

VICTORIA, THE PICTURESQUE CAPITAL, COMMANDING THE STRAITS OF FUCA.

VICTORIA, March 14.—"Porridge," said a visitor as a visitor from the United States took his seat on a morning at the breakfast table of a steamer running into Victoria. "And then," said the visitor, as he told the incident afterwards, "I knew I was in Canada," for over on the American side it's always mush, not porridge.

Well, perhaps that is apparently a strange way of introducing a description of Victoria, "the beautiful Queen City and British Columbia," as the Victorians love to call their town, but it is an illustration of one of the main differences between the capital of British Columbia and an American town. Of course, everybody in Victoria does not eat mush porridge—indeed, the proximity to the more densely populated state of Washington and the constant stream of travel between Vancouver Island and the United States has had the effect of largely introducing American names and words, but the little incident referred to gives a striking example of the real difference between the ways of Victoria and those of the American towns. Mush and porridge, call it which you will, is the same thing, and while the methods here in Victoria may seem different on the surface to the superficial glance of an American, the man of discernment soon sees that after all there is no real difference. While it is an article of faith with the citizen of the United States to keep up the best front possible before strangers and patriotically to stand up for his own town as the finest place on earth and to question whether in Paradise itself he could be happier, the Victorian has retained the dearest of John Bull's cherished privileges—that of growling at things as they are and always grudgingly admitting, even when conditions are brightest, that there is room for improvement. Both American and Canadian have the same end in view, the improvement and advancement of his own city, and the Victorian in his heart dearly loves his town and feels hurt when the innocent stranger takes his grumbling for truth and accepts without questioning the valuation which the Victorian resident puts on his city and its business.

As a matter of fact, you will, it would be difficult to find any place on the continent where the general condition of the people is happier than in this thriving city of Victoria. For instance, to hear a Victorian growl about the streets, one would imagine that people were wallowing up to their necks in mud on the main thoroughfares, and this goes abroad, to the detriment of the place, whereas, although the paving of a few streets in the business portion would certainly give the city a better appearance, and, in fact, this improvement is now within reasonable distance of being accomplished, a city official from one of the larger American cities expressed his surprise a few weeks ago that Victorians were not satisfied with their roads; "for," said he, "you would have to travel a long way before you find a city with such uniformly good roads as you people have got right here, and you should be ashamed of yourselves to run down your town in the way you do, giving outsiders such a false view of the real condition of things." Now, as an actual fact, one of the great charms of Victoria and the surrounding district is the really splendid roads, that make driving to the multitude of beauty spots in the vicinity a never failing source of delight to visitors.

Charmingly situated on the southern end of Vancouver Island, with glorious scenery on every side, of woodland, seacoast and picturesque, verdure clad hills, Victoria is an ideal spot for the pleasure seeker. Within few short miles of town are to be had shooting and fishing of the best description, streams and lakes full of trout and the fields and woods a cover for deer, grouse and the gorgeous pheasant, while a pull in a skiff of five minutes puts one where there is capital sport trolling for salmon or for catching sea trout, bass or other game fish. The boating is one of the features of Victoria, and one has the choice of a breezy sail out in the straits outside the inner harbor or canoeing up "The Arm," a picturesque stretch of almost land-locked sea water four miles long, opening here and there into wide stretches, delightful and safe to sail the lightest of canoes—the banks a marvel of loveliness, with thickets of pine, maple and arbutus, dotted here and there with most charming residences and gardens—a very Eden—which visitors never tire praising.

The city itself is a most picturesque one. Only a few

position not too near lofty mountains, Victoria has a far less rainfall than the adjacent mainland, while in summer the climate is simply perfection, never oppressively warm, and the cool winds from the sea tempering the air deliciously and the nights invariably delightfully cool. Victorians are naturally proud of their climate, and it is a revelation to the people from the cold Eastern winter to come here in February and see the buds on the lilacs turning green, the snowdrops and crocuses beginning to open, the wild currant in its Eastern April.

