A PAPER MILL FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA.

SOME years ago a small paper mill was established at Alberni, on the Somass River, in British Columbia. A fatal mistake, however, was made in erecting a mill for making paper from rags, which were found to be unobtainable and costly. No provision was made for the treatment of the raw material, viz., wood, which was to be had on the spot. Consequently the results obtained were not satisfactory, and reorganization was felt necessary.

For profitable pulp and paper making it is absolutely necessary to have up-to-date machinery, and it is also important for the paper mill to be well located. The British and Colonial Printer and Stationer announces that the advantages of pulp and paper making in British Columbia have not been lost sight of, the preliminary efforts only tending to stimulate fresh enterprise, and a company has recently been registered in England under the name of the British Columbia Wood Pulp and Paper Co., Ltd., with a nominal capital of £65,000, divided into 35,000 7½ per cent. preference shares of £1 each and 30,000 ordinary shares of £1, to acquire the property and works and, as we read in the prospectus, "to manufacture chemical and mechanical wood pulp and paper to meet the existing and continually increasing demand in the province of British Columbia, along the Pacific Coast of the United States, and in Japan, China and Australia."

It is the intention of the company, says the journal quoted above, to particularly cater for the requirements of British Columbia, and it is proposed to manufacture 30 tons of various grades weekly, also 30 tons of chemical wood pulp and 30 tons of mechanical. The surplus pulp will be exported. A gentleman, who appears to have thoroughly familiarized himself with the conditions of wood pulp manufacture in Canada and the United States, has visited Alberni, and from his official report to the British Columbia Development Association, he is highly impressed with the property. He gives the following reasons:

"1. There is a market for about 30 to 40 tons of paper per week in British Columbia alone, the supply being at present imported into the province from Eastern Canada and the Eastern States of America.

"2. Manufacturers of paper, outside of British Columbia, could not successfully compete with your mill, owing to the cost of railway freight from Eastern Canada being from £4 to £5 per ton, and competitors in the United States would have to pay not only a heavy freightage, but also an import duty of 25 per cent.

"3. Wood pulp (mechanical and chemical) can be manufactured at the Alberni mill as cheaply as anywhere in Canada or the United States, there being an abundance of cheap and suitable wood and natural water-power. From this wood pulp almost every class of paper used in British Columbia could be very profitably manufactured.

"4. The proposal for manufacturing wood pulp for the market in addition to that required for the manufacture of paper is also advisable, inasmuch as there is a growing demand for this product by paper manufacturers who are not situated in wood growing countries, and consequently have to buy elsewhere. In my opinion, British Columbia will, in the near future, become the wood pulp producing country for the paper manufacturers all along the Pacific Coast—notwithstanding protective tariffs—where practically no wood suitable for pulp making exists. I would also point out that there exists in China and Japan a good demand for wood pulp, which, owing to the absence of suitable wood, these countries are unable to manufacture. British Columbia could supply the markets of these countries with pulp and paper as profitably as any country in the world. I estimate that a good quality of mechanical wood pulp can be made at Alberni for about 22s. (twenty-two shillings) per ton, whereas paper manufacturers in Great Britain have to pay from £4 to £4 10s. per ton for such pulp.

"Chemical wood pulp, I estimate, can be made at Alberni for about £4 per ton, the price of which to paper manufacturers in Great Britain and the United States is from £7 to £9 per ton. As these two products constitute about 90 per cent. of the raw materials from which most qualities of paper are made, it will readily be seen that paper itself can be very cheaply made at Alberni."

Our Scandinavian readers, says The British and Colonial Printer and Stationer, will not be readily convinced that British Columbian mechanical wood pulp can be produced at 22s. per ton, or that British Columbian sulphite will only cost £4 per ton. Such, however, are the views of an expert, from whose report we give further extracts:

"Wood Supply.—An almost inexhaustible supply of wood suitable for manufacturing pulp is obtainable in the Alberni district. This wood consists mainly of Douglas fir, hemlock, white pine, and spruce.

"Of the 160 acres of land included in the property, I believe about 109 acres are covered with timber, which would probably yield about 5,000 (five thousand) cords of pulp wood. I should, however, advise the company to keep this wood in reserve, and purchase in the district whatever may be required. From enquiries made I am confident that for a considerable time to come all the necessary wood can be bought for 7s. to 8s. per cord. At present I would not advise the proposed company to invest in timber lands, but should the pulp making department of this business develop beyond the present expectations, the company might issue, if necessary, a portion of the reserve stock and purchase additional timber concessions in the vicinity of the mill.

"Water.—The water for manufacturing purposes is all that can be desired, being clean and practically free from mineral matter.

"Water Power.—A suitable and well-constructed dam has been built across the river, also a flume for conveying the water to the turbines situated at the mill. After the proposed alterations to the flume have been made and additional turbines erected, I estimate a power of about 2,000 horse-power will be available."

The managing director of the company is S. Philip Eastick, director of the Newfoundland Wood Pulp Co., Limited, and the general manager in British Columbia will be Mr. Herbert Carmichael, of Victoria, who is at present the chief chemist and assayer to the Government, and the works manager, Mr. James Dunbar. Mr. Dunbar is well known to many of our readers as the author of "Wood Pulp and Wood Pulp Papers" and "The Practical Papermaker." He has made a report on the undertaking, and we give the following extracts:

"The property consists of 160 acres of land situated on the Somass River, which is the largest river on Vancouver Island. The property has over 6,000 feet of river frontage. At Alberni there is a deep-water landing stage, at which the ss. Maude calls once a fortnight. This landing stage is 2½ miles from the mill, and the goods communication between the stage and the mill has been done by a small steamer. A flat-bottomed steamer of about 20 to 30 tons would be wanted.

"The available power in the river is practically unlimited, and a power of 3,000 h.p. could be had without in any way interfering with the running of the salmon in the season or giving offence to the Fishery Board.

"The water, for paper and pulp manufacture, is unrivalled, it being of the purest description, containing only the slightest trace of mineral matter. There is absolutely no deposit from it in the steam boiler; the flues and side plates I carefully examined after working six months, and found them perfectly clean.

"During my residence in British Columbia I went carefully into the consumption of general papers, and came to the conclusion that there would be a demand for from 25 to 30 tons per week, consisting of fine printings, chromo and litho papers, colored papers, news, grocery, drapers', butchers' and hardware papers. I do not include in this label paper for salmon cans and other purposes.

"The supply of wood for pulp making along the river is practically inexhaustible, and can be taken to the mill at little cost. It consists of first and second growth of Douglas fir, hemlock, balsam, spruce, cotton wood, etc."