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Features and Trends of Provincial Trade

Satisfactory Position of Credit and Increasing Consumption Improving Trade Conditions—Large Productive Developments Under Way and Establishment of New Industries Promise Much for the Future.

If there is anything the matter with Provincial trade, there is certainly nothing wrong with commercial credits. Bank managers, wholesale houses and jobbers are unanimous in saying that never were credit conditions better. Bank managers say that notes and drafts are met promptly; collections are now the best in the history of the Province. Wholesalers say that never had they less concern with their outstanding accounts than at present; and the same is true of the jobber. The Credit Men's Association report less work on hand than since the formation of the association. While there is a smaller volume of business, it is nevertheless paid for business.

If the basis of business expansion is a sound credit condition, then business in British Columbia is prepared for a prolonged advance. There is a feature in the business situation that augurs much for the future and is often lost sight of. During the period of buoyant expansion which accompanied the real estate boom, there came to the Province and its chief cities a group of merchants and manufacturers who were inadequately equipped by experience and training to carry on their various lines of endeavor in an economical and permanent way. The rapid growth, especially of our Coast communities, created conditions whereby the veriest tyro could, and did, prosper. The lack of capital and the lack of experience did not appear to matter, since there were so many eloquent examples of success to the contrary. The inevitable reaction quickly made evident the slender basis for permanent success of an astonishingly large number of our business men, and its effects forced out of business all but the financially strong and the well-equipped and the capable. The trying times that ensued from the reaction and the outbreak of war has been a stern lesson to the business interests, but they have received valuable experience which will tend to prevent recurrence of conditions which formerly obtained. The chastening will prove beneficial in the long run.

Tendencies toward moderate business expansion are evident. The average retailer gives the testimony that there is an enlarged consumption of goods by the public. It is felt most among the necessities and standard lines. The wholesaler and jobber are similarly affected. They are having more trouble in securing supplies of standard articles than in disposing of present stocks on hand.

Another very favorable feature in the situation is, that expenditure at present going on is being used for productive enterprise that is being laid out only after a most careful scrutiny of conditions and with an economy of practice that ensures almost certain success. This would seem to be precedent to the outlay of any money; but British Columbia can furnish many eloquent examples of ill-advised financing, of the spending of money for purposes that were all but certain of failure, and of the expenditure of wealth for other than productive enterprise. Such is not now the case. Mining, logging and lumbering, and pulp-making developments are all instances in point. The amount of money now being expended is very large; but every cent of that amount is being used to bring into operation an industry which will return profits, and thus add to the general prosperity.

It is astonishing to the average man in Vancouver or Victoria, and elsewhere, to know that there are very large undertakings and enterprises now in operation, or preparing to operate. The Granby Company's plants at Anyox and

Grand Forks are very large employers of labor, and use large supplies of material and food in the turning out of the copper metal. The Surf Inlet mine on Princess Royal Island is assured of handsome returns on the large capital now being expended in its development. The pulp plant at Ocean Falls is employing thousands of men and millions of capital to bring it to the point of manufacturing newsprint. The Powell River plant has been so long in operation that its place as the largest industrial enterprise in the Province is lost sight of. New sulphite fibre plants are in process of erection at Swanson Bay and Quatsino Sound, while that in operation at Mill Creek on Howe Sound has considerably increased its capacity during the last year. The fact that one of the largest copper properties in ex-

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