BRITISH COLUMBIA AND PANAMA CANAL

Pacific Coast Lumber and Grain via the Isthmus—Vast New Source of Supply for Both Grain and Lumber —Wonderful Development of Province

A report just issued by United States Consul General David F. Wilber, of Vancouver and filed at Washington, summarizes in a striking manner the growth of British Columbia and its effect upon American interests. British Columbia is likely to benefit largely by the Panama Canal.

"There is a good market," says Consul Wilber, "in British Columbia for American manufactures of all kinds. While the preferential tariff favoring Great Britain limits the sale in some lines, the nearness of the market and, in many cases, the better appearance of American products enables American manufacturers to hold their own. A large number of agencies for American goods have been established in Vancouver during the past few years.

"There is a good market for commercial automobiles and trucks, as this branch of the trade is in its infancy. They are now beginning to be used for delivery by department stores, grocery stores and similar firms.

"A large percentage of the furniture sold here is of American manufacture; a large percentage of the hardware and tools sold are of American make. They are preferred on account of the better finish and style. A large amount of the railway construction equipment is manufactured in the United States. On account of the large amount of railway construction under way in the province there is, and will continue to be for some time, a good demand for railway equipment. There is an increasing sale for eastern Canadian clothing.

"Of the total tonnage of vessels entering Vancouver during 1912, amounting to 5,237,010 for 10,657 ships, the American shipping contributed a tonnage of 463,796 and 1,041 vessels. Of these 53 were fishing vessels with a tonnage of 9,480. The value of the aggregate cargo during the year amounted to $13,941,526, as follows: Inward, $10,201,174; outward, $3,740,352.

Total Mineral Production.

"The estimated mineral production for British Columbia for 1912 is $32,606,000, as against an output of $23,499,072 for the previous year. The production for 1912 was the largest in the history of the province.

"The following table shows the value of the several minerals produced in the province in 1911, and the estimated production in 1912:—

Minerals—	1911.	1912.
Gold—		
Placer	$426,000	$500,000
Lode	4,725,513	4,960,800
Silver	958,293	1,676,200
Lead	1,069,521	1,520,000
Copper	4,571,644	8,338,500
Zinc	129,092	501,500
Coal	7,675,717	9,275,000
Coke	396,030	1,584,000
Building materials, etc.	3,547,262	4,250,000
Total	$23,499,072	$32,606,000

"In the production of copper British Columbia stands first among the provinces, the output amounting to more than a third of that of all Canada. As in other years the Boundary district produced more copper than any other in the province, the total being 33,000,000 pounds.

"It has been estimated that British Columbia has an area of about 253,000,000 acres, of which about 1,600,000 acres is composed of lakes in the interior. There are over 100,000,000 acres of timber land of no value for farming other than for stock purposes, and while it is estimated that 3,000,000 acres is either under cultivation or partly so, statistics show that the actual yielding acreage, other than for grazing purposes, is not more than 250,000 acres.

Conditions in the Timber Industry.

"It is stated that with the exception of Siberia, Brazil and the Northwestern United States British Columbia's timber wealth is unparalleled in any other country. The investigations of the forestry branch show that there are not less than 100,000,000 acres of forest land in British Columbia and that the total stand of commercial timber amounts to about 300,000,000,000. Taking the present lumber output of the province as a basis of figuring, which is about 1,250,000,000 feet per annum, and making no allowance for annual growth, it would take nearly 250 years to use up merely the mature timber now standing.

"The export of manufactured timber for 1912 amounted to 35,225,740 feet board measure, upon which a tax of $1 per thousand was charged, and 17,054,635 feet board measure without this payment, making a total of 53,280,375 feet, as against an exportation in 1911 of 47,000,000 feet. The different classes of lumber exported in 1912 included: Cedar, 33,608,990 feet; spruce, 1,249,489 feet; pine, 367,261 feet; unspecified, 17,054,635 feet.

Prospects of New Market.

"The lumber cut for 1912 was the largest on record, although the actual profit of the year's operations was not so great as for the previous year. The total cut, including railway and crown lands, was 1,262,000,000 feet, valued conservatively at $19,000,000. The cut for 1911 was 1,189,000,000 feet and for 1910 1,028,000,000 feet.

"The mountain mills have been much more seriously affected than the coast mills by competition with American mills that has to be met in the Middle West and to a considerable extent in British Columbia. In 1911 that competition amounted to 263,00,000 feet, and in 1912 to 300,000,000 feet.

"The British Columbia lumber exporters are looking forward with interest to the completion of the arrangements with New Zealand and Australia as regards the preferential trade agreement. It is also expected that the opening of the Panama Canal will largely increase the lumber exports of the province, as the shippers of British Columbia lumber will be enabled to land their product at Atlantic Coast ports for about one-half the present rate overland by railroad, and also cheaper than the Pacific Coast States on account of transportation on other than American vessels.

"Fishing is one of British Columbia's leading industries. The production for the province for 1912 was over one-third of the total production of the Dominion, for the first time leading its rival, Nova Scotia. Of a total of $34,667,872 worth of fish caught in the waters of the Dominion, British Columbia furnished $13,677,125, an increase for the Dominion over 1911 of $4,702,439 and for the province of $4,513,890.

"The increase for the province is attributed almost entirely to the increased demand and value of the cheaper varieties of salmon.

Panama Canal Shipments.

"It is claimed that Vancouver will be an important grain shipping port after the opening of the Panama Canal and the reduced water rates are available. Canadian grain shipments at the present time via the Great Lakes are hampered by the short season.

"While heretofore it has been necessary to ship over the eastern route, with the completion of the new roads to the west and the opening of the Panama Canal it will be necessary that exceptionally low rates be offered the shippers of the Western provinces, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, in order to induce them to ship via the Eastern route. It is claimed by some that grain shipments through the Panama Canal from this point are impracticable on account of the liability of the grain to sweat owing to the heat to be encountered on this route.

"The advantage of the Western route becomes more apparent when it is taken into consideration that the Panama route from Vancouver to Liverpool will be cut to 8,800 miles, as against 14,000 miles by way of the Straits of Magellan and more than 16,000 miles by way of the Suez route. In fact, the time will be practically cut in half.

"It has been estimated that the entire crop of grain of British Columbia and Alberta, and one-third of the crop of Saskatchewan will be exported by way of Vancouver, either in the shape of grain or in manufactured form. The production of this area for 1912 amounted to approximately 179,330,836 bushels. This production will be increased upon the opening of new parts of these provinces by the completion of the transcontinental railroads now under construction.

"During 1912 there were over 2,000 miles of railway under construction in the province. The government is directly responsible for 1,500 miles of these lines. These railway operations involved an actual expenditure during 1912 of $25,000,000."

WANT FLAX FIBRE

As a considerable quantity of flax will be harvested in Canada this year, the attention of firms interested may be drawn to the market in Leeds, England for flax fibre. Spinners there have followed with close attention the development of the growth of the flax plant in Western Canada, and are desirous of receiving shipments of the fibre if it can be obtained on competitive terms with supplies from other sources. Some three years ago a few small trial shipments of unretted flax fibre were sent here from Canada.

Mr. J. M. Mussen, Canadian trade commissioner at Leeds says consumers express their readiness to give their consideration to offers that may be received at any time from Canadian firms interested in seeking export markets for this fibre.