

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF B. C.

(Major Martin, Industrial Commissioner.)

At the present time it appears that all industries in British Columbia, with the exception of ship-building are at a very high rate of advancement, and this week the further contracts for wooden ships in Victoria and here are very promising.

This year the timber, mines, lumber, fishing, fruit and vegetables have been what you might call a bumper year and this means a large revenue to British Columbia, but practically the whole of it will go outside the province for manufactured articles. This has always been the problem with British Columbia. In the past industries have failed in this Province just because of their being promoted for speculative purposes. At the present time there are similar attempts being made. In the past it has been claimed that local co-operation has been kept back in British Columbia, first on account of the scarcity of labor and the high cost of living as compared with other countries paying high wages. These conditions are equal now. The cost of living continues everywhere to be high; there is not the difference that there used to be in wages, so that on these two accounts there should be prospect of advancement. In addition almost half as many more returned men have come to British Columbia as left the Province; this at the present time gives a large number of men seeking employment. Now, it is very desirable that these men, be employed and given work in order that they should be induced to make this Province their home.

This is an intimation of what you may expect in the next two years; this influx of returned men from Eastern Canada is just an indication of what we can expect in the next year or two from the old country, because British Columbia has been advertised by the soldiers overseas. The time would appear to be opportune. A large amount of money is required to meet the expenditures of the war; there is great financial unrest throughout the world owing to readjustment and a larger population, it should not be long before capital would cease to lie down on the job, and promote those opportunities for trade which are evident in the Province today.

The time would appear to be opportune for something to be done and the Government has passed an Act to create a Department of Industries with the purpose of developing the industrial resources of the Province. To assist in carrying out the operations of this Act, there is appointed an advisory board of seven members representing various interests in the Province. This board is non-political, and its duties are to examine and aid in the establishment of any industries, when they are satisfied that the loan is justified on the following grounds; that the security which the applicant offers is good, that the granting of the proposed loan will be to the ultimate benefit of the Province; that the applicant has the probability of making a fair profit from the enterprise. Other considerations which influence the board in granting their approval to loans, are those industries which are promoted in the interest of returned men to enable them to get employment, and those which use only white labor.

Now, while the possibilities are very great in British Columbia I am not in a position to do them justice at the present time, but I will briefly refer to a few things which are coming before the Department, some of the things which will be dealt with in the near future, I refer to under two headings.

First: The development of our own natural resources, the finishing of the raw products of British Columbia, to be disposed of in the Province.

And again, on the Pacific Coast we are the point of entrance for a large number of raw commodities used in the country; these should be manufactured in British Columbia, and the market should be in the Middle West at least.

One of our greatest resources in British Columbia is our timber; our lumber, shingle, paper and pulp mills. At the present moment we have approximately 212 lumber and shingle mills in British Columbia, all doing a profitable business, working for export trade principally. For their products they are getting a very high price, and conditions in other parts of the world and present demand would indicate that this would continue for a long time; and it is not necessary that much aid should be given to lumbering as already existing. But under lumbering there are many other industries that could come

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