

the streams and near the shores farming can be successfully carried on, and much of the rougher land affords the best of pasturage. No limit is known to the scope for industrial development on the island. All of that territory may properly be considered as tributary to Victoria. Then, from the smaller islands of the adjoining waters and from the main land, much business must flow to the capital city. The fact that it is the capital of the province is an important factor contributing to the importance of Victoria. The government is administered from there, and if no other reason existed, that alone would have a tendency to draw business to the city. The Victoria custom house shows by far the largest business of any port in the province. Last year the arrivals and clearances of marine craft numbered over five hundred and sixty, aggregating more than half a million tons burthen, exclusive of those plying to the various ports within the province. The exports for the year, as shown by the custom house records at Victoria, consisted of gold, coal, fish, furs, hides, lumber and curios, to a total value of \$3,475,968.00, and the imports for the same period aggregated \$2,922,395.00. The duties collected amounted to \$873,952.26. These figures indicate the large volume of business which is transacted at the Victoria custom house.

The British government regards Victoria as an important point. Not alone as a growing city of promising prospects does it attain its full importance. The strategic point which it occupies as a national post of observation, supply and defense entitles it to the consideration it receives from Her Majesty's home government. Not only in the event of hostilities between Great Britain and the United States would fortifications at that point be almost indispensable, but the war vessels of any naval power might do serious harm to British possessions on this coast if they were left unprotected. The naval station the British government maintains at Esquimalt (virtually a part of Victoria) is esteemed of such importance that steps

are being taken for the erection of strong fortifications in addition to the present means of defense. Defenses, though not very extensive, are now maintained on the strait front of the city. It is expected that the proposed government works will greatly benefit the town in every way.

In describing the capital city, a few words about the provincial government will not prove uninteresting to American readers. Until 1858 British Columbia and Vancouver island were governed by the Hudson's Bay Company. In that year both colonies were given a territorial government, and ten years later the two were consolidated and the capital established at Victoria. In 1871 the province joined the Canadian confederation, one of the considerations being that the dominion government should connect the two oceans by a railway, which was completed in 1886. The province now is governed by a governor appointed by the dominion, and cabinet of five—premier, provincial secretary, attorney general, commissioner of lands and works, and commissioner of mines—and a legislature consisting of two houses, council and assembly, the members of the former being appointed and of the latter elected by popular suffrage. British Columbia is represented in the dominion parliament by three members in the senate and six in the house of commons. The provincial legislature has power to levy direct taxes and borrow money for provincial purposes, the control of public lands and public works within the province, municipal institutions, public schools, hospitals, prisons, asylums and charities, and generally all matters of a local or private character. All judges except those of some of the minor courts are appointed by the dominion government. The provincial government is efficiently administered, and with the increase of wealth and population its influence in the legislative bodies becomes greater through increased representation. The city of Victoria is governed by a mayor and nine councilmen elected by the people.

