

British Columbia Trade Letter

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.)

VANCOUVER, August 3rd. —Indications from a general industrial stand-point are not as promising as they were some time ago, and as one or two exceptional indications account for these, it may be well to refer to the courses somewhat in detail. The most important industry now suffering from depression is that of lumber. For this there is ample explanation in the south American difficulties which have disorganized the principal lumber markets which British Columbia had. This has had a natural reflex effect on the local market. So far in the season the export trade has been fairly good, but not sufficient to exhaust the supply. This is obviously exceptional and will be relieved as soon as matters are adjusted in the southern republics. As was expected the salmon catch is not up to its usual volume this season "two years good and two years bad" is a maxim with the canneries, which so far the economic results of a hatchery have not been successful in disturbing. The two years of plenty have been enjoyed and the canneries are not disappointed in finding them followed by slack runs, although there is still a possibility of a run of some consequence. Salmon have been caught plentifully off Blaine, which would indicate that they are moving towards the river, but if so, there progress is unusually slow. So far the catch has been so limited that contract fishermen have given up the job and only day men are employed, so that unless salmon reaches a high figure the prospects of profit are slight. Then comes the stoppage of the sealing industry and the return of the sealers with a small catch. Of course the owners of vessels are likely to be compensated, but for the present the cessation of so important an industry will have a temporary effect in making matters quiet. The other exceptional feature to which attention might be drawn is the lightness of the crops, especially fruit. This does not apply to some sections, but as a whole while crops would be considered satisfactory compared with those of any other province, compared with those of previous years they are not up to the standard. This it seems to me is fully accounted for by the cold wet spell which followed immediately after seeding, and which had its effect on fruits as well as other farm products. Even a partial failure of crops in this province is so rare as to excite comment in this instance.

On the other hand business has been unusually good, as has been shown by the constant increasing revenue returns, which grow apace each month. Local coast and to ciga shipping has been very active and the volume of traffic being moved has rapidly expanded. The starting of new industries, the large amount of building, public works of one kind and another throughout the province have employed and circulated a great deal of money, and are likely to offset materially any shrinkage the result of the causes above referred to, doubtless they will be appreciatedly felt, but as they are of a temporary and exceptional character there is no cause for anxiety. In nearly all respects prospects at the outset this spring were of a decidedly bullish nature. One of the buoyant features of the situation is the immense output of coal at Nanaimo, where the New Vancouver Coal Co. is loading on an average 2,000 tons a day. In other words, dump cars filled with a

day's output would extend a mile. The mines and Nanaimo are very prosperous as a consequence. It is rumored that as a consequence of their troubles with the miners, the Dunsmuir are going to sell out their Wellington mines to a syndicate of American capitalists and some things would seem to indicate their truthfulness, but nothing authoritative has been published or is known regarding it. The healthful character of trade generally and the industrial activity apparent are also very assuring features.

All parts of the province have joined heartily in the project for a provincial exhibit worthy of British Columbia, and the prospects of a mammoth display of products are most gratifying. Any jealousies that may have existed between the various cities, have been laid aside, and only a spirit of healthful rivalry exists.

The vegetable crop generally will be good, though not excessive; grains is not as heavy as in former years, the straw being shorter, but the yield will be satisfactory all round. Fruit depends upon locality, but generally it may be said to have been injured by the cold, wet early season. Small fruits were in fairly good supply but damaged while maturing. Pears and apples are a short crop, especially pears, depending largely, however, on local conditions. Plums will be a fair crop. Peaches, grapes, etc., are not sufficiently plentiful as yet to be included. Hay was a good crop and was nearly all harvested in first-class condition. Wheat and oats are ripening and in some places cutting has commenced. Real estate generally is quiet and firm. Prices are as follows:—

Flour and Grain—Manitoba patents \$6.30; Manitoba bakers, \$5.90; Enderby XX, \$5.35; Oregon flour, \$6.00. Eastern rolled oats, \$3.75 per sack; ditto, San Francisco, \$5.25; cornmeal and oatmeal, \$3.30; shorts, \$2.6; bran, \$2.4; wheat, \$35 to \$40; hay, \$15 to \$16; chopped feed, \$35 to \$40; oats, \$40 to \$43.

Cured Meats—Dry salt, 11½c per pound; roll bacon, 13c; breakfast bacon, 14½c; hams, 15c; long clear, 11½c. Lard is held at same prices: in tubs, 12c; in pails, 12½c; in tins, 13; lard compound, 12c.

Sugar—Granulated, 6½c per lb; yellow, 5½c; cube, 6c; syrup, 5c.

Butter—Creamery 24 to 25c for extra choice; dairy, 15 to 20c.

Eggs—19c.

Cheese is held at 12½; old cheese, 8c.

Vegetables—Potatoes, Californian, \$1.30 to \$1.40 per 100 pounds; local, do, \$20 per ton; onions, silverskins, \$1.35 per 100 pounds; cabbage, \$1.50 per 100 pounds; turnips, \$1.25 and carrots, \$1.50.

Fruit—Peaches, \$1.25 to \$1.40 per box; plums, \$1.10 to \$1.20; prunes \$1.40; apricots, \$1.25 to \$1.50; apples, \$1.75; pears, \$2.50. Oranges are offered at \$4 to \$4.25; California lemons \$3.75; Sicilian lemons at \$8. Grapes, \$1.75 per box.

A VANCOUVER dispatch says that the latest estimate places the Brazilian coffee crop for 1890-91, now coming into market, at 2,200,000 bags. Notwithstanding the high prices the daily receipts do not average over 3,000 bags. Should the present disorganization of labor continue it is believed that the coffee crop for 1891-92, now placed at 3,000,000 or 9,000,000 bags, will not exceed 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 bags.

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