

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

[This department is in charge of R. F. Gosnell, who is permanently engaged as a regular member of THE COMMERCIAL staff, to represent this journal in British Columbia. Parties in British Columbia who wish to communicate in any way with this paper, may apply directly to Mr. Gosnell, at Vancouver.]

Business remains much the same as usual. There is a quiet in most lines.

It has been reported that the smelter plant at Vancouver was purchased and was to be shipped to the interior and put in operation there, but so far as known there is nothing definite known as to negotiations pending, being completed. Another report says that an offer has been made for the smelting of ores on the ground. And still another report has it that the land has been bonded by the Great Northern railway for terminal facilities.

The British Columbia sugar refinery starts Jan. 4 again after being closed a week for repairs.

Apropos of railway matters, it is reported allegedly, on the authority of a C. P. R. official, that a railway from Revelstoke down the Columbia river to connect with the Columbia & Kootenay railway and Sproat's Landing will be commenced shortly. Operations are also said to be about to begin on the Chilliwack railway.

The Pitt River Dredging Co. is about to construct another large dredge to accelerate the work now under way. A large steam scow to carry a pile driver and haul wood, etc., is about completed and operations on a larger scale than at first anticipated will be gone on with in the spring. The work so far has progressed very favorably and the first tract of land will soon be enclosed with a dyke and pumping commence as soon after as practicable. The dyking of overflowed land by means of dredges so long overlooked, is attracting general attention now that it has been fairly inaugurated. The high water last year did considerable damage to the dykes on the lower Fraser, and now the municipality of Richmond is likely to take hold of the enterprise of dyking with vigor and replace the present dykes with more substantial ones on a comprehensive scale. The municipality of Richmond is doing a great deal of good work just now in the way of improving its roads and consequently its communication with the cities of Vancouver and Westminster.

Report has it also that the C. P. R. Co. will build marine shops at Vancouver next summer, and make it the head quarters of their Pacific steamship lines, and that a move will be made in the direction of establishing an Australian line.

R. P. Rithet & Co., have deposited with the department of public works, Ottawa, their plans for the improvement of Victoria harbor, and preparations are being made for a more extended shipping trade, a considerable independent business having been already done there with the Orient during the past season.

The Vancouver foundry and machine works, pending important changes which are likely to place it on a more comprehensive basis, has closed down temporarily and transferred several large contracts to the British Columbia iron works.

During the past week the Eliza Edwards returned from an experimental trip up the coast in quest of halibut, Capt. McKeon in command. It will be remembered that the Eliza Edwards was one of the sealing schooners fitted

out in Vancouver last year, and is just now being utilized for other purposes in the absence of the privilege of catching seals in Behring sea. She had two tons and a half of fine fresh halibut ranging from 80 to 200 lbs in weight. These were all caught in a few hours after a long and somewhat stormy voyage. The Eliza Edwards went as far north as Alaska and along the coast of Queen Charlotte's Islands. Another trip is decided upon and she returns this week. The gravamen of the halibut problem is now to discover the winter feeding grounds. The question of an extensive market seems to be one upon which there is little or no doubt. When in New York recently, the writer paid a visit to Fulton market and found a condition of things somewhat adverse to the trade in British Columbia fish. The eastern fish business is largely in the hands of a combine which will not handle British Columbia salmon or halibut and discourages all attempts in the interests of certain sources of supply. There are, however, a few independent dealers outside of the combine that would be willing to undertake it in order to build up a trade in that line. They recognize the superior quality of our fish, and are apparently anxious, if a supply could be guaranteed to handle halibut. It only requires to create a strong financial interest in New York and the eastern cities to back our fish to successfully combat the combine that controls Fulton and similar markets. The first duty, however, to perform is to find the fish and regulate the supply.

Some excitement has been occasioned in the vicinity of Mission by the alleged discovery of minerals in that section, some quite near the townsite. A number of claims have been recorded.

Last week the *Colonist* issued its long expected *Illustrated Victoria*, a work which was brought out under the auspices of the city and of which a very large number of copies have been printed. It contains about a hundred very fine photo gravure illustrations of the city and vicinity, with a clearly and concisely written letter press. Typographically it is a success and in other respects well demonstrates the resources and attractions of the Queen City and the province of which it is the capital.

Mr. Losee's new shingle mill, Victoria, with a capacity of 68,000 a day has started operations.

