

British Columbia Trade Letter

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.)

VANCOUVER, August 24th.—Hot weather has prevailed all week, and crops are ripening fast. Your correspondent has visited most of the sections in the New Westminster district recently and can speak with some knowledge as to their condition. On Westham island which is really the most advanced and best cultivated district in the province, grain is nearly all cut and threshing is underway. Oats is turning out from 60 to 100 bushels per acre, wheat 50 to 75 and barley as high in some instances as 80 to 90 bushels. Hay was harvested in good condition and averages about 2½ and 3 tons to the acre. On Lulu and Sea islands the wet backward spring has a more depressing effect and grain is neither as heavy nor good as last, although yields will be from above the eastern average. About the same remarks apply to the Delta. Fruit generally has been a failure and very few creditable samples for exhibition can be obtained. Apples are not at all healthy in appearance, and the plums in places have been stung. Too much wet, cold weather in the spring and insufficient drainage and in many places lack of proper care of orchards account for the unsatisfactory condition of many of the orchards. Now that canneries are springing up and fruit will have a regular market price according to the value of varieties, more attention will be given to the commercial aspect of fruit growing. The custom heretofore has prevailed of farmers planting a great variety of fruit trees bought from irresponsible fruit tree agents with the result that over one half of the varieties are not as represented and the other half is useless for commercial purposes, or nearly so. Another feature is that farmers so far as my observation goes and not knowing either the varieties for sale or how to put them up for sale, or otherwise are indifferent. Our apples are superior to Oregon apples, but nine out of ten customers at a fruit store will buy the latter in preference to B. C. apples, for the reason that they are packed better. Boxes are neat and tasteful, only one variety and size are represented in a box, and all apples are picked one way. B. C. apples are dumped big and little all kinds, into rough boxes for which the highest market price is expected. Besides being uncommonly well off, compared with farmers in the east, the ordinary British Columbian is the most independent man imaginable and if his ways don't suit, well they needn't, that's all! He never gets excited or enthused over anything and goes on quite independent of the world, takes life easy and is generally free of debt, the devil and good intentions. This to some extent accounts for a condition of things that exists and retards progress on the lines of farming and fruit growing where are opportunities for success so great, because the original land owners and husbandmen have held the fortunes of the province so far in the hollow of his hand; but there is a new idea of things under way and while one cannot help but regret seeing so many broad acres unproductive and so much done in a "blacksmith" style there are also many fine farms being developed and any number of good men at work, which will produce a wonderful change in five years. A great deal of attention is being turned to gardening and the fields of potatoes, onions, mangolds, carrots, cabbages and so on are

surprising both as to number and appearance, so that in this line at least the home supply may be expected to fully supply the home demand. Considerable wheat and barley are also being raised for which a good market price is offered. Harvesting weather has been of the finest.

Building in Vancouver after a season of quietude is going to take another start, some half dozen large blocks being advertised for tenders. Among these are the bank of British North America, Bank of Montreal, the new club house and several big business blocks. The Union Steamship Co. is starting to build several iron vessels for local and foreign trade, while shipping generally is good. Real estate shows no marked features, though several large auction sales of lots are advertised. There is little change noticeable in the foreign lumber trade, although local orders are active and there is scarcely an industrial establishment of any kind in the province that is not reported full time at work and crowded with business. The salmon canning season is over, with a moderately full pack to each of the canneries on the Fraser. The northern canneries have done well. As this is one of the "off" years in the canning industry, some data have been obtained as to the economic value of the hatchery. Considering that the canning force has been so largely increased that the runs of the two last years have been unusually large and that this season was much better than similar seasons in former years, it may reasonably be inferred that the effects of the hatchery is beneficial and that the permanency of the salmon industry on the Fraser to some extent depends on it. However, it has not by any means been demonstrated but next year's view will go a long way towards deciding it one way or another. It is understood that the balance of the unfilled cases will be filled with "cohoes," the run of which is a few weeks later in the season. The season of fairs is now on and both Westminster and Victoria are advertising unusual attractions, the former especially. British Columbia has been favored with a visit from the members of the Crofters commission, who are now in the province looking over it for sites for colonization. There are undoubtedly many opportunities in this province ultimately for people with the characteristics and instincts of the Crofters, but it is very evident that for several years these people would have to be maintained before they could adapt themselves to the conditions and organize a system of industry. There are certain similarities, it is true between this coast and their own home that might tend to reconcile them to the situation, and, if other things were equal to maintain them, but it seems to me it would be rather a cruel experiment to place them here in their own resources until such time as the industries upon which they must rely are sufficiently developed to justify it. There is one thing, of course, there is no possibility of them either starving or freezing to death, but success is an other thing.

