

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY AT VICTORIA, B. C.

SUBSCRIPTION - - \$2.00 PER YEAR.

Advertising Rates on Application.

D. M. CARLEY . . . . . EDITOR

L. G. HENDERSON . . BUSINESS MANAGER.

Office—No. 77 Johnson Street.

VICTORIA, TUESDAY, MAY 3, 1892.

## NO SHOULDERING.

After all, it is by no means so certain that the Provincial Government will have the Dominion Government steamer Sir James Douglas placed at their disposal, to be maintained at their own expense. What, it may be asked, has the Provincial Government to do with marine matters, or anything connected with fisheries? It is true the Province has entered into an arrangement with the Imperial authorities and certain influential British capitalists with the object of developing the deep sea fisheries of the Province; but it is those capitalists, and not the Government, who will require steamship accommodation, and that they will no doubt provide; but we object to the picayune manner in which the Ottawa authorities expect, by the transfer to British Columbia of an old steamship belonging to them, to force the latter to undertake a share of the work, which properly done would fully employ two vessels, but which in reality belongs to the Marine and Fisheries Department.

## SEEKING FOR INFORMATION.

While in a furtive and sort of surreptitious way American agents are sneaking round from place to place, endeavoring, as they say, "to secure evidence as to the conditions of seal life"—to meet, as a matter of course, that which Great Britain obtained last year in a fair and square, open-handed way—the latter country is seeking for further facts, and according to the latest information Mr. J. M. Macoun, of the Geological Survey, is coming out in an open and straightforward manner to remain on the Pribyloff Islands for some weeks, to make comparative observations of seal life, to ascertain whether the investigations of last year are borne out this season. With all his blow and bluster Uncle Sam would seem to be incapable of anything approaching this. An American official, Major Williams by name, came here to make inquiries, but, according to published statements, only such persons were invited to his august presence as it was expected would testify in a certain sense. A correspondent of a morning paper thus explains the mysterious advent and mission of the American representative:

"The major came to Victoria with a letter from the president of the company holding the lease of the American seal islands to a gentleman residing in this city, who is in the, I might say, predicament of being their agent at this place and at same time a 'poacher,' in being inter-

ested in one or more sealing vessels, with instructions to aid Major Williams in procuring such evidence as would be most suitable. Now, none of the owners or captains in port of the Victoria sealing fleet, with one exception, were invited by Major Williams, or through Consul Myers, to call on him. All the witnesses whose evidence was taken were hunted up and were, with one exception, paid \$2 each for answering questions put, negatively or affirmatively, for their guidance. None of the witnesses, with the one exception, who is an owner and captain, are practical men, or they would be where their knowledge would yield them a better compensation—aboard the sealing vessels now out at sea. Major Williams' remarks to a reporter of one of your contemporaries, that in his country 'all men are equal,' probably accounts for his considering the evidence of all men as being of equal value, and his consequent preference for the evidence of persons, some of them of unreliable character, and others wholly inexperienced in sealing matters, to the evidence of men whose interests have caused them to study the question closely in all its bearings."

United States Consul Myers says, it is but fair to mention, that he did his utmost to induce interested gentlemen to see Major Williams; but how, we may ask, could it be possible to expect people who had been branded as poachers and as little short of horse thieves to voluntarily go before a gentleman whose manifest mission was to misrepresent them and prejudice their case? Major Williams is out to all intents and purposes in search of a certain class of evidence. That he will get it there is no doubt, but he and his Government know well that it is not from the reputable sealers of Victoria that they must obtain it.

## AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY.

There is always something in the law of compensation, as the farmer finds to his cost when he has worked the life and soul out of his holding, and as the individual does when he has, to use a common saying, burned the candle at both ends; and in many other ways it is constantly shown that it is utterly impossible to have something for nothing. On the other hand, though this is the natural course of events, things as a rule are not so unkind that everything must always go wrong, and therefore has arisen the trite and true old saying that "it's an ill wind that blows no one any good." The present season, every one had made up his mind, was going to be an off year in the salmon trade, partially because the run of the fish was expected to be light and partly because the foreign market was already overstocked in such a way, indeed, as to render it inadvisable for the canners to make anything more than a very short pack. But though this is the case, the fishing industry, particularly of the Fraser River, is not to be a dead one this season, as the demand for fresh Pacific coast salmon, which has been continually making advances bids fair to be much more than ordinarily large.

Not a few refrigerator cars have already gone along, and these bid fair to be still more numerous as the season advances, the indications being that previous shipments both in quantity and value will be completely eclipsed. And not only are the fish being sent to Canadian points, but the English and American markets are gladly receiving them, and the business, pro-

perly handled, is one that, to all appearances, has come to be a permanent one. Then for the halibut trade there is a very considerable opening, so that while, as has before been said in these columns, the canners are resting, the fishermen need not be idle, and the additional licenses which they have secured will be worth considerable to them. Canned salmon, it is announced, is looking up, and if the packers are not led away into putting up too many up, they and their agents will have the market as they want it.

## THE NEW YORK LIFE.

At the recent annual meeting of the New York Life Insurance Co. to elect trustees, forty seven thousand votes were cast, the largest number ever known in the history of the company. All were in favor of the ticket named by President McCall and the committee of policy-holders. Ex-Mayor W. R. Grace, Judge Hiram R. Steele, C. C. Baldwin, Walter Lewis and Henry C. Mortimer were elected trustees. Mr. Grace takes the place of ex-President Beers, and Judge Steele that of John N. Stearns. All these gentlemen opposed the voting of the pension to ex-President Beers, and it was resolved that a pension of \$37,500 a year awarded ex-President Beers by the former board of trustees should not be paid. Mr. Beers was not present at the election for the first time in thirty-three years, and threatens to contest his pension in the courts. President McCall announced that he had reinstated Theodore M. Banta, the cashier whom Mr. Beers dismissed seven months ago because of his alleged participation in an attack on the executive officers of the company.

## INCONSISTENT.

It is remarked, as a matter of some significance, that Colonel Falconer, who went to the seal islands to look after the interests of the United States, is reported to have expressed the opinion that the Washington authorities will "make an egregious blunder if they mean to carry out the policy of claiming ownership in seals wherever they journey through the sea." He, however, thinks that the American government may fairly claim in Behring Sea exclusive rights which, he adds, Russia claimed there. But, says the *Monetary Times*, he forgets to say that the Americans joined Napoleon to set this claim at defiance; the United States and France publishing to the world, in a formal treaty, a declaration of the right to take seals in any part of the world. This was the answer of these two nations to the exclusive claim of Russia; and surely it is a little too late in the day for the Republic to plead the exclusive pretensions of Russia as a precedent which stands specially good for the United States. That treaty ought to be capable of doing good duty before the arbitrators, one of whom will be appointed by France.

At the instance of the Government of the Province of Quebec, the proprietors of the People's and Montreal lotteries, both of which have been running at Montreal for some time and doing a large business, were arrested. The arrest of the ticket-sellers throughout the city will shortly follow.