

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

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## VOLUME IV., No. 1.

With this issue, THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL enters upon its fourth volume, and once more it becomes our pleasing duty to return thanks to those who have contributed so liberally towards the maintenance of a paper devoted exclusively to the trade and commercial interests of the Province. The support which this paper has received from the wholesale trade has been most gratifying, there being only a few houses in the city that have absolutely refused to partake of the peculiar advantages which a commercial publication offers as a means of reaching the retail trade.

THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL is a purely independent publication, and political matters are only discussed in its columns when they have important bearings on trade questions. The great aim of this paper has been to furnish its readers with the most reliable commercial data; and to obtain at as late an hour as possible before going to press the market value of the staple products of the Province and elsewhere. That we have succeeded in filling the field is attested by the fact that while our subscription list is constantly being added to, it is only rarely that a subscriber is lost.

We would be lacking in gratitude were we not to acknowledge the many tokens of recognition we have received from the newspapers throughout the Province, and particularly do we thank the editor of the *Victoria Times* for his frequent references to THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL in the editorial columns of his widely read and influential newspaper.

## "SHALL WE HAVE MANUFACTURES?"

It is a gratifying sign of the improving times to notice that an agitation has been started in the columns of the *Victoria Times* and elsewhere looking to the establishment among us of some kinds of manufacturing industry which we do not possess. We recall how, in what are now regarded as the great industrial centres of the Dominion, an impetus was given to the subject of manufacturing industries by articles similarly headed to the present. "Where are we to find a market?" was the question propounded on the other side. Why "at home - at our very doors," was the reply, and so those who did not consider that the local woollen and grist mills were all that the country needed

went to work—it is true with some degree of faintheartedness—and by degrees one after another industry started up, which by the time the original reciprocity treaty was abrogated found some relief in the action at that time taken by our American neighbors. They had by this time discovered that Canada could do some thing in the manufacturing line, moreover, that there was a considerable amount of skilled labor at home which had been trained in the cotton mills of New England, and just about this time sprang up the Canadian cotton industry, which is at present one of very considerable proportions.

Then the policy of protection was inaugurated, and now we have discovered that we can afford to modify to some extent what are felt to be the burdens of the consumers. Most of the industries which grew up alongside that of cotton are now able to stand alone, at least such of them as are worth having, and hence the present action on the part of the Government in endeavoring to prepare a measure of tariff reform by which both manufacturer and consumer will be benefitted. We have favored this tariff revision inasmuch as we regarded it not only as advisable, but necessary. Still, looking at the condition of affairs among our United States neighbors, we would advise the exercise of the utmost caution in this direction, otherwise before we know it we shall find an effort being again made to convert Canada into a slaughter market for the surplus stocks of our neighbors at the South. This, we have no doubt, will be borne in mind by the more cautious of the members of the Canadian Parliament, who will meet this week at Ottawa for the despatch of business.

But, as to local industries, there are numbers of them whose inauguration will at once suggest themselves as perfectly feasible. Manufactures of wood, for instance; then those of iron and steel. Wherever we obtain these latter from, there will always be entailed considerable expense in the way of freights, though in the past their carriage has offered "ballast" one way for vessels which have come out to carry away salmon and other articles from British Columbia and wheat from Oregon and California. By the cheapness of freights on this account our importers have been benefitted. But, as the late Sir John Macdonald pertinently asked, of what use are cheap goods if our people have not the money to buy them with? We must have manufactures. As the *Times* correspondent suggested, there ought to be room for tanneries here, the lack of means for treating them, causing thousands of hides and pelts to be regarded as of comparatively little value. The experiments which have been made with our fruits indicate that if we cultivated them carefully and handled the crop either by canning or preserving in a proper manner, there is a sufficient market both at home and in the eastern provinces for all that we can produce. Indeed, specimen shipments to Great Britain and Australia have shown that there, despite the name and the fame of certain universally known English houses, our own product has been received with general favor.

Then, as for iron and steel, which we

have already mentioned, we have the finest quality of ore as close to Victoria as Sooke, the metal requiring only to be carried away without any expensive process of mining, and taken to the water a distance of only a few hundred yards. Coal and ample supplies of wood for smelting are close at hand, and, in this particular, nothing should stand in the way of the successful prosecution of the enterprise. And there are numerous other developments of the baser metals both on Vancouver Island and on the Mainland, while it is difficult to estimate to how large an extent manufacturing industry may be carried on. By all means let us have manufactures, no matter in how small a way we may begin. We have unlimited national wealth, if capital and labor could only be combined to deal with it.

## COLD STORAGE.

It has been announced that the prospects are excellent for the erection in Westminster at an early date of an ice-making plant and cold storage warehouse, Mr. Harris, president of the Union Ice Co., of Seattle and Tacoma, which operates several ice plants on Puget Sound, having signified his intention of putting up an establishment in that city. Mr. Harris is said to have arrived at this conclusion after having looked over Victoria and Vancouver, and found Westminster the most suitable location for the purposes of his enterprise, it having the advantage of direct railway communication east and south and excellent shipping facilities with up and down river points. It is said the company will manufacture ice on a sufficiently large scale, using Coquitlam water, to supply Westminster, Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo. The pure and unlimited quantity of water to be had is another reason why Mr. Harris has decided to make Westminster the company's central business point in British Columbia.

Mr. Harris proposes, it is reported, to apply to the City Council for a lot on the pleasure grounds reserve, east of the oatmeal mill, where will be installed the machinery necessary for ice making and cold storage, while the intention is to supply ice daily to the people of Westminster. The cold storage department will, it is said, supply accommodations for butter, fruit, meat, poultry, eggs, etc., the charge being on a moderate scale, while the Company will also buy these articles and endeavor to do an extensive business in handling them both winter and summer. Mr. Harris is said to be a business man of considerable importance at Tacoma and Seattle, and he with his friends are regarded as reliable men.

We have often urged the importance of establishing a cold storage establishment on the Mainland so as to solve the problem of doing away with the unnecessary expense of keeping stock during the winter, subject, too, to all the losses incident to that season. We wish the Westminster scheme every success, assured that its prosperity will tend to the inauguration here of something of the same kind which is urgently needed, particularly for the storage of fruit and vegetable products as well as the perishable articles of all kinds that are continually being consigned here.