

the North Atlantic Squadron—fleetless? However, the thing for the city to do now is to recognize the change and to make dispositions accordingly. It may be a blessing in disguise if her citizens should be impelled by the withdrawal of an accustomed source of easy income to look for other and wider sources which may result in permanent benefit.

It is quite possible that the presence of the troops has not been always a good thing for Halifax. The influence of the land and naval forces socially has not been of the best. As a rule, they have set a pace for society which is unbecoming to a country such as ours; and have fostered ambitions among our young people to climb the social rather than the business or professional ladder. They have been responsible for a good deal of extravagance among our people which must have had its effect on our commercial progress; they have, to a certain extent, caused legitimate business—stigmatized as “trade”—to be regarded with a feeling quite out of place in a democratic country. This has never spread so far in Halifax as it might have in some countries or cities; there has been too large a leaven of hard-headed, common-sense and thrift in that city, particularly among the Scotch and Irish element; but that it has existed is undeniable. On the whole, as a Halifax man expressed it not long ago, “our life without the troops will probably be saner, more wholesome and more successful.”



#### THE SALMON CANNING INDUSTRY.

The British Columbia salmon packers are face to face with a serious problem. They have already come to an agreement, should it be necessary, to close down the canneries during “off” years, and only pack when there is a heavy run of fish. While, however, the packers, as a body, see that some such course as this is necessary, individually, they are afraid of the results of such an action upon the laborers. And the consequences to this class would indeed be very serious. There are some eight thousand employed and to throw these out of employment and stop the circulation of three or four millions of money is no light matter. Not only this, but it is believed possible that even if the canners in the combine were to close down, as suggested, the independent men would fix up factories of a temporary character and carry on business in a spasmodic fashion. Whatever plan be adopted, it is likely that business will be seriously affected.

Last week a deputation, representing the British Columbia canners, waited on the Dominion Government to discuss the advisability of adopting a close season for salmon. For a number of years the canners of Puget Sound refused absolutely to take any measures to protect the fish. They themselves used fish traps and every other contrivance for catching fish cheaply in large quantities, but they enforced practically no regulations, and no close season. Last year, however, the Dominion Government granted permission to use trap nets. Since then the Puget Sound canners have been negotiating with those of British Columbia for the purpose of coming to some agreement for their mutual benefit. The upshot was that the United States canners undertook to secure from the Washington State Legislature the necessary legislation to close down fishing entirely during the sockeye run, which is practically six weeks in the months of July and August during the years 1906 and 1908, such legislation to be conditional upon the Dominion Government passing an order-in-council to cease fishing on the Canadian side for similar periods. The necessity of such a drastic measure is evidenced by the fact that for the last three years the catch on the Fraser River was insufficient to supply the forty-nine canneries, and this is notably true of last year, when the total pack was not equal to the capacity of one cannery. This year, however, a good season is due. The business men in British Columbia are in many cases protesting against the proposals.

#### OUR HALIFAX LETTER.

Trade in general is a little quiet here, as is customary during the stocktaking season. The chief business is being done, it would seem, by His Britannic Majesty at his Imperial dockyards. The naval squadron of Great Britain, so long the pride of the coast, has been withdrawn, and Halifax is to be abandoned, for the present at least, as a British naval base. The entire movable contents of the dockyards—with the exception of some stores in bulk returned to England—as well as the residence of the Admiral, Chief Engineer, Surgeon's quarters, and so forth to the extent of ten or twelve houses, are being disposed of at auction. And as the sale includes pretty nearly everything from a needle to an anchor, it attracts crowds of purchasers, not only from this city, but from a great part of the country, purchasers coming even from the United States to attend. The official residences were, of course, furnished in an exceedingly handsome and substantial fashion; and much of the furniture was of antique mahogany of considerable value. The prices paid were astonishing. In very few cases was anything sold at a loss to the Admiralty, notwithstanding the years during which the articles had been in use, even the commonest of household ware bringing prices beyond their local market value. When it is remembered that all this stuff has been brought into Canada duty-free, it will be seen that the Admiralty made a good thing out of the sales. No doubt a great deal of the competition and high prices realized was due to associations connected with the articles, but it all has a more or less injurious effect on business.

Probably the most discussed topic here at present is this withdrawal of the forces. It is generally understood that the garrison of Halifax Citadel, with the exception of a few engineers and others, whose work is of a particularly technical character, will soon follow the navy. It means, of course, a heavy direct decrease in the income of the city. The two forces probably disburse between them, in one way or another, a good many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. The supplies for the troops—about two thousand men—are bought here nearly altogether. The force of the dockyard consists of about three hundred men, largely mechanics, their wages amounting to about \$125,000 a year. The fleet when in port disbursed a large amount of money among our citizens. The loss of income, therefore, to Haligonians cannot be much less than three-quarters of a million per year. This loss is variously regarded. Its direct effect will certainly be harmful, as the withdrawal of such a large sum from the regular income of any small city must be; but there is no general feeling of dismay. Whether the idea be a correct one or not, there is certainly a feeling that the presence of the forces here has not been a useful or valuable factor in the life and progress of the city. A very large part of the best portions of the city is owned by the Imperial Government and used or reserved for purposes of their own. The dockyards cover a large and important part of the water-front—that contiguous to the railway terminals. Much good residential property is lying unused except as commons for drilling or other of their purposes. This has doubtless helped to give land and house property a fictitious value here, the result being that building is more expensive and rents higher in comparison to values than in any other part of Canada.

The coal companies operating in Nova Scotia have arrived at an agreement to maintain present prices during this year. This agreement was reached at a meeting held in Halifax last week. There are rumors of a reduction in wages, but this is very questionable. The Dominion Coal Company and its operatives have entered into a hard-and-fast agreement to maintain present wages for three years. Some of the other collieries may make a reduction, but it is hardly likely. The general attitude of the trade seems very hopeful, and there is every likelihood that the production of coal for the coming year will exceed that of 1904. Operators say this will be done, and the whole product will be marketed in Canada.

The first regular passenger train on the Halifax and Southwestern Railroad began running last week, establishing rail connection between this city and Liverpool, more