

THE SITUATION.

When are business matters going to improve? is the question one hears on every side, and to it the men who are supposed to be the best informed profess their inability to give a reply. On the other side the line, we observe signs of increased confidence; but the people of the United States were struck before we were, and it is only natural to suppose that, intimate as are our relations with them, there must be more of a re-establishment than has yet been experienced before we shall feel beneficial results from it. In their weekly review of business and finance, *Bradstreet's* tell us that the condition of general trade last week was an improvement over that of a week ago, the favorable features then reported having been maintained; while *Dun's* says there is plenty of material for encouragement, also for discouragement, business men finding the accounts so far conflicting that it is difficult to strike a balance. There is every reason therefore for us to conclude that if, in the meantime, there is to be an improvement it must be within ourselves. What are we doing?

The outlook for the lumber trade is at present dull; mining prospects, both for the base and precious metals, are said to be tolerably favorable; but, as for coal, it would appear that the best we can do is to remain as we are and live in hopes—somewhat Micawber-like. Markets for our fish are, we are glad to think, opening up and widening out. We may mention that the Boston Halibut Company, whose Canadian headquarters are at Vancouver, is in active operation at the fishing grounds, and has made important preparations for extensive shipments to the East. Then a French concern is reported to be arranging for cold storage at Westminster, with the object of making extensive shipments of salmon to the continent of Europe, while, at the Terminal City, there is talk of a new salmon packing concern which will involve the maintenance of an establishment of some proportions. Building operations, too, are generally brisk, the idea being to supply more commodious and substantial houses to take the place of those which were rushed up after the fire, and not so much to accommodate an augmenting population, though we are glad to hear that there is an increase. Then, as for the Fraser valley, the news which comes from that country is most cheering. Excellent crops have been and are being gathered in, and, to a large extent, though not yet relieved from all their pressing necessities, the farmers have at least a comfortable winter before them, and for whatever they produce that is perishable, as well as for what may be

sent along from the interior, the capacious cold storage at Westminster will soon be opened. The Mainland, we may say, has every reason to expect that it will more than hold its own. The Australian trade is growing, both in imports and exports, and, as for the Orient, despite the war, the outgoing and incoming cargoes are alike large.

But to look to Vancouver Island, what do we find? In the first place there is a better feeling, and according to many authorities money circulates more freely, still with by no means that amount of liberty which used to obtain, for the reason that there are not a few people wholly out of work or only partially employed and in consequence not only are they unable to pay old bills at the stores, but they are obliged to live on comparatively short commons. Building operations being materially restricted, those who depend upon them or are in any way connected with them are greatly disadvantaged, which has an unfavorable result on almost every one. The moneys which are being expended on the sewerage works and are to be employed on the water works ameliorations will give employment in some directions, while the new Dominion Government buildings have every appearance of being gone on with without much delay. All the people who get job on either the Provincial or Dominion buildings will have more money to spend and in one way or another this will improve the flow of currency, which it is sincerely to be hoped, will be circulated to a great extent among people already here rather than among those whom contractors, for reasons of their own, might be disposed to bring from abroad.

For the present it would appear that our business will not be of a very extended character, nevertheless things will be better, provided we are content to make them so and at the same time think so. Meantime, the occasion is fitting to consider more attentively than we have ever done the subject of manufacture. Hard experience has shown that we cannot live within ourselves alone and there must be a vigorous exhibition of both energy and enterprise on our part to prevent a recurrence of the disappointing and injurious conditions to which we have of late been subjected. It is foolish to hide from ourselves the fact that our isolation from the mainland prevents our handling a considerable amount of through business; but besides supplying the requirements of our own people there are numerous articles that can be manufactured in Victoria and on Vancouver Island, which also the vessels that come to our port can carry to foreign markets, and these, it is for us to discover and cultivate. Are our capitalists equal to the situation or are they of the same

way of thinking as are those of our aldermen, who by their peremptory action recently put the quietus on a scheme to establish iron and steel works here? It is just possible that had they been a little more inclined to come to an arrangement we might have had the works for even a smaller consideration than that asked for, but, as it was there was no room left for any further negotiations whatever.

—*Commercial Journal*.

VICTORIA'S EXHIBITION.

There is every indication that the exhibition to open on Tuesday next and continue during the week will be the best and most attractive that has yet been held under the auspices of the British Columbia Agricultural Association. In view of the general business experiences and the greater counter-attraction at Tacoma, it required, no doubt, the exercise of a great deal of nerve to undertake and develop a show upon the scale of the one to which we refer. However, the enterprise displayed during the last two years by the president and committee rendered it essential that the attractions should be greater than ever, as well from the value of prizes as from the outside features designed to achieve the one grand result.

Tuesday next, the first day of the fair, is to be a civic holiday, America's Day, Canada's Day, Children's Day and Societies' Day following in their succession. Bicycle races, foot races and horse races are down upon the programme, as also football, baseball and lacrosse matches, together with tugs of war, military manoeuvres, etc. There is to be a grand procession of children, who will sing in chorus, while the music each day will be exceptionally fine. All this is outside the exhibition proper, which, as the entries indicate, will be one of the finest collections gathered of animals and their products, field and garden fruits, as well as of the thousand and one articles the work of home industry. We are satisfied that the show will only require to be seen to be appreciated, and we therefore commend it to the attention of the public.

—*Commercial Journal*.

It is expected that Lord and Lady Aberdeen will reach Victoria Nov. 3.

Mr. George Burnett is recuperating at New Westminster, and expects to be able to attend to his musical duties in the house of a week or so.

The Daughters of St. George propose giving a grand Operetta and Scarf Drill at the Victoria Theatre, on Wednesday evening, Oct. 3rd, America's Day. The arrangements being under the superintendence of Mrs. Lang, its success is assured.