

accompli. The question is naturally one of great magnitude, necessitating the expenditure of millions of dollars. At Victoria it would mean an outlay of about \$10,000 per annum, as for that sum shipping could be relieved of all charges for pilotage, port charges and sick mariners' dues. The advantages to the port would naturally be very great, and the local Board of Trade have endeavored all along to keep the matter a live one.

In the annual report of that body for 1908, it is argued that "there is no valid reason why the commissioners' recommendation should not be carried out, particularly in view of the fact that the Dominion Government, after an expenditure of millions of dollars in constructing canals between the Great Lakes, admits and provides all services to vessels of all nations free of any charges."

Dry Dock at Esquimalt.

A larger dry dock at Esquimalt is another object towards which the Board is assiduously working. The Dominion Government, in reply to representations made, have agreed to give a subsidy if a company can be formed to undertake the work. The Board is of opinion that the dock should be constructed by the Dominion Government, with possibly the assistance of the Imperial authorities, "for no one can foresee how soon it may be necessary to re-establish the naval base at Esquimalt, where there are no modern facilities for docking modern cruisers." Another aspect of the case to which the Board draws attention is the fact that there is at present no accommodation on the Canadian Pacific Coast where repairs can be made. No time, it is urged, should be lost in providing for such emergencies.

With regard to the general progress and development of Victoria during the past year, the various statistics bound up in this report are the best indication. It is evident that the port was not affected to any serious extent by the trade depressions of 1907; indeed, the increase of 8 per cent. in bank clearings is proof of that, while the following figures tell a similar tale:

	1907.	1908.
Imports, 12 months to 30th June.	\$4,252,162.00	\$4,971,045.00
Exports, 12 months to 30th June	3,318,392.00	
Customs collections, 12 months to 30th June.....	1,054,507.99	1,524,785.92
Inland Revenue, 12 months to 30th June	210,585.94	220,656.24
Post Office, 12 months to 30th June (approximate) :	67,400.00	71,500.00
Tramway, passengers carried....	3,614,787	4,237,451

Factors in Development.

At the present moment, while business is perhaps less buoyant than a year ago, the general advance compared with any previous year is well maintained, and the prospects are for further increases in the returns a year hence. The development of Vancouver Island and the opening of the Empress hotel by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co.; the yearly improving steamship service with the city, and the extensive railroad construction in British Columbia by the Grand Trunk Pacific are factors which are rapidly adding importance to the port of Victoria.

The fishing industry has been generally successful during the past season. In 1907, it may be remembered, the salmon catch was very disappointing, a total of only 547,459 cases, including 314,047 cases of sockeyes being secured. In consequence, only eight canneries were opened on the Fraser River last season. A serious shortage of labor was the main cause for the small catch at northern points, where the run was generally average. The halibut industry, which is carried on principally by an American Company with Vancouver as their base of operations, has been equally successful this year as in the past, the catch aggregating about 40,000,000 pounds, valued at \$2,000,000.

TRADE WITH MEXICO.

Subsidized by the Mexican Government, a new steamship service will shortly be established between Victoria, Puget Sound and California ports and the principal ports of Central America. Traffic arrangements have been made with the Mexican Central Railway to handle cargo under through billings to and from interior points in Mexico via Manzanillo, and with the Tehautepec National for handling through European cargo.

The same tariff as is now in force by the Pacific Mail and Kosmos lines, will be maintained, except in some instances, where the present rates of those companies force business to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States, which could be readily handled on the Pacific.

Special attention will be given to the carriage of fruit from Mexico and Central America to California ports. Puget Sound and British Columbia. The service will be inaugurated with the German steamers Ella and Erna, which are of about 2,200 tons net register, and 4,000 tons dead weight. Other steamers will be held in readiness to augment the service as soon as conditions warrant.

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