

Yukon Navigation Matters.

The Bennett Lake & Klondike Navigation Co., which has its head office at 23 Leadenhall St., London, Eng., & has a capital of £75,000, has been licensed to carry on business in British Columbia, where F. M. Ratterbury, of Victoria, is its Attorney. The principal objects of the Co. are to operate steamers, rail or tramways in Canada, to facilitate access to Dawson City or elsewhere in the Klondike, & to obtain parliamentary authority to build a railway from the north end of Marsh Lake to Hootalinqua River, & a railway or tramway on either side of the White Horse Rapids & Miles Canyon. The Co. possesses extensive powers, a recital of which would occupy more space than we could devote. Full particulars are contained in the B.C. Official Gazette of Sept. 8.

In our Aug. issue, pg. 163, we gave some particulars of the work of this Co., which is operating the steamer Nora between Bennett & White Horse, connecting with 3 other steamers, the Ora, Nora & Thorn, which run on the lake & river route for the balance of the way to Dawson City. The idea of entering the Yukon from the up river & running down to Dawson, in place of utilizing the Lower Yukon & traversing so many weary miles of uncertain water, originated with British Columbia people. The U.S. companies which have been running steamers on the Lower Yukon have, says the Vancouver World, several times sent men up the river to advise upon the possibility of running steamers in the upper reaches of the Yukon. All reported against the feasibility of it, & that boats could not be run through Miles Canyon & White Horse, to say nothing of the Five Fingers, while running them back again was entirely out of the question. Still, it has been done. The steamers were built, & carried in small sections, over the mountains of the Chilcot Pass, in thousands of small packages, amidst the storms & snows of last winter, when even ordinary travel was thought to be questionable. Incessant care had to be shown, so that no package was missing, as it was apparent that in a country where there was no possibility of duplicating any missing article, the loss of even one package might be a serious obstacle to the completion of the boats. Timber had to be secured, a saw-mill put in operation to cut the necessary timber, & a thousand details arranged in a part of the country, at that time a terra incognita. But amidst all the difficulties, the steamers were built & launched in time, & capital little steamers they are.

The wonderful journey through the rapids has often now been depicted, & a great surprise it was to the Dawsonites to see the trim little vessels coming into their city, from up the river, instead of from below. At one step the whole problem of how to reach Dawson had been solved. Vancouver and Victoria are now within 9 days' travel of Dawson. No longer will there be weary months of waiting for news of the outside world. Backwards & forwards the Ora, Nora & Thorn, have been travelling the whole of the summer, without the slightest mishap, bearing in tons of goods for the local merchants, who, by getting in ahead of the down river boats, have secured the first market, & the richest profits, & bringing out hundreds of miners & business men, delighted to reach civilization in a few days—when they were expecting to take weeks on the journey.

It has been a wonderful transformation scene. Already for next year enterprising merchants are booking freight room for the first steamer down to Dawson, as it is apparent to them that the first goods in next year will be of enormous value. Next year, as during this, the Canadian coast cities will retain the cream of the Klondike trade. Arrangements are being now made for extend-

ing the operation of the fleet, & securing larger & even more powerful steamers so as to hold the route that has so courageously opened out. Astonishing as the success has been this summer, of this line of steamers, already the principal inaugurators of the Company are hard at work, perfecting arrangements to secure for B.C. the winter route to Dawson as well as the summer one. Particulars of what they are doing will be found on pg. 196 of this issue, under the heading, "The Arctic Express Co."

The Boston & Alaska Transportation Co. has passed into the hands of a receiver. This Company was given the contract by the Dominion Government for the transportation of militia & other supplies to the Klondike. The latest advices from St. Michael's, Alaska, stated that 500 tons of these supplies were lying there, the Co. being unable to get them up the river. The action of the Government in giving the contract to a shipping port in the U.S. over the tender of Canadian firms in Canadian Pacific coast cities aroused great indignation at the time, & British Columbians take a grim satisfaction in the result. The shipment of the supplies commenced early in June, the first instalment being taken from Seattle by the Brixham. This cargo & subsequent shipments were transferred to river steamers being built at the mouth of the Yukon. But the men engaged in building the steamers tied them up for their wages, & the Boston & Alaska people have been moving heaven & earth to get a river company which would take the supplies on to Dawson. This they had failed to do when the advices left St. Michael's, as the river companies say the Dominion Government has already paid the B. & A. Co. 75% of the contract price, & they express doubt as to the ability of the Co. to make good to them the transportation charges to Dawson. When the Danube left St. Michael's the Seattle people were making frantic efforts to close with the river companies, but with little prospect of success, although a large portion of the supplies were landed there early in July. In striking contrast to the above, & in vindication of the position taken by B.C. merchants at the time the contract was awarded, is the fact that 30 tons of supplies sent up in the Canadian steamer Danube for the N.W.M. police, & which were transferred to the C.P.N. Co.'s steamer Yukoner, have long since gone up the river, with every prospect of reaching Dawson safely.

