly of the business their prices for fish will not prevent the fish curing industry being made profitable for export. The fisheries being one of the most promising resources of British Columbia, the great necessity of having a man in the Department at Ottawa who knows the local conditions of the industry is daily becoming more apparent. It may be added, that the last carload of halibut caught in northern waters was shipped to New York. The consignee wired upon its receipt for a car of salmon. Irving G. Hall, of the firm of J. G. Hall & Co., fish and commission merchants, Boston, is paying the province a visit. Interviewed on the fish business, his remarks confirmed exactly what has been said in THE COMMERCIAL. He says the eastern fish business is in the hands of a combine, which can only be broken by counter capital and the assurance of a regular supply of fish to the trade from independent sources.

The C. P. R. has now completed arrangements for a very complete and direct train service to Seattle, via Mission branch, Bellingham Bay and British Columbia and Great Northern Passengers leaving Victoria at two in the morning by the Islander, can take the train at Vancouver and reach Seattle at 20 o'clock that afternoon. Further arrangements are being negotiated for extending this service to Portland, which will undoubtedly be completed in a few days. The steamer Premier has been withdrawn from the Whatcom-Seattle route as a consequence. A bonus of \$300,000 is being asked to bring the Northern Pacific into Vancouver. It is announced that the C. P. R. Co. is going to build through Crow's Nest pass this year. This has, of course, been contemplated for some time. It will connect with the old line at some point known only to the management as yet and will shorten the through route one day. This move will probably be fatal to several other charters for lines through Crow's Nest. The Twin Sister and short line charters for lines between Vancouver and New Westminster have not been allowed, the former being killed in committee and the latter withdrawn.

Shipping just now is lighter than usual, although the next two weeks it is expected to be heavy. The first of the thirteen sealers from Nova Scotia sealers for the north was arrived and is being fitted. Notice has been received that applications for compensation by sealing vessels must be filed at Victoria within a month. It is thought in some quarters that the *modus vivendi* will be renewed this year. If so it will be a serious blow to the sealing industry, if not accompanied by compensation. Shipping now in port is:

Port.	No.	Tonnage.
Victoria	1	1,253
Vancouver	6	8,687
Nanaimo	6	9,252
Chambers	1	1,036
Total	13	19,631

A new hop raising company has been organized for the cultivation of hops in the Squamish Valley, and a gang of men have gone up to prepare the grounds and plant. One important feature of the industry will be utilization of a large amount of Indian labor which annually goes to Washington and Oregon hop fields, where a large share of the season's earnings are spent by the Indians.

Owing to the mild winter and early spring, the Kootenay country has opened up sooner than was anticipated and the rush in there has already begun. Fortunately, however, the rush will not be as large as at first supposed. The excitement in Spokane Falls due to the progress of another railway and the recent mining strikes in Colorado will attract a number who otherwise would have gone into Kootenay and who may eventually go, but in the present undeveloped state of the country it is just as well that too many people do not go in just now. Mining machinery is being taken into Cariboo and several placer deposits will be worked on a large scale this summer. A big deal, some time ago referred to as closed regarding some Little mining property, is still under way, but is expected to be closed in a week or so. A syndicate of capitalists is working a large claim on Siwash creek, with good prospects of success. A company has been formed in New Westminster to seek for coal in Stray. Government returns have just been issued in regard to the mining industry. From this it is learned that the coal output for last year was 1,029,097 tons, nearly fifty per cent. increase over the previous year. The gold mined was disappointingly small, being placed at \$351,206.

B.C. MARKET QUOTATIONS.

FLOUR AND FEED—Flour has taken another rise and owing to the strike on the C. P. R. may rise much higher locally, as shipments are likely to be delayed. The tendency in any event is strong.

FLOUR AND FEED—Hungarian, Manitoba, is quoted at \$6.00; strong bakers, \$5.60; ladies' choice, \$6.00; prairie Lilly, \$5.75; Oregon, \$6.25; Spokane, \$5.65; Eaderby mills: Premier, \$5.85; three star, \$5.70; two star, \$5.35. Oatmeal, eastern, \$3.49; California, \$4. National mills, Victoria \$3.65; rolled oats, eastern, \$3.40; California, \$3.90; National mills, \$3.25; cornmeal, \$3.10; split peas, \$3.50; pearl barley, \$4.50. Rice—The Victoria rice mills quote wholesale: Japan rice per ton, \$77.50; China rice, do, \$70; rice flour, do, \$70; chit rice, do, \$25; rice meal, do, \$17.50; chopped feed, \$33 to 35 per ton; bran, \$21; shorts, \$25; oats, \$30 to 32; wheat \$33 to 40; oil cake, \$40. Wheat is quoted in car lots \$30; oats \$25 to \$27; chop barley, \$27.

Eggs—Eggs are now down to 18c, fresh local eggs ruling a little higher. Lime are as low as 15c.

DAIRY—Cheese is steady at 13½; butter is on the downward tendency. California butter is on the market at 29c and creamery is about a cent lower. Dairy is anything obtainable.

MEATS—Dried meats show no improvement and some Ontario pickers are offering away below the market. Just now prices are somewhat demoralized, regular firms are quoting: Hams, 13½; B. bacon, 13½; rolls, 11½; backs, 12½; dry salt, long, clear, 11½; dry salt, ome lots, 10½; lard, kegs, 13½; lard, pails, 13½; kettle rendered, 12½; steam rendered, 11½; compound, 11c; bologna, 11c.

Fresh meats show no change. The only thing likely to affect prices for a time is the enforcement of the quarantine regulations.

FRUITS, NUTS, ETC.—Apples are almost out of the market. A car of eastern apples is on the way, but prices cannot be quoted. The following are to-day's quotations:—

Riverside oranges, \$2 to 2.50; Cocoanuts \$1 per doz; Wash. navels, \$4.75; bananas, \$3.75 to 4; lemons, \$4.75; Turkish figs, 15c; almonds 18c; evaporated apples, 12c; walnuts, 15c; Cal. onions, 1½c; Str'd honey 13c; filberts, 15c; evaporated peaches, 10c.