So far as business is concerned it is generally good, but little to report in the way of change of quotations, which are as follows in small wholesale quantities.

Flour and Grain—Manitoba patents \$6.30; Manitoba bakers, \$5.90; Enderby \$5.35; Oregon flour, \$6.00. Eastern rolled oats, \$3.75

per sack; Californian, ditto, \$5.25. Eastern oatmeal, \$3.50; ditto, California, \$4.00.

Food—Shorts, \$26; bran, \$24; wheat, \$35 to \$40; hay, \$15 to \$16; chopped feed, \$35 to \$40; oats, \$40 to \$43 per ton. Japanese rice 1½c per pound. Grain sacks, 8c each.

Cured Meats—Dry salt, 11c. per pound; roll bacon, 12c; breakfast bacon, 14c; hams, 14c. Lard is held at the following prices: In tubs, 12c; in pails, 12c; in tins, 12c; lard compound, 11c.

Sugar—B.C. refined granulated, 6½c per lb; yellow, 5½c; cubes, 6½c; syrup, 5½c.

Butter—Creamery 23 to 24c for choice; dairy is quoted all the way from 15 to 20c.

Cheese remains steady at 11c for new and 8c. for old.

Eggs are held at 17 to 18c. per dozen.

Vegetables—Local potatoes, \$12 to \$18 per ton; B.C. onions, \$1.25 per 100 pounds; carrots, same price. Cabbage 50 cents per 100 pounds. Sweet potatoes, \$3.50 per 100 lbs.

Fruit—Peaches, \$1.25 per box, Black grapes \$1.35; white grapes, \$1.50; apples, \$1.50; pears, \$1.75 to \$2. Oranges \$1. Sicilian lemons, \$1. California lemons \$0.50. Tomatoes, \$1; L. C. plums, 5c per lb. Pineapples, \$1.00 per dozen.

The present retail prices of fish are as follows. Salmon, 10 cents per pound; smelts, 10c; soles, 15c; flounders, 10c; cod 10c; halibut, 15c; trout, 20c.

Fresh eggs, retail, 50c per dozen. Creamery, 35c. per lb., and dairy 30c.

Spring chickens at \$6 per dozen, and hens at \$11.

Toronto Live Stock Market.

About half of the receipts of cattle remain over unsold. One drover from the vicinity of Woodstock brought in a fine load of exporters, for which he paid the farmers, \$56.50 each. He sold them here at \$52 each rather than hold them over with the present prospects of trade, and he was not the only one who suffered that way.

Export cattle—There was a great many of this class of cattle offered to-day, and they were of a first-rate quality, but owing to the poor reports from the English markets, increased shipping rates and limited space, exporters were poor buyers and only took what suited their particular fancy, and at prices which agreed with their views. About \$4.75 per cwt was the highest price paid for anything when taken by the load, although a few choice picked head were disposed of at \$5 per cwt. The lowest limit was about \$1 per cwt, but the majority of sales were made within the range of \$4.25 to \$4.50 per cwt.

Stockers—The market was well supplied with this class of cattle, in fact, more than wanted, and prices took a drop of from 20 to 25c per cwt. The range was from 3 to 3½c per lb. for the best, and a fraction under 3c. for inferior, and a few head of choice stuff went a trifle above the highest quotation, but such sales were scarce. Dealers took a good many at these prices. Still a great many left in the pens at the close of the market.

Butchers' cattle—This grade of stock was somewhat scarce and about all suitable for the trade was taken at prices ranging from \$3 to \$3.75 per cwt.—*Empire*, August 22.