In British Columbia Waters.

It is said that more than 100 vessels have been added to the Pacific Coast fleet this season, B. C. getting more than its share.

The C.P.R. steamer Illicilliwaet, heretofore running between Arrowhead & Thompson's Landing, has been withdrawn from that route, & now runs between Brooklyn & Robson, touching at all intermediate points. Capt. Hughes is now in command.

On Sept. 8 at 2 a.m., on Lower Arrow Lake, the C. P. R. steamer, Rossland, ran into P. Genelle & Co's tug Fawn. Both vessels had lights out & each had given signals, but the Fawn's pilot misunderstood the Rossland's whistle. The Fawn is about 70 ft. long & had been in commission 3 years. She was cut in 2 by the Rossland's prow. The 2 parts were towed to Shields' landing by the Illicillewaet, to be placed on the ways & repaired. Had the Rossland struck the Fawn in the middle instead of abaft the pilot house there would have been loss of life. Both engines were reversed when the boats collided.

A large steamer, with a pneumatic caisson & air lock elevator for gold dredging purposes on the Upper Fraser is likely to be built at Vancouver. A model has been tried & found to work satisfactorily to the inventors, Messrs. Garrison & Wood, of Los Angeles, Cal. The steamer will cost about $20,000. It will be 120 ft. long & 28 ft. wide & will be fitted with steam appliances & machinery for heavy dredging work. The caisson is to be 10 by 20 ft. It is designed as a water-tight section in the boat that can be lowered to any reasonable depth so as to *strike the bottom of the* river. Then it will be pumped out so workmen can descend inside the caisson & dig out the bed of the river.

In our Aug. issue, pg. 161, we mentioned the sale of the Esquimalt Marine Ry. to the B.C. Marine Co., which intends to enlarge the plant, to erect a smaller plant in Victoria Harbor & to build another marine railway at Vancouver. There is evidently going to be competition. The Star Yard at the head of Victoria Harbor, which until recently was managed by T. Trahey, has been sold to a U. S. Co., of which J. Clarke, a Victoria shipbuilder & contractor is Manager. This Co. has commenced building a slip. A cradle will be built running from shore to mid-channel, or until 20 feet of water is struck. The grade of the ways will be 1 ft. in 20. It is intended to handle vessels up to 2,000 tons.

We have no advice as to what the Canadian Pacific Navigation Co. is doing in regard to a new steamer for the Vancouver-Victoria service, further than what we mentioned in our July issue, pg. 134, & Aug., pg. 161, except that the Assistant Manager of the Co. denies a rumor that a steamer has been bought from the London & Northwestern Ry. of Eng., & states that negotiations are being carried on with that & other companies for the purchase of a 1st-class steamer, it having been found that, owing to the rush in the British shipyards, too long a time would elapse before such a craft could be built to order. The Islander is now doing the Vancouver-Victoria service, the Charmer being laid up.

The Pacific Coast S. S. Co. has decided to increase its San Francisco-Puget Sound-British Columbia service from a weekly to a semi-weekly one. As soon as the Corona, which ran ashore between Dyea & Skagway, can be placed in commission again she will be put on the southern run, taking the place of the Santa Rosa, which will be put on the B.C. route, & will run in conjunction with the Umatilla, Walla Walla & Queen. Steamers will leave San Francisco each Wednesday & Saturday, arriving at Victoria, B.C., each Monday & Friday & Seattle each Tuesday & Saturday. Returning, they will leave Seattle every Sunday & Thursday, arriving at Victoria each Wednesday & Sunday. The return of the Senator and City of Puebla, which were *withdrawn on the opening of the war, will make* a change in the vessels of the Puget Sound fleet, but it will make no change in the sailing days.

The Ontario Court of Appeal recently reversed the decision of an assessment court & held that in assessing for purposes of taxation the poles, wires, conduits & cables of a telephone company, the cost of construction or the value as part of a going concern is not the test; they must be valued in the assessment division in which they happen to be, just as so much dead material to be taken in payment of a just debt from a solvent debtor.

THE ST. LAWRENCE ROUTE & THE MANITOBA GRAIN TRADE.

By Edward Farrer.

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier has said that the question of the day in Canada is transportation. It is a question everywhere, owing mainly to the drop in prices during the last 20 years. When wheat was $1.50 a bushel the cost of transportation was not the vital factor it is to-day, when the price is so much less. The general movement in behalf of lower transportation rates is caused, as economists put it, by the fact that whilst improved transportation has contributed greatly to the fall in prices, it has not similarly reduced its own price; in other words, while formerly 10 bushels of wheat would fetch enough to carry 100 bushels, say, 250 miles, it would now be necessary to sell 15 bushels to transport the same quantity the same distance, so that, to quote Professor Mavor, of the University of Toronto, "The transportation charge tends at present to form a progressively increasing proportion of the realized price of the article transported.

What Mr. Laurier had particularly in mind, however, was the question of transportation from the North-West. The Canadian route from the Sault to the Welland Canal, & from the Welland to Montreal & Quebec, has cost the people over $50,000,000 for canals, besides a large sum for harbors & dredging, yet the bulk of the grain traffic of Manitoba is going to the Atlantic by way of Buffalo & New York. For every bushel of Manitoba wheat sent to Montreal for export in 1893, 2 bushels were sent to Buffalo & New York; in 1894 the proportion was 3 to 1 in favor of the American route; in 1895 as much as 8 to 1; in 1896 3 to 1; in 1897 5 to 1.

The export of grain from Manitoba is destined, we all believe, to become an immense traffic, & it is of importance, after all we have spent & are spending on the St. Lawrence route, that the trade should not be diverted in this fashion to the U.S.

The reasons why it seeks New York in preference to Montreal appear to be these: First of all, Montreal is handicapped by its remoteness from the ocean & by the freezing of the St. Lawrence so soon after the Manitoba harvest. It was cruel of nature, when she had built so majestic an outlet from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic, to place that heavy ban upon it. Wheat does not begin to reach Fort William in large quantities till the first of October. Ordinarily the last ocean vessels leave Montreal about Nov. 20. But as it takes on an average 10 to 12 days for a cargo to reach Montreal from Fort William, the Manitoba shippers do not care to ship to Montreal after Nov. 10. On the other hand, they can ship to Buffalo as late as the first week in December; it takes a week to send a cargo from Fort William through to New York, & their insurance runs to Dec. 10. Buffalo has thus an advantage of 30 days of shipping time at the busiest period of the year. Besides, when the wheat gets to Buffalo the owner has the choice of 4 ocean ports, New York, Boston, Baltimore & Philadelphia, open the year round—an important consideration.

Secondly, the speculative market of New York enables the Manitoba shipper to insure himself against a drop in price while the grain is in transit. For instance, when he has 100,000 bus. of no. 1 hard ready to ship from inland elevators to Fort William, he wires his New York agent to buy an option for the delivery of 100,000 bus. of no. 2 red, the standard grade there, a fortnight thereafter. The option, of course, goes up & down with the market while the no. 1 is on its journey, & protects the no. 1. Hence, as he says, the banks need not worry about his account. The option is bought in when the Manitoba