

The Commercial in British Columbia.

Lower Fraser River District Visited by our Representative.

New Westminster is one of the oldest settlements in British Columbia, having been founded in 1858 during the time of the Fraser river gold excitement. It is situated on the side of a steep hill, which forms the north bank of the Fraser river, and overlooks a very pretty valley scene. The business thoroughfares are comparatively level as they parallel the river front, but many of the cross streets are very steep. New Westminster is situated about sixteen miles from the mouth of the river and is accessible for ocean vessels. Daily connection is made with trains on the C. P. R. main line and an hourly service with Vancouver is provided by an electric railway. The Great Northern Railway comes to a point immediately across the river from the city, the transfer being made at present by a ferry boat, but a traffic bridge is practically assured in the near future.

This is the market town for the farming community spread along the

Columbia, giving employment to many hundreds of men every year. The principal streams frequented by these fish are the Fraser and Skeena rivers, and during the spawning season the waters appear to be alive with salmon. There are five different kinds of these fish, the spring or tyee, sockeye, coho, dog and humpback, the two latter being of very little commercial value. These fish visit their spawning grounds at different seasons of the year and various theories and conjectures have been advanced as to where they remain previous to that time, how old they are when they come to spawn, etc., but no very satisfactory solution of the matter has yet been reached. It would appear, however, that the fry go from the spawning grounds to the sea and on attaining maturity go back to the rivers where they were born and thus end their existence. They make their way for great distances up these streams, on the Fraser river they are found

in competing with those in the United States as the latter catch their fish in traps which is not permitted in Canada and the fish have thus to be taken by nets which cost considerable more. Representations have been made to the government regarding this and it is possible that new regulations will be put into force.

Between New Westminster and the mouth of the Fraser river there are two towns, Ladner and Steveston, the latter being the more important from the standpoint of the fish canning industry. For about ten months of the year Steveston is a quiet little village doing a small business with the surrounding agricultural district and the few fishermen who make their homes here, but during the principal salmon run, which commences on the 1st of July, and lasts about six weeks, it is filled to overflowing with a motley crowd of white men, Indians, Japanese, Chinese, etc., who are engaged either in the canneries or in fishing. It is during this time that the merchants located here expect to make their year's profits, and if for any reason the fishing should prove a failure, they have only one resource, namely, to hold on as best they can with what little business they get from the immediate vicinity until the next fishing season arrives.

Ladner, which lies between Steves-

the slopes of the foothills which are well adapted for the cultivation of fruits and vegetables and for sheep grazing. Hop growing is receiving a great deal of attention as the land is said to be particularly well suited for this.

Recently Mount Baker has been attracting more than usual attention, owing to the discovery of some rich mineral deposits, and Chilliwack is profiting from this, as while many of these claims are in the United States it is practically impossible to reach them excepting by way of Chilliwack. A good wagon road has been built ten miles out from Chilliwack, and the government has appropriated sufficient funds to have this extended to the mines. Already the merchants at this point have derived considerable business from this source and the trade is sure to increase as the mines are developed.

Some of the principal mines are the Lone Jack, Red Mountain, Golden Chariot group, Gold Basin, etc. On the Lone Jack there is a vein from one and a half to eight feet in width, which can be traced for a distance of 25,000 feet. Tests made of this ore have averaged over \$35 per ton, and it is said that the cost of mining and milling will not exceed \$5 a ton. Upwards of \$30,000 has been expended



Ships Loading Salmon at Steveston, B.C.

Fraser river valley, and is also the headquarters for the immense salmon trade of this river. A large lumber business is handled here, there being three large sawmills, which ship extensively to the Northwest Territories and Manitoba. There are several other manufactories also, such as an oatmeal mill, sash and door factories, machine shops and an automatic can factory started as a result of the immense proportions which the salmon canning industry has assumed.

New Westminster was once noted for the size and magnificence of its buildings, but in the fall of 1898 the business portion, where the most of these buildings were situated, was entirely destroyed by fire, and those erected to replace the ones destroyed, while being as a rule substantial structures, were not on so grand a scale. This year, however, several very fine buildings are being completed, notably among these being two which will be used for the post office and customs house, the city hall, fire hall and public library.

The provincial penitentiary, the asylum for the insane and some other public buildings are also seen here.

For several years past an industrial exhibition has been held here each fall. This has met with good success, and has grown to such proportions that it is now one of the most important exhibitions in Canada.

Salmon fishing forms an important industry along the coast of British

six hundred miles in the interior and it is said that at one time they went to the headwaters of the Columbia river in East Kootenay although they no longer go that far.

These fish are canned in large numbers for export. There are about seventy canneries in the province, which give employment during the fishing season to some 21,000 men. Some of these men are regular fishermen, but the majority of them only work at this during the sockeye run, which starts on the first of July and lasts about six weeks. For the last few years there has been trouble between the cannery owners and the fishermen over the price to be paid for the fish. This reached a serious stage last year and the government were compelled to interfere for the protection of life and property. A strike was called by the Fishermen's union again this year, but, fortunately, it was settled in time to prevent any great loss by the business men interested.

In 1899 the pack for the province amounted to 732,437 cases, but last year was a poor season owing to labor troubles, etc. This season, however, promises to be a record one, particularly for the canneries on the Fraser, as the salmon have been swarming into that river in great numbers.

The canneries in British Columbia are under a considerable disadvantage

ton and New Westminster, is surrounded by the best agricultural district of the Fraser river delta. This delta produces wonderful yields of vegetables, fruits, grain, clover and timothy. The principal drawback to farming here is the lowness of the land which makes it very liable to be flooded during the time of high water in the river. To overcome this, dikes have been constructed along the banks of the river, which serve in most seasons to keep back the water. The merchants here also receive a large amount of business from those engaged in the salmon fishing. Besides three general stores, there is a bakery, a harness shop, two butchers, drug store, bicycle and implement warehouse, etc.

Above New Westminster also there is a fine agricultural district extending along both sides of the river for many miles, and large quantities of vegetables, fruit, timothy, etc., are grown, being almost sufficient to supply the Vancouver and New Westminster markets.

The principal town along this portion of the river is Chilliwack, commonly known as the garden of British Columbia, where vegetables, fruit, and grain are raised in large quantities.

The Chilliwack valley is about eight or ten miles in width and stretches along the river for a distance of some twenty miles. Besides this there are many hundreds of acres of land along

on this property. A tunnel has been driven on the upper ledge for about 140 feet and a winze sunk 150 feet, as well as some cross-cutting and other work.

On the Gold Basin some \$15,000 has been spent in development. A tunnel is being driven to tap the ledge at the 701 foot level.

The Red Mountain property adjoins the Gold Basin. A tunnel has been driven on a 4-foot ledge from which ore has been taken averaging \$40 a ton.

The Golden Chariot group comprises fourteen claims. A strong company has recently been organized to work this property.

There are a large number of claims besides these which have given good surface showings, but on which very little work has been done, but the opinion is confidently expressed that before long there will be some rich mines operated here.

The residents of Chilliwack are expecting to have a railway built into their town before long, which will place them in much closer touch with the outside world and enable them to derive more advantage from the rich country surrounding them.

Continuing along the main line the next town reached is Kamloops, which has a population of about 2,400, and is well supplied with business