

NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THE second largest city on Vancouver island is Nanaimo, situated about seventy miles up the eastern coast from Victoria, and in the midst of one of the richest coal regions on the Pacific coast. The city has about four thousand inhabitants within its limits, and there are nearly as many more in that immediate vicinity. The district has a population of more than eight thousand.

Nanaimo was formerly only a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company. That company prospected for coal in many localities on the island before it finally found the rich carboniferous strata that are now developed in the coal mines around Nanaimo. This discovery was made in 1854, and the first shaft was sunk near the site of the present postoffice building. Now there are four collieries in operation, and the aggregate output has increased from year to year, last season's product being nearly half a million tons, the bulk of which was exported.

The Nanaimo colliery consists of three mines, the Esplanade, or shaft No. 1, being sunk in the city near the edge of the bay, under which the several levels extend a lateral distance of about three-fourths of a mile. This shaft was opened in 1883. It is the deepest mine in the district, six hundred and twenty-six feet, but there are strata of good coal at a much greater depth, as has been demonstrated by boring a prospecting shaft over eleven hundred feet farther into the bowels of the earth. The Southfield, a short distance south of the Esplanade, was opened in 1883, and the No. 3 near it was opened in 1887. Both are now in successful operation, and shaft No. 4 is being opened. The North Wellington, also belonging to this company, is now in process of development. The output of the Nanaimo colliery last year was nearly two hundred and fifty-nine thousand tons. The Vancouver Coal & Land Company, which owns these mines, holds the fee simple, mineral and surface, of thirty-three thousand acres, a portion of which is on the adjoining islands that are known to contain coal. The Wellington colliery, six miles west of Nanaimo, has been in operation twenty years, and its coal is well known in every market on the Pacific slope. These mines consist of three pits now in operation, and a fourth down to coal. The East Wellington colliery is three miles west of Nanaimo. It was opened about six years ago, and has two shafts now being worked, the coal being of similar quality to that of the Wellington. The Union Colliery Company, composed of capitalists interested in the Southern Pacific railway and the Wellington colliery, is laying out extensive works in the Comox district, a few miles northwest of Nanaimo. Preparations are in progress

for building a railway from the mines to the harbor on Union bay, where the largest ships may load at any stage of the tide at the longest wharf in the province. The prospecting done by the various companies shows the existence of inexhaustible supplies of coal, both on Vancouver island and on the smaller islands near it, particularly on Gabriola island, directly opposite Nanaimo. There are also indications of iron in some localities. On Texada island are extensive iron mines now in operation. It is a very attractive field for engaging in mining.

Though in the center of a rich coal mining district, Nanaimo is not merely a mining town. A visitor might spend days in the city without discovering that it had extensive coal interests, so unobtrusive are they. Yet when it is known that about two thousand men are employed in the mines of that vicinity, their importance becomes apparent. The town of Wellington, five miles beyond Nanaimo, has a population of about a thousand and is owned by the proprietors of the mines there. The Esquimalt & Nanaimo railroad extends from Victoria through Nanaimo to Wellington, which is its present terminus. This line is projected nearly a hundred miles farther up the coast.

The city of Nanaimo is located on a small bay known as Nanaimo harbor, which is entered by all kinds of marine craft, the course being so free that vessels sometimes sail in unassisted. Nearly all the shipments are made by water, the coal going to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland and the Sandwich islands, besides to British Columbia ports. A portion of the harbor is now being improved by rock dredging to remove obstacles that restrict the movement of large vessels near the docks when the tide is low.

The town occupies an uneven tract of land rising quite rapidly back from the water, the altitude increasing until the summit of Mount Benson, nearly thirty-five hundred feet above the sea, is reached some ten or twelve miles to the westward. No regular plat was made until a considerable settlement had grown up there, which accounts, in part, for the irregular streets, the lay of the land also conducing to the present arrangement. A view of the harbor may be obtained from almost any point in the city. The north and south ends of the town are higher than the middle, where the main business houses are situated, and the residence portion occupies the higher ground. During the past year a large amount of building has been done, and the outskirts of the city are rapidly being built up with neat and comfortable cottages, that speak in no uncertain way of the prosperity that is enjoyed by the people. Even greater improvements are in prospect for this year. The business interests are experiencing a decided growth, and an