

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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British Columbia Business Review.

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An immensely cold snap has brightened up business somewhat, the weather being clear and cold. A somewhat high wind has been accompanied by several shipping disasters, in which one or two steamers and several schooners have been badly damaged.

Trade generally remains dull and will for some weeks yet, there being nothing especial to warrant a revival just at present, and in a few weeks will reach its lowest ebb for the year.

The principal event of the week has been the opening of parliament, at which in the address from the Throne some important measures were outlined. The session is expected to be a lengthy one and characterized by a good deal of hard fighting. Another event of special note was the annual session of the B. C. Fruit Growers' Association held in Vancouver. The programme was purposely a long one and included a very comprehensive list of topics affecting the horticultural interests of the province. It is expected that a large number of these reports will be published for circulation at the World's Fair. In this way a good deal of practical information will be disseminated and will no doubt be eagerly sought after.

A report has been circulated, with or without malice it is impossible to say, that the Crofter scheme has collapsed and that the promoters in the old country have failed in floating the commercial scheme connected with it on the money market. This is entirely without foundation so far, because the promoters did not place their project on the money market at all, and consequently could not have failed. The brokers who had the matter in hand advised the promoters of the Commercial company not to do it owing to the bad state of the money market, and that advice has been followed. Everything indicates that the money market is recovering in England, and at the proper time the scheme will be floated. In the meantime all the necessary precautions have been taken to keep the Acts in force. The various rumors set on foot in regard to the Crofter scheme are largely political, on both sides of the water, and are done for the purpose of bringing about failure. If it does fail it will be owing to political machinations, and not to any defeat in the scheme itself, which if carried out, would prove to be one of the most important and beneficial commercial enterprises ever undertaken on the coast.

The president of the Ottawa Electric Street Railway has written to this province for a supply of the dog fish oil, which is manufactured at Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands. A year and a half ago samples of this oil were distributed from the British Columbia Court at the Eastern Exhibitions. Mr. McRae, the gentleman above referred to, was one who tested the oil, and has been so well pleased with the results of the tests that he has sent an order for the oil. This oil, which is everywhere acknowledged by machine men on this coast, and especially by steamboatmen, to be the best lubricant in the market, is manufactured out of the dog fish, so abundant on the northern coast, the finer quality out of the theliver and the second quality out of the body of fish. This is very likely to develop into a large and important industry, if it can be manufactured cheaply enough to compete with the eastern oils, but the freights eastward are very heavy and as yet the market in the province is limited. Another factory for its manufacture was started last season further north by R. A. Cunningham & Son, of Skeena. The rat fish

is also plentiful where the dog fish abound and as the oil in the liver of this fish is very valuable there is room here for a tributary enterprise of some value.

A gentleman from the Sound country representing lumber interests here, has been in the province buying up cedar logs. A Puget Sound Lumber Company is reported to have a contract to supply 10,000,000 feet of cedar lumber for finishing work in the United States. It is said 5,000,000 feet of cedar logs are wanted for this purpose in British Columbia. If so, it is a matter which might very well occupy the attention of our Boards of Trade in this province, and the Dominion Government. As has been frequently pointed out so far as British Columbia lumber is concerned there is a very one-sided arrangement with the United States, which is entirely in favor of the latter, and now when the Pacific Coast cedar is beginning to find a market in Eastern America and, as is well known, British Columbia having the largest and best supply, if the Puget Sound lumbermen are allowed to come into this Province, buy the logs, boom it to Seattle, saw it up there and sell it as Puget Sound lumber, the sooner an agitation for a readjustment of the whole lumber tariff the better for British Columbia interests. The matter has been placed before the present head of the Department of Trade and Commerce, and no doubt a judicious presentment of the case again would be successful. Either an export duty should be re-imposed on logs, or our lumbermen should be placed on equal footing with those of the United States.

Brief Business Notes.

A number of sealing schooners have left for the sealing grounds.

The South Westminister Coal Mining Co. is winding up its affairs.

The business of Lorgen & Mansfield, Vancouver, has been sold to R. B. Dodds.

Simmons & Cohen, Vancouver bakery, Victoria, have purchased the business of Thomas Harding.

Fred Schofield, Vancouver, has been appointed Clerk of the municipality of North Vancouver.

Large exhibits of coal from the Vancouver Island mines are being shipped from Victoria to the World's Fair.

A new town site named Alexandria Park is being laid out in the Somenos district on the line of the E. & N. R.

