

THE NORTH-WEST COAST.

The various canneries on the Northwest Coast have commenced operations, and the outlook for the season's catch is very promising. By the steamer Otter, which arrived here on the 23d ult., we are in receipt of the following news from that quarter:

Smith's Inlet - The Quashela Co. had closed in their cannery buildings and were making cans.

Rivers Inlet - New buildings for the Rivers Inlet Packing Co., were going up and the improvements are in progress. The buildings of the Victoria Packing Co. are all up.

Metlakatlah - Indians have gone to work for \$35 a month. Ten boats are out.

Skeena River - The Windsor Co. have no boats out, but are ready for business. Cunningham & Co. have put up the first 17 cases. The Balmoral Co. had about sixty fine salmon in their shed the morning the Otter sailed. Inverness Co. were ready, but had sent no boats out. Indians on this river want \$45 a month.

Alert Bay - The canneries are all ready for the run.

The fish caught in the northern waters are hard and compact, of fine taste and flavor, and when better known will command the highest prices in the market. As this industry is susceptible of almost unlimited extension, a great increase in the development of this resource, in the immediate future, may be confidently anticipated.

Inasmuch as the salmon is known to come from the north and as the run in the Columbia and Sacramento rivers is annually decreasing it becomes evident that the great bulk of salmon canned on the Pacific Coast will be put up in British Columbia. It will be observed that the great fisheries on the east coast of America and on the western shores of Europe are found within the same geographical parallels. The abundance of fish in these northern waters corresponds with that of the well known fishing grounds referred to. The myriads of food fish that swarm in the waters of this province go to show that there is scarcely any limit to the amount that could be caught if the business were fully entered upon. Hon. Allan Francis, U. S. Consul, residing in this city says in a letter to the *St. Louis Grocer*, that last year the fish began running two weeks later than usual, but when they did come they came in myriads. The first appearance of salmon was at the north—at Skeena and Nass rivers and Rivers Inlet - demonstrating again that they either came from the west or north, and not from the south, as generally supposed. The mouth of the Skeena is in latitude 54; Nass, 54.40; and Rivers Inlet, 51.25. The significance of the fish coming from the north becomes more apparent when it is remembered that Skeena is about five hundred miles north

of the Columbia. At the points above named there were last year four canneries, and their season's put up was 30,000 cases. At Alert Bay, near the head of Vancouver Island, the run was still later, and its cannery only put up 5,000 cases - 2,000 less than the previous season. On Fraser river there were fifteen canneries in operation, the season commencing and continuing later, and their put-up amounted to 200,000.

The twenty canneries of the province aggregated 235,000 cases, each containing four dozen cans calculated at fifty pounds, giving 11,750,000 pounds 5876 tons. They are rated at \$5 per case, and make a showing in value of \$1,175,000. Almost the entire pack of British Columbia has been sent to England, Canada and Australia, absorbing the balance. As to the labor in these northern canneries with the exception of overseers and adepts in the business Chinese, Indians and squaws perform most of the rough work, on wages from \$30 to \$40 per month. The canneries average about sixty hands, and turn out if the supply of fish is equal to their work, from 200 to 250 cases per day. Outside the canneries are white and Indian fishermen, who contract to furnish fish from 5 to 10 cents a piece regardless of weight, and as they use gill-nets, none less than eight or ten pounds are caught, and they frequently run to twenty or thirty pounds. The canneries use all modern appliances, and the cost of the pack is increased by competition. The consul states that an establishment capable of turning out ten thousand cases the season costs \$12,000 to \$15,000.

At these figures several have started into business, and after taking everything into consideration, connected therewith, footed up large profits at the end of the season. Some of the canneries average the cost of salmon at \$250 per case, others from this to \$350, but find no difficulty in making sales at \$5 per case.

A number of new factories have been put in operation this year and the total pack will be largely increased.

THE PACIFIC COAST S. S. CO.

So great has been the increase in the passenger and freight traffic between San Francisco, Victoria and Sound ports as to render necessary the establishment of a weekly line of ocean steamers between these points instead of tri-monthly as heretofore. Nor is the increased service adequate to present requirements, especially on the up coast trips. Vessels leaving San Francisco for Victoria are not unfrequently compelled to decline applications for both freight and passage long before the hour of sailing.

This line of staunch ocean steamers is composed of the Geo. W. Elder, Idaho, Victoria and Dakota, one of which leaves Broadway wharf, San Francisco, every Friday at 2 p. m., arriving at Victoria every Monday