The Canadian Development Co.'s running its steamer Anglian between Teslin Lake & Fort Selkirk.

Two stern-wheel river boats, the Mono & the Stikine Chief, built for J. A. Mara for Stikine River traffic & subsequently destined for the Yukon River, have been wrecked while being towed from Wrangel to St. Michael's by the Fastnet.

Chief Engineer Coste, of the Dominion Public Works Department, who was sent to the Yukon last spring to look into the navigability of the route from Teslin Lake to Dawson, reports to the Department from Fort Selkirk that there is a free course for vessels drawing 3 ft. of water from the head of Teslin Lake down the Hootalinqua & Lewis Rivers to Fort Selkirk. From Fort Selkirk it is plain sailing to Dawson City.

The Canadian Pacific Navigation Co.'s river steamer Yukoner, built at St. Michaels, was given her trial trip Aug. 6. It proved satisfactory & the work of loading her with freight was at once started. She was to leave St. Michaels Aug. 7 for Dawson, Captain J. Irving, Manager of the Co., being in command. He did not doubt her ability to ascend the river, the lowest water reported by boats arriving about that time being $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft., so that unless it fell very rapidly it was expected that all the boasts then at St. Michaels would be

able to make the round trip at least, if they did not get back to Dawson a second time.

The C.P.R. steamers Tartar & Athenian are lying at Vancouver open to engagements.

The Sydney-Newfoundland Service.

At night we were in Newfoundland. A 6 hours' run across Cabot Straits, in the steamer Bruce, brought us early next morning to the wharf at North Sydney, & again we stepped ashore on Canadian soil. What made the matter seem simpler was that we slept soundly all the 6 hours, in berths so commodious that the tallest member of our party—6 ft. 1 in. in his stockings—was able to stretch himself out to his full length. Tall men appreciate such a luxury at sea. How is it that the builders of berths so seldom think of it? But the Bruce is a model in every respect, & in its fittings equal to anything that a first-class Cunarder gives. As an ice-breaker she suggests wonderful possibilities. Every one admired Sydney Harbor before, but no one believed that it could be kept open all the year round. But last winter the Bruce steamed calmly, at the rate of 7 knots, through blue ice 20 ins. thick, & in the spring she pushed her way through the still more dreaded field ice with little trouble. If she did that last winter, when she had to make a 20 hours' run to Placentia, the trans-insular railway not being completed, how much easier to do it when she has only a 6 hours' run to Port-aux-Basques? The time of her arrival now can be calculated to a quarter of an hour.

It seems to me that this is the kind of boat with which to try the Hudson's Bay navigation before we can consider the question closed, or winter communication between Prince Edward Island & the Mainland, or navigation during the winter to Paspebiac or further up the Gulf or even the River St. Lawrence. The people of North Sydney, at any rate, believe that as an ice-breaker the Bruce can do anything. Doubters declared that when sent into dock the winter's work would show a great deal of damage to bow, keel & hull. She went into the big dock at St. John's in July in order to be inspected, & no damage was seen, further than might have happened with a winter's sailing anywhere.—Correspondence by Rev. D. M. Grant.

B.C. Freight & Shipping Report.

R. P. Rithet & Co. say, under date of Aug. 31: Business in grain chartering both from San Francisco & the northern ports is very slow, & on the present basis of freights there is little to be done. It is a question, however, if even a substantial reduction in rates would mend matters, as foreign consuming markets are more or less demoralized. There is some demand for nitrate tonnage on the west coast of South America & more than one vessel has been fixed to proceed there from San Francisco in ballast.

In the lumber market rates continue nominal to some extent, but there has been a decided marking down of quotations in several directions. Tonnage is now offering more freely, but this is accompanied by a falling off in the demand for lumber, which tends to steady rates.

The salmon season has proved a great disappointment & in B.C. the pack up till now is only about 40% of last year's. Several of the fleet chartered will therefore not be required, & indeed already two vessels have been withdrawn.

The White Pass & Yukon Ry. Co. has contracted for 135 miles of telegraph wire & the necessary supplies for equipping its offices at stations along the road, running north from Skagway.