This cozy, comfortable settled appearance of Victoria often leads strangers to set down the city as far older than it really is. Victoria is not an old town. In 1843, when it became evident that the northern portion of Oregon, which had formerly been held in common by traders of the United States and the Hudson's Bay Company, would by the treaty become part of the United States, Governor Douglas, after careful consideration, decided to move the company's headquarters from the Columbia river to the spot where the city of Victoria now stands. Accordingly he built

**Founded by
Hardy Trappers
of Early Days.**

Victoria's business. There is not apparently the same ease and scurry that one sees in an American city, and unthinkingly one may put this down to lack of business. That is a very erroneous idea, however. Victorians are energetic, but they are not nervous. The young men here, and the young women, too, for that matter, are devoted to athletic sports and the older people encourage them. Probably in no town of its size is this taste for athletic exercises more general. But while that is the case, the steady growth of the business of the city shows that the material things of life are not neglected, and that Victorians are just as energetic as other people, though, perhaps, showing their exuberance less. Another thing that will strike a stranger most favorably is the universal courtesy shown to visitors. Ask a small boy the way to some particular spot and instead of his pointing vaguely up the street and saying, "Oh, round that next corner and straight ahead," it is dollars to doughnuts that the youngster will walk half a block out of his way to be sure to get you on the right track and then watch you for a while to make sure you take the proper turn. It is the same with the grown folks, and that is one of the reasons why

**Businesslike,
Athletic,
Courteous.**

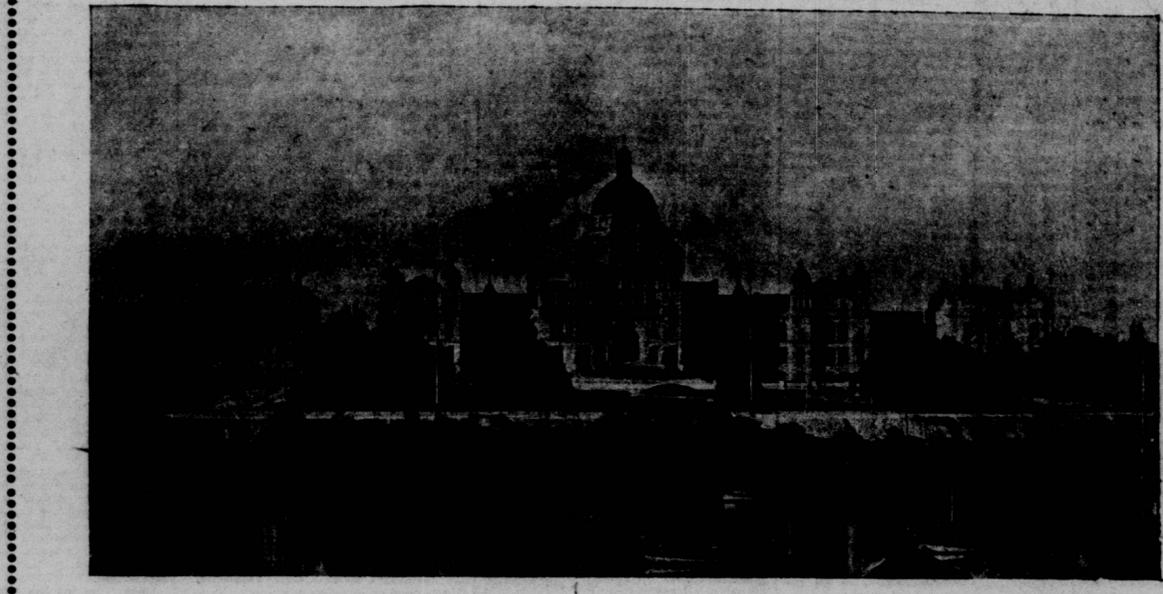
to be seen in the customs returns, which show that the amount of duty collected in 1886 was \$20,580, against \$12,440 in 1887, quite a substantial increase it must be admitted, while in shipping the comparisons of vessels entered and cleared in the past two years is as follows:

	Entered.	Cleared.	Total.
1888—			
Deep sea	1,246	1,217	2,463
Coastwise	1,692	1,598	3,290
1887—			
Deep sea	1,154	1,078	2,232
Coastwise	1,385	1,388	2,773

