

PACIFIC SECTION

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ORIENTAL LABOR.

Several Announcements Respecting the British Columbia Problem—Railway Development of the Province.

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The past week has been productive in announcements which are of importance in most instances to the whole of British Columbia. One has relation to the labor problem, which is so closely interwoven with the question of Oriental immigration. At a public meeting held in Vancouver, on Tuesday, Premier McBride stated that arrangements had been completed to bring between 1,500 and 2,000 men from Great Britain, and, if the resources of the Government permitted, this number would be greatly increased. The Premier emphatically declared that he would do all in his power to keep this a white man's country.

Hon. R. L. Borden, Conservative leader, who opened his campaign in the West on the same evening, was not specific enough to suit the three or four composing the Executive of the Asiatic Exclusion League, and that body asked him to make a more explicit statement. On the platform at New Westminster he said the question was one that he would deal with according to the wishes of the majority of the people of British Columbia, and that he was not responsible to any organization or society.

C.P.R. Will not be Lacking.

An announcement made by Mr. R. Marpole, Western Executive of the C.P.R., at the banquet on Monday evening, which commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Vancouver Board of Trade, was that in the development of this Province by means of new railways his company would not be behind, and both Sir Thomas Shaughnessy and Mr. William Whyte, head officials of the C.P.R., were fully alive to the adequate improvement of shipping and terminal facilities at Vancouver. Competition is often quoted as being the life of trade, and it is certainly meaning more life to British Columbians.

The advent of the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Canadian Northern, and the Great Northern has made the C.P.R. very active. This latter company, which has long enjoyed a monopoly of the field in this Province, and which rarely expands unless compelled to, has parties in many sections looking up the data preliminary to the survey of new lines. The branch from Kamloops to Edmonton will be considered when Sir Thomas Shaughnessy comes west in a week or two, and a party is now going through the Similkameen in connection with the extension of the Nicola line to the boundary.

On Vancouver Island, construction of the line to Alberni is going ahead rapidly, and at Vancouver ocean wharves, to accommodate the largest of steamers, have been started. At Victoria, the handsomest hotel on the coast has been erected, showing that even the tourist trade is not being overlooked. The activity of the last year is remarkable, and it also shows that Mr. Marpole is right when he says the C.P.R. will do things.

Railway Deal Pending.

Mr. John Hendry, president of the V.W. and Y., dwelt upon the importance of a line of railway to tap the country lying between Vancouver, and from his remarks it might be judged that its construction will be coincident with that of the G.T.P. across the Province. There is a deal pending, though it will not be known for some days whether or not the negotiations will be successfully concluded, for the taking over the charter of the V.W. and Y. for the line north by the G.T.R. When Mr. Hays and party were here last week Mr. Hendry conferred with them, and the night that the party left for Prince Rupert the Parliamentary agent of the V.W. and Y. left for St. Paul to consult with Mr. Hill, who is principally interested financially.

So much for expansion on land. At the same banquet, Capt. T. H. Worsnop, manager of the line of steamers which are plying between Victoria, Vancouver and Mexican ports, announced that the boat going south this trip would carry a full cargo. Arrangements had been completed so that freight rates would be as low as the lowest, and that all competition would be met. Not only does this mean increased trade with Mexico, but with the convenient transportation facilities afforded by the railway across Mexico, a much larger business will be done with West Indies and Brazil.

The stringency in the East and Middle West, in the latter place the wheat yield having been below what was expected, has had the effect of bringing money to British

Columbia. With so many new enterprises, particularly on the coast mainland and on Vancouver Island, there is a strong demand for funds, and companies and agents are placing large amounts. That there has been no diminution of financial transactions is shown in the bank clearings records, which are away above previous marks.

Lumber Mills Shut Down.

The untoward conditions in the West are having a further effect, and lumber mills are shutting down. At the meeting of the British Columbia Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association this matter was discussed, and it was decided to leave it to individual action. There is always the annual shut-down for the overhauling of machinery, but that does not take place until the off season, about the first of the year. Already a number of local mills, having no orders on hand, have ceased operations temporarily.

While skilled laborers will be thrown out of employment, this action will result in a supply of labor for other industries, and it is not expected that times will be any harder this winter than in previous seasons. For the first time in several years real estate is not booming this fall. Transactions are many and large, though, as was evidenced by the record returns of the registry office for last month, but in comparison with last year the excitement is not so tense. Speculation is not so rampant. Buyers are taking advantage of the conditions, and are securing good properties before they have been turned over too many times, with additional profit in each case.

Many newcomers are arriving from the East, and nearly all are buying what they need in residential and business property. As far as material prosperity goes, the coast cities have not felt the pinch which is apparent elsewhere.

Mr. Henry Bell, general manager of Lloyd's Bank, of London, England, while on the coast looking over conditions asked why steps were not taken to get some of the leading Stock Exchange men to take a trip through the country. "If you wish to impress the British investor," Mr. Bell remarked, "with the advantages of Canada you would accomplish more in that way than by bringing out journalists, or even bankers. The vast majority of investments in listed securities are made on the advice of brokers, who are always on the lookout for securities they can safely recommend to their clients. Bankers very rarely take the responsibility of recommending investments in specified securities. They refer the enquirers to some firm of brokers. Thus, if you can reach the brokers, you reach the men who really control the investing public."

Another Bank for New Westminster.

Messrs. Ross & Shaw, real estate and timber brokers, of this city, are among those who continue to do a good business, even though speculation is not effervescent. Being thoroughly experienced in Provincial investments, they have reliable information to place at the disposal of their clients. That they enjoy a worthy confidence is indicated by the transaction of a week ago in which Senator Cox was a principal. He is one of the shrewdest financiers in Canada, and while here bought two billion and a half feet of timber from a company of local men, of which Mr. Ross is secretary. It was the Senator's first purchase of the kind, and he completed the deal in a few hours, knowing the reputation of the firm.

The Northern Bank, which has branches in all the principal cities of the West, including Victoria and Vancouver, is opening a branch in New Westminster. This makes the fourth bank for the Royal City. Industries are centreing there, and there is an expanding field for steady financial institutions. Sawmills are principal, and two more are spoken of, and, in addition, F. L. Durfey, of Portland, Ore., who is a large manufacturer of leather purses, contemplates the erection of a factory there for the production of his goods for the Canadian trade.

Madison Grant, secretary of the Zoological Society of New York, and one of the authorities on big game shooting on the continent, was in Victoria the other day on his way back from the North. "One of the most pleasant residential cities in America," were the words he used in speaking of the capital city. He was sure the population would be doubled in the next few years, but he hoped it would not, as the main charm, its embowered lanes and hedges, would then give way to business streets.



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