

The prospects for the lumber market in the Prairie Provinces, which in addition to the increasingly important stocks of spruce and poplar produced by their own mills, consume large quantities of pine, fir and cedar from North-Western Ontario and British Columbia, are quite good. During the early part of the year the retailers, after their experience in 1908, were slow to buy until the crops were assured, and prices were therefore unprofitable to the manufacturer, so that the year as a whole is not likely to be very satisfactory, although much better than 1908. Since the assurance of good crops, both the volume of sales and the prices have so improved that an active and profitable business is already being done.

It is thought that the population of the three provinces is now nearly 1,250,000. Even based on the Census Department reports to 31st March, with estimates for foreign immigration since, but not for movement from Eastern Canada, the figures are 1,162,000. It is evident that our estimate of last year, namely, 975,000, was too low. In addition to the unusual movement from the United States, there has also been a large number of immigrants from Europe, but the decrease from Europe as compared with 1908 is pronounced. The character is, however, so much better, and their declared possessions in money and other values so much greater, that these considerations more than compensate for the loss in numbers. The outlook for immigration next year is exceedingly good in all directions.

Such prosperity has naturally excited real estate speculation, and the pace at which prices are rising and the tendency of ill-informed people to invest their money in suburban schemes in which the adjacency to solidly settled parts is often in inverse proportion to the claims of the dealers in this respect, is again apparent enough to warrant a caution on our part. There is, of course, a great legitimate increase in values both in the farm and in the cities, but those who buy on margin, or who buy without knowledge of surrounding conditions, are sure to be punished in a majority of cases. Winnipeg has now a population of about 150,000. The building permits to the end of November covered 2,904 buildings to cost \$9,152,000, as compared with 1,740 buildings in 1908 to cost \$5,427,000. It is the third city in Canada, and although we think of it mainly as a great market, it has already 180 factories employing 11,000 people. Like Chicago in earlier days, it may astonish us in this respect before many years have passed. In any event, when in 1912 the Centenary of the Landing of the Selkirk Settlers is celebrated, it will have a record of growth to show which will be worth much to Canada as a general advertisement of the whole West.

Extensive new mileage has been built by the three railway corporations, particularly in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Great improvements in the way of double-tracking and to roadbeds and terminals have also been made, and again the crop has been moved to the head of the lakes in a satisfactory manner.

The plans of the several companies formed to supply water to the dry lands of Southern Alberta are now beyond the experimental stage, and great success is attending their efforts to obtain settlers. Of the western section of the Bow River area, being developed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, only about 15 per cent. is still unsold, and the energy and intelligence of this great corporation in establishing demonstration farms, in discovering new kinds of crops, supplying good seed, making first improvements and breaking the land for settlers, limiting the holdings of individual settlers, and advertising the country in Europe and the United States, quite apart from the great irrigation works themselves, should command the admiration of every Canadian.

Doubtless few people in the East realize the extent to which our western and north-western lakes have been supplying fish to the United States markets. The value of the catch this year is from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000, and it includes seven important species of fresh-water fishes. The lakes of three provinces are being fished, namely, Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba, Winnipegosis, Dauphin, Lake of the Woods, Rainy Lake, Lake Athabasca, and other large bodies of fresh water north of Edmonton and Prince Albert. The supply of fish in these waters is practically inexhaustible if properly protected, and as a result of the findings of a Commission appointed by the Dominion Government it is hoped that every necessary step will be taken. It will be a great calamity if their history is like that of the Great Lakes in Eastern Canada.

Summing up the trade conditions for these provinces, it may safely be said that, as in the East, the volume of trade has increased as the year progressed, and that the level of 1906 has doubtless been reached by almost all trades, while many are doing a larger business than ever before. The extent to which retail trading is being done on a cash basis is gratifying, and in marked contrast to the early years of settlement in the Eastern provinces.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The few great land industries of British Columbia, lumber, coal, copper, fruit, etc., have naturally responded to improved trade elsewhere, and the business of the coming year promises, in many branches, to be the greatest in volume yet experienced. In lumber, with the mountain mills, the year began with a hesitating market, but as soon as good crops in the adjacent provinces were assured, business increased, so that the volume for 1909 was about double that of 1908. Prices are now higher than at any time during the last two years. The mills, after a busy season, began the winter with small stocks on hand, and the outlook for next year, both as to volume and prices, is most satisfactory. Owing to the lower United States tariff considerable quantities of lumber have been shipped to Chicago and other United States markets. The coast mills have not done quite so well, and the increased United States tariff on shingles has hurt that important trade. But the prospects for the lumber business generally are of course much better, and it is hoped that the coming year will show results more nearly akin to those of the mountain mills. The most interesting feature in this industry at the moment is the possibility of timber leases being made permanent instead of being granted only for rather short terms of years.

The total output of coal was about 2,300,000 tons, as compared with 2,112,000 tons for 1908 and 2,220,000 tons for 1907. Strikes and accidents, as usual, somewhat lessened the quantity mined. Many new coal areas, particularly in British Columbia and Alberta, are being opened, and there is no doubt that coal-mining will continue to keep its place as much the most important of our mining industries.

With the copper market in a dull state and with prices at 12 1-2 to 13 cents a pound, it is only natural that the Boundary mines should not show an increase in output over the record of last year; still, the figures are only slightly lower, the quantity for the past year being 1,588,000 tons. The largest company has taken advantage of the dullness to make great improvements, and with the general recovery in business a larger output than ever before is probable in 1910, for the accomplishment of which the equipment is superior to that of any previous year. Notwithstanding the low price of copper and the low grade of the ores, the year has been profitable to the leading companies, which shows how stable the basis now is for the copper industry in the Boundary district. Only a very small part of the known mineral area is being worked, but its possibilities are shown by the fact that the largest company now has furnaces with a capacity of 5,000 tons daily, and a converting plant with a capacity of 40,000,000 lbs. of copper per annum, while the plant as a whole is the largest in the British Empire and the second largest in the world. The company next in size is also working towards a much greater output, its well-balanced plant needing nothing but enlargement. As a whole, the conditions of mining elsewhere in lower British Columbia have improved during the year. The total value of all classes of minerals produced in British Columbia in 1909 was about \$24,500,000. Dear labour and insufficient transportation and smelter facilities are the main obstacles in the way of greater success. In addition to the areas tributary to the White Pass and Yukon Railway referred to a year ago, we now hear of important discoveries in the Portland Canal district, which bid fair to result in a large mining camp immediately. In the Queen Charlotte Islands and in the Skeena River district there is some mining activity, much hindered, of course, by lack of communication with the outside world.

The salmon pack for the year was 920,000 cases, much larger, as usual in the quadrennial year on the Fraser, than for 1906, 1907 and 1908, but quite unsatisfactory as compared with the pack of 1,167,000 cases in the quadrennial year 1905, or of 1,236,000 cases in 1901. The short-