This is a very striking evidence of growth in a town where nearly all the commerce with the outside is done by vessel. Victoria has had a steady increase in the number of steamship lines calling at her port, and now she has direct communication with the Orient by the Canadian Pacific and Northern Pacific lines. She has the Australian colonies, New Zealand, Fiji and Hawaii connected by the Canadian-Australian line, steamer connection daily with Seattle; the Pacific Coast steamship line from San Francisco makes this a port of call; there is a

**Ocean Traffic
to All Parts
of the World.**

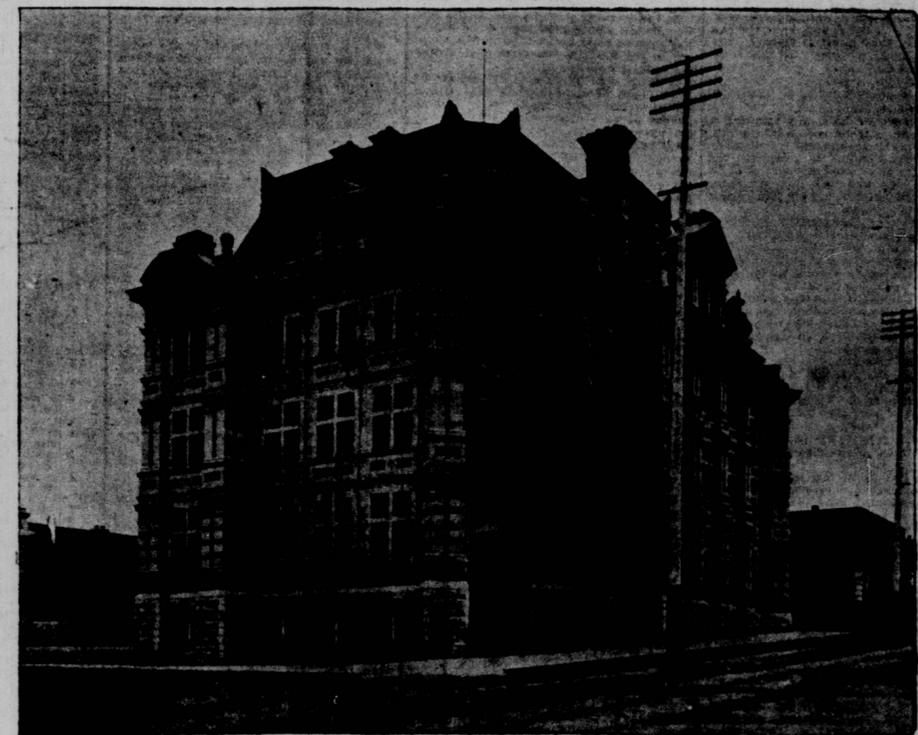
island is very largely tributary to this city, and is constantly growing greater, especially on the Alberca canal, and the vessels leaving this port carry more and more supplies that the increasing mining population demands. Then, too, while Kootenay is far away, Victoria houses have branches throughout and have made such a vigorous struggle for a share in the trade that they have got it, a large part of this going by way of Seattle in bond. So that Seattle is a gainer as well as Victoria. One thing Victorians are looking forward to is a railway ferry connecting with some transcontinental line, the ferry taking aboard the loaded cars and setting them down in Victoria, without breaking bulk. This hope is likely to be realized before very long, and will give this city increased business facilities. Besides this, the people have not lost sight of the cherished scheme to build a line to the upper end of the island and across Seymour Narrows. Many think this will be accomplished sooner than some people imagine, for it has been declared feasible, though some adverse opinions have been given on the subject.



BRITISH COLUMBIA PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.



VICTORIA CITY HALL.



POSTOFFICE AND CUSTOMS HOUSE.

minutes' walk or drive from the bustle of the business portion one enters a succession of beautiful gardens.