Municipal matters are gradually acquiring a fever heat. In Vancouver it is developing into a straight dead issue of Cotton vs Oppenheimer and Messrs. Carroll and Cope for mayor, and the aldermen will be elected on the cry of "who is king." Nothing has developed in Victoria of material interest. The report of the Royal Commission now investigating civic affairs will be waited for with interest, but is not likely to be made public in time to influence elections.

MARKET REPORTS.

Vancouver, Jan. 4.

A good deal of dairy butter is now on the market and sales are rather slow. Prices are quoted at 20 to 22c according to quality and size of lots. Good creamery is in good supply and although there is not much demand prices are firm at 27½ and 29c. There is little or no fresh ranch butter on the market. There are good stocks of cheese and considering the state of the eastern markets prices are low at

12½ to 13c. Eastern cheese could not be laid down at the prices, but shipments of Manitoba cheese account for the large stock and the quotations.

Eastern limed eggs are from 20 to 22c. Stocks are not heavy at present, but prices are not likely to advance the dealers say. Quotations in fresh eastern, which are coming in now are at 24 to 26c. Prices, however, are yet a little uncertain.

Onions are very plentiful at \$1 to \$1.50 per cwt., with no prospect of an advance. Notwithstanding the talk among farmers of short crops, potatoes seem to be quite plentiful and as yet no appreciation in quotations appears. The potatoes, however, are not keeping well, rot being prevalent and it is difficult to say how the supply will hold out. Quotations are: Lower Fraser, \$15 per ton; Chilliwack, and Island, \$16 to \$17; Ashcroft, \$20. Turnips are \$8 on the bank of the river or \$10 delivered per ton.

Meats are on the decline, and stocks are heavy. Quotations are: large hams, 13c; medium, 13½c; breakfast bacon, 13 to 13½c; backs, 12½ to 13c; short rolls, 11 to 11½c; long clear dry salt, 10½ to 11c; shoulders, 10½c. Retail men through the agents of eastern firms are pooling and buying by car load lots at ½c less than prices quoted above.

Riverside oranges, seedlings, are quoted at \$3.50; navel, \$5; lemons, \$5.50 to \$5.75; Japanese oranges, 75c to \$1. Grapes are about out of the market and stock inferior. The few peaches coming in are trashy with no demand. Oregon apples are quoted at \$1.15 to \$1.25 per box; British Columbia apples, \$1 to \$1.10; eastern apples, \$5 to \$5.50 bbl. There are a good many eastern apples in the market and the higher price are of fine quality. Pears are \$1 to \$1.25; tomatoes, \$1 to \$1.25. Now Canadian evaporated apples are quoted at 10 to 11c per pound.

The British Columbia sugar refinery has raised the price of granulated sugar to old figures. The market is slightly fluctuating and disturbed, owing to the recent cuts, but the prospects for steady quotations are better.

Local preserved fruit, put up in Victoria, in glass jars, 1½ pound sizes, are quoted at \$3 per dozen; 3 pounds, \$5 per dozen. These include apricot, peach, plums, etc.

Prices of flour seems to have a downward tendency, although dealers say that prices are out of sympathy with those of wheat and should be higher. There is no change in local or Oregon stock. Quotations are: The Columbia Flouring Mills, for Enderby flour in car load lots, premier, \$5.60; XXX, \$5.30; strong bakers' or XX, \$5; superfine, \$4. Quotations to the trade are: Delta, Victoria mills, \$5.50; Lion, do, \$5.50. Premier, Enderby mills, \$5.55; XXX, do, \$5.65; XX, do, \$5.25 to \$5.50; superfine, do, \$4.25 to \$4.50. Ogilvie's Hungarian, \$6; do, strong bakers', \$5.75; snowflake, \$6.25; Portland roller, \$6.25; royal, \$6; Oregon superfine, \$4.25.

Wheat, per ton, \$40 to \$45; oats, \$28 to \$35; oil cake meal, \$32.50 to \$35; chop feed, \$33 to \$35; shorts, \$28 to \$30; bran, 26 to 27.50; National mills oatmeal, \$3.50; California, do, \$4.35; California rolled oats, \$3.75 to \$4; cornmeal, \$3 to \$3.25; cracked corn, per ton, \$45 to \$50; hay, per ton, \$18 to \$20; straw, per bale \$1 to \$1.25.