

government in equipping survey parties to ascertain what lands fitted for settlement may exist is highly commendable, and will doubtless be productive of good results. There can be little doubt that a very considerable quantity of land fitted for cultivation and stock raising must exist in addition to those tracts which are already known. The board hopes that should arable land be found, the government will not sell to other than actual settlers, the sale of land in blocks to speculators having a tendency to curtail bona fide settlement.

THE SALMON FISHERIES.

during the year 1889 developed the largest export trade known in the history of the canning industry, owing to an unprecedented supply of fish on Fraser river, as many as 414,291 cases being exported from Victoria to Great Britain, Australia and eastern Canadian points, in addition to the shipments of salted salmon, aggregating a value of nearly two and a half million of dollars. The scarcity of unskilled labor year by year is a source of considerable anxiety to the canneries, whose operations during the fishing season are greatly hampered thereby.

FISHERIES.

During the past year considerable attention has been devoted by the salmon canners to the matter of fishery regulations, a delegation of their association having visited Ottawa in November last, where they had several interviews with the minister of marine and fisheries. The result led to a schedule of suggested regulations for governing fishing operations on the Fraser river, submitted to the canners and practically assented to by them. The department, however, subsequently issued regulations at variance with those previously proposed, which action has resulted in much dissatisfaction and irritation, although several relaxations have been since made. The regulations are of a decidedly discriminating character, particularly as regards the scale of fishing licenses for Fraser river, which are put at \$5 for fishermen, and for cannery men \$20 to \$50, and it is already apparent that the carrying out of this regulation is hardly likely to be of any practicable utility. The board for years has impressed upon the authorities the importance of conserving our fishery wealth while also protecting and encouraging the large interests of those engaged in the industry. The difficulties are fully realized by the board, and it has strongly recommended the minister, or competent and impartial nominees, to personally visit our rivers during the fishing season, which would greatly assist the department in forming practical ideas of local requirements, and lead to the adjustment of a matter hitherto unsatisfactory to both the department and to those who are interested in the salmon fisheries. The minister has intimated his intention, if possible, of visiting British Columbia during the approaching season, and it is to be hoped he will be able to carry it out.

DEEP SEA FISHERIES.

The importance and value of our deep sea fisheries now no longer remains a matter of conjecture. It merely rests with the Dominion Government to devise some means of removing the obstacles which at present prevent the exportation of the produce of such fisheries to the large and profitable market offered by the United States. Until this be achieved the bulk of the raw products in which the province abounds cannot be profitably marketed.

In its last report, the board alluded to the

continued postponement of the promised survey which the Dominion Government has undertaken to make of the various fishing banks off the coast of Vancouver Island and Queen Charlotte Island. Your committee regret having to record the fact of the work not having yet been commenced, and from present appearances the date of its commencement is entirely problematical.

FUR SEAL FISHERIES.

The continued delay in connection with the Behring Sea seizures has operated to the detriment, and has, indeed, caused a partial paralyzation of this branch of our fishery industry. It is greatly to be regretted that the points at issue between the two countries should have been permitted to remain so long unsettled. A satisfactory and peaceful solution of the difficulty will, it is to be hoped, soon be arrived at.

The question of preventing the indiscriminate slaughter of seals is one which demands the attention of both Governments. The port of Victoria fits out annually a large fleet of vessels for the prosecution of this industry.

MINING DEVELOPMENTS.

The action of the provincial government in dispatching surveying parties to investigate and report upon the character and resources of such sections of the country as have not already been fully explored, will, it is needless to say, accomplish much in the direction of developing our mining interests. The future prosperity of the province largely depends upon the putting to practical use of the rich mineral deposits which exist throughout the country, and, for the profitable development of these resources, increased facilities for transport are of primary importance.

VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

In accordance with the usual custom, the board, upon the occasion of the recent visit of His Excellency the Governor-General, presented His Excellency with an address of congratulation and welcome, in which were embodied such allusions relating to the general trade of the province as it was deemed expedient to make; the difficulties surrounding the Behring Sea question and their untoward influence upon one of the chief industries of the province were especially commented upon. It is satisfactory to note that several of the more important matters which were brought under the notice of His Excellency, in the address in question, have since then received attention at the hands of the proper authorities.

ESQUIMALT GRAVING DOCK.

The great utility of this work has been amply demonstrated during the past year, when several of H.M.S. ships, as also many merchant vessels, have made use of the dock. In the case of the recent serious accident to H.M.S. Amphion, the existence of the dock probably averted the total loss of a valuable vessel. In view of the fact that the capacity of the dock is insufficient to accommodate vessels of the largest size now constructed, it would undoubtedly greatly enhance its value were steps taken to add to its length. The construction of this dock has called into existence a branch of industry formerly foreign to the port, namely, that of repairing iron vessels. In the case of H.M.S. Amphion, alluded to above, it was demonstrated that work of this character could be accomplished here to the entire satisfaction of the Admiralty. Doubtless, with the facili-

ties which the port enjoys, the building of iron ships may, at no late date, constitute one of our leading industries.

FINANCE.

The finances of the institution continue in a highly satisfactory condition. From the report of the audit committee hereto attached it will be observed that the board is now possessed of substantial assets aggregating \$3,607.82, of which \$2,350 is invested on mortgage at 8 per cent. showing a net gain in the past year of \$428.48. Your committee are fully in accord with the recommendation made by the audit committee of last year, to the effect that the time has now arrived when the advisability of the board's investing its surplus funds in the purchase of a piece of property whereon at some future date may be erected a suitable building for the use of the members of the institution may be discussed.

GENERAL TRADE AND OUTLOOK.

Your committee have special pleasure in directing attention to the substantial progress made by the province in the development of its trade and the promotion of its industries.

The establishment of flour mills of modern type, and of large producing capacity, has given an impetus to agriculture and to the consequent settlement of large tracts of land suitable for wheat growing which were previously of comparatively small value. The immense timber resources of the Province have during the past year continued to attract attention of Eastern lumbermen, and several new mills some of them of very large capacity, have been constructed within the period in question. In the city of Victoria the value of real estate has advanced nearly 100 per cent within the past twelve months, a fact which attests sufficiently the flourishing condition of its trade. Several new enterprises, notably the construction and successful operation of the electric street railway, a large flour mill and other industries have largely contributed to the present encouraging prospects of the port.

The revenue from Customs and Excise duties obtained from the Province during the year ended 30th June last shows a large increase. Of the total amount, the port of Victoria contributed \$972,863, a fact which sufficiently supports her claim to be considered one of the principal revenue producing ports of the Dominion.

Further wholesale changes in the scale of Custom's duties, within the period in question, have again had the usual effect of disturbing trade throughout the country. Despite the continued absence of any legislation in the direction of providing for the equitable distribution of insolvent estates, the mercantile community of the Province has during the past year suffered but little from that cause, owing chiefly to the fact that very few business disasters of the character indicated have occurred within that period.

Your committee, in conclusion, take the opportunity of congratulating the board upon the success it has thus far achieved, in grappling with, and overcoming many difficulties, some of them serious in character; and in pointing to the rapid and genuine progress which is being made by the province, they can conscientiously bear testimony to the fact that in no small degree is this due to the foresight, sagacity and untiring vigilance of a body which, while strenuously opposing all pernicious legislation, and discouraging all but bona fide enter-