**A City Made
Beautiful by
Flower Gardens.**
Victoria is spread over a very large area, comparing its population with other cities, and therein lies the chief charm. The people are flower lovers, and there is implanted in most people a desire to own a place with a garden—this disposition of residence streets not at all popular. Consequently, instead of tedious lines of houses built side by side and lining the streets with nothing but house fronts, the general aspect of the residence portion of the town is a succession of detached houses, cozy and comfortable, each with its garden, large or small, according to the means of the occupant. The people are real home lovers and take a wonderful pride in their gardens. From early spring until far into the mild winter—which is similar to the south of England—the gardens are abloom with beautiful flowers, carefully tended, pretty green lawns nicely cropped and kept verdant through the dry summer months with sprinklers. It is in deference to the desire of the people to keep their gardens as fresh as possible that the city made the water rates extremely low, and no man is now so poor that he cannot get all the water he wishes for his strip of lawn. The climate of Victoria, too, is one of its great charms. There is the rainy season in winter, but thanks to its

a fort—a palisade structure one hundred yards square, and in it eight log houses. This fort was called Camosun, and in 1848 the name was changed to Victoria, and this was the nucleus of the present city. It was not till 1852 that the town was surveyed and laid out in streets, and in 1862 it was incorporated, with a population of 3,500. Today the population is 25,000, and the continued growth is shown by the fact that real estate men say that all the desirable houses in the town are occupied and it would be impossible to find a vacant store on Government street.

To any one gazing at the ceremonious proceedings in the magnificent parliament buildings that now adorn Victoria, the beginnings of representative government here sound very funny as related by Hon. J. S. Heintzken, who was the first speaker, elected in 1854, and who still lives to a green old age. The "House of Assembly" was a room in the bachelors' quarters in a square log building in the Hudson's Bay fort. It was lined with plank, unpainted and unadorned, save with a few cedar mats to cover the seats. In the center was a dilapidated stove of sheet iron, and at the end stood a wooden home-manufactured table for Mr. Speaker. Half a dozen ordinary wooden chairs stood around this table for the members, and a respect-ful distance a couple of wooden benches for the audience. What a contrast this all is with the flourishing state of Victoria at the present day, with its busy streets, fine business blocks, stately churches and excellent public schools. A false impression often is entertained by visitors as to

visitors are always so charmed with Victoria—people are never too busy to be courteous.

While the residence portion of Victoria is spread over a large area, this does not apply to the business portion, that is, in the sense of the buildings being scattered, for from the water front back the business streets are well lined with substantial warehouses and stores, and in the past few years a great many very fine modern buildings have replaced those that were found too small for the constantly increasing trade. There has been no boom about this—the growth has been natural, and consequently there are no big blocks put up that are not immediately occupied. Until a very few years ago only two banks did business in Victoria—that is, incorporated banks. Now there are branches of five of the largest banks in Canada established here—the Bank of British Columbia and Bank of British North America, which have been established here for years; the Bank of Montreal, which has lately put up a very handsome building, and the Merchants' Bank of Halifax and Montreal's Bank of Montreal, which have recently established branches in Victoria. The growth of the business resulted in the establishment last October of a clearing house, and the steady increase in the clearings is an indication of the growing trade of the city. Whereas, in December and January the clearings seldom reached \$700,000 a week, for the week ending February 25 the clearings were \$81,250, the largest on record, and placing Victoria in the sixth place among the cities of the Dominion. Another indication of the growth of Victoria's trade is

daily steamer connection with Vancouver; steamers run regularly between here and Westminster, Port Angeles, Comox and Nanaimo; the west coast ports, including Barclay Sound and Alberca mines, contribute regularly to her shipping fleet; lines run regularly to the northern points on the British Columbia mainland coast, and several lines are engaged in the traffic to Skagway and other Alaskan points.

