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HAS BUSINESS DEPRESSION TURNED THE CORNER?

(Continued from page 2)

in business. The good and bad signs about counterbalance. Whether we are in this turn of tide or in the back water cannot be accurately decided at this time. The concensus of opinion among those in a position to judge as to their own particular line of endeavor is that more business is now being done than during the fall; that the business now being done is being promptly paid for; that the outbound movement to the Interior, the Upper Coast Country and Vancouver Island is larger than it was last fall; and that the car movement to this centre and from this centre is steadily increasing.

The deep sea tonnage of this port is steadily growing, in fact, during the first week of May the arrival of tonnage to this port was the largest in the history of the city. This is despite the fact that the means of transportation and the advantages offered to this port have not increased materially. The Canadian Northern Railway has not yet effected an entrance to this city, the Panama Canal is not yet open to traffic, and the Kettle Valley Railway, which will bring all the border country of the province into tributary relations with Vancouver is not completed. The loss of trade to Vancouver by the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific to Fort George, placing Edmonton temporarily in a better strategic position to capture this trade in rapidly developing Central British Columbia, is about counterbalanced by the increasing trade of Vancouver with the west section of that territory, via Prince Rupert. None of the improvements that have been taking place in this province are yet available to this city, and still the consensus of commercial opinion is that business is slowly but surely turning in the direction of increased activity.

Another handicap at present is the dullness of the lumber business. Prices are so low that mills are refusing to compete for some of the large orders that are being offered among the mills of the Province. The export business is poor and the consumptive demands of the prairie, which usually supplies most of the business of both Coast and Interior mills, are much below last year. The money stringency was as drastic there as here, and the curtailment in building has severely affected the most profitable industry of British Columbia. Yet the situation is full of hope for the future, although manufacturers cannot see much increasing demand for months to come, or until the new crop is made. Some improvement exists in the shingle business, as the removal of the United States duty is stimulating the manufacture here and the consumption in the United States of our shingles. Until the tariff is again put on, if that is ever done, this must be a steadily increasing item of export. No effort has been made, or perhaps the market is not yet right, for the invasion of rough lumber into the United States. These hold out much promise for the future of the lumber business of the Province.

The conditions which Vancouver has experienced are the conditions which have been encountered in the chief centres of population throughout the Province. What has been roughly outlined in regard to Vancouver would in the main apply to them all. On the other hand, the unsettled sections have been steadily advancing in development and activity and have been ever acting as a brake in the downward tendency of business. Faith in the province as a whole, and in the position of its chief cities has not been impaired in the least either in the minds of the citizens or in the minds of the outside investors who have such a large stake in this province. The readjustment was inevitable and will prove beneficial.

Immigration to Canada for the year ending March 31 totaled 384,878. Of this amount British Columbia received 37,572. Great Britain supplied 142,622.

Mr. Robert Baird, formerly of Zealandia, Sask., has been appointed Inspector of Municipalities under the new Municipal Act passed at the last session of the Legislature. Mr. O. W. Ross of Fernie, B. C., has been appointed chief clerk.

The Pacific and Great Eastern has let additional contracts between Kelly Lake and Clinton. Moran & Heckman will build ten miles north from Kelly Lake, Welsh & Kennedy four miles adjoining, Rankin & Kellet twenty miles north of that, and Madden Bros. the next six miles.