British barge Assel arrived last week from London, Eng., with a general cargo of merchandise for R. P. Ritchet & Co., Victoria.

A petition to quash the By-law giving a by-law to the Burrard Inlet and Fraser Valley railway was argued in the Supreme Court, Vancouver, last week.

The train service on the Shuswah & Okanagan railway has been changed from every day to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, during the winter months.

The stock and business of Carmichael & Patterson, Victoria, boots and shoes, sold to Gilmore & McCandless. Will be managed by James Patterson.

The Northern Shipping Company, Vancouver, has bought the steamer Mermul, and is refitting her as a freight and passenger boat. She will run from Vancouver to Aleut Bay.

The annual meeting of the B. C. Fruit Canning Co., Vancouver, was held last week. The report showed a good business for the year, with substantial extension of the same.

The California Giant Powder Co. have purchased 40 acres of land at Telegraph Bay for their new works. They will manufacture Judson powder and Giant powder and dynamite.

It is reported that a Puget Sound lumberman is in the province seeking to buy 5,000,000 feet of cedar logs. These will be cut in the Sound mills, and shipped to the East for house finish ing.

The Origin of Tobacco.

There is no longer any doubt about the Spanish origin of the word tobacco, neither about the country where the Europeans saw it for the first time, says the New York Sun. Its discovery dates from that of America, and it was at Cuba on the 28th day of October, 1492, that the bold representatives of the 11th World saw the fragrant smoke puffed out from the lips of the inhabitants of the New World. (Another reason, lovers of the weed will say, for celebrating worthily the forthcoming anniversary of the discovery of America) Tobacco was the name given to the plant by the Indians whom Columbus saw, but in Brazil and in Florida the natives called the tobacco plant petun, which word the Orientals have changed into lutum. However, the word tobacco prevailed everywhere as the generic term of the plant that the early Americans called the "cure all" and the "holy herb," probably because it seemed to them to be the consoling plant and one fruitful in happy inspirations. The plant also had its place marked in Indian mythology, and all the tribes of redskins who still hunt the buffalo have faithfully preserved for tobacco the cult transmitted to them by their ancestors.

It was in 1560 that Catherine de Medecis received from Jean Nicot, the French Ambassador, in Portugal, the first lot of tobacco seeds. But curiously enough, though the people of Lisbon took snuff and the inhabitants of Madrid smoked, of the new plant for its medicinal qualities, the English, on the contrary, became enthusiastic over the intoxicating odor of the fragrant smoke. As soon as its use spread to all classes the era of persecutions began.

Although the method of cultivation is the same in all countries, the differences that exist in the taste and perfume of tobacco come from the natural richness of the soil and the excellence of the temperature. The best tobacco is grown in Cuba, Mexico, Brazil and above all in the United States, where the soil is fertile and the sky is full of sun. After Cuba, the choicest tobacco comes from Virginia, Boraco, Ceylon, and the Phillipine Islands.

To Asia, and principally in Persia, the cultivation is carried on extensively. As for the Turkish tobacco it is extremely aromatic. The best brands come from Roumelia, Syria, Noman, Karamania, and the borders of the Persian Gulf. China furnishes a straw yellow tobacco, which is smoked a good deal in England, Japan, Cochin China, India and the Tonkin produce only mediocre varieties. Burmah is more favored. At Manila the cultivation is more and more important; Manila cigars are sent all over the Orient. Holland has valuable lands at Java and Sumatra. The products are sold at Amsterdam and are used as wrappers for costly cigars.

The United States is the most productive country in the world, and at least half of its production is exported. Mexico and Brazil furnished very aromatic tobaccos; that of Brazil being the most combustible in the world. A great variety of species is also cultivated throughout Europe, but these are generally of very ordinary quality and are consumed at home. England is the only country where tobacco is not grown. The German tobaccos are mostly cultivated on the banks of the Rhine, at Baden and at Myence. They are fresh and light, but of poor flavor.

In France, tobacco being a government monopoly, can be grown only by permission. The cultivators have the choice of selling their crops to the government or of exporting them. No Frenchman, other than that supplied by the government, can get permission to grow a stock of tobacco, and that stock cannot exceed twenty pounds. There exist in France nineteen tobacco factories, of which two are in Paris. The ordinary caporal, or, as it is officially called, scaferati tobacco, is sold at \$1.20 a pound, and the superior scaferati at \$1.60 a pound. This tobacco is put up in small packages of different colored paper. The monopoly yields the government nearly \$50,000,000 annually.