Besides all this, the Royal Roads of Esquimalt is a favorite place with vessels seeking cargoes, and the immense stone dry dock at Esquimalt, one of the finest on the continent, is constantly in demand for vessels needing repairs. This repairing industry is rapidly growing into a ship-building business, for besides the dry dock there is a marine railway at Esquimalt and another in the inner harbor. This latter is to be increased so as to take larger vessels than it has hitherto handled. Quite a number of river steamers are built in Victoria, and Victorians look forward confidently to the establishment before many years of a regular industry for building steel vessels, for one or two have already been turned out, though not large ones. Then, too, Victoria is the headquarters of the sealing fleet, which last year brought in a total of 25,665 seals for thirty-five vessels. With all this shipping trade naturally a large number of industries in connection are sustained. Besides, the growth of the mines on the east and west coast of the

island is very largely tributary to this city, and is constantly growing greater, especially on the Alberca canal, and the vessels leaving this port carry more and more supplies that the increasing mining population demands. Then, too, while Kootenay is far away, Victoria houses have branches throughout and have made such a vigorous struggle for a share in the trade that they have got it, a large part of this going by way of Seattle in bond. So that Seattle is a gainer as well as Victoria.

**Mining Trade
and Improved
Transportation**

One thing Victorians are looking forward to is a railway ferry connecting with some transcontinental line, the ferry taking aboard the loaded cars and setting them down in Victoria, without breaking bulk. This hope is likely to be realized before very long, and will give this city increased business facilities. Besides this, the people have not lost sight of the cherished scheme to build a line to the upper end of the island and across Seymour Narrows. Many think this will be accomplished sooner than some people imagine, for it has been declared feasible, though some adverse opinions have been given on the subject.

The business men have taken these matters up in the British Columbia Board of Trade quite vigorously, and that there is no falling off in the interest is proven by the fact that the board has grown largely in membership during the past few months. The board is one of the institutions of the city and is well established in a handsome four-story brick building of its own. This body has done much during the past few years to impress on the Dominion the needs of the shipping community, and with a good deal of success.

**Plan Proposed
for Making
an Ideal Harbor**

A big scheme which has been put before the city for the past two years is a very comprehensive plan of harbor improvement, which, if it could be carried out, would make Victoria a magnificent harbor. It is proposed by this body to purchase all the land around the inner harbor, to block up the entrance, empty the basin, excavate it to a uniform depth, and place down a breakwater. Then the water would be let in and instead of at present the various docks being owned by private individuals, they should be operated by a harbor trust. The city has in the past few days set aside \$2,500 to examine into the scheme.

At present there is splendid accommodation for the largest class of ocean steamers at the outer dock, which is just beyond the entrance to the inner harbor; but the proposed plan would admit of these vessels coming right into the heart of the city.

Another thing that Victorians are looking forward to is the establishment of a smelter in the vicinity of the city. At present the mines on the island are hardly developed enough to give a constant supply of ore, but another year will see great changes in this respect, and the scheme will take definite form just as soon as that comes to pass. Victoria is destined to become the center of a great iron and steel industry—of that no patriotic Victorian feels any doubt. Vancouver Island stands out from the mainland like Great Britain does from the continent of Europe, and there are on the island as great resources in iron as one could wish; there is also the coal in immense quantities, and sooner or later this means a ship-building industry of great proportions, for the demands for the transpacific trade are sure in years to come to be as large or perhaps even larger in the course of time than that between Europe and the eastern coast of America today. The faith of Victorians in their city is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that Victoria stands fourth among the ports of the Dominion according to its customs returns. Besides, as the capital of a great province, which is developing rapidly, Victoria holds a very important place as the leading city of British Columbia. At Esquimalt is the headquarters of the Northern Pacific squadron, where there are always several of her majesty's fleet. Esquimalt is a very picturesque place, one of the sights for the visitor to Victoria. It is reached by tramway, and is three miles from the center of the city. So important has this station become that extensive fortifications have been in course of construction there for several

years past under the charge of a detachment of the Royal engineers. Though a person entering the harbor can see very little of this work, it is of a most extensive character, and the intention is to make it absolutely impregnable to attack. When the time comes the whole of Esquimalt village will be taken in for defensive purposes, and before long it is proposed to have a force of five thousand men stationed there constantly. At favorable points between Victoria and Esquimalt very strong forts have already been constructed, and on these numbers of high power modern guns are placed—not in view, for they are of the latest disappearing kind, that rise by pneumatic power just long enough to fire, and then sink out of sight. These guns command the straits and are of very long range. As auxiliaries to prevent any possibility of landing parties there are smaller engines of war, such as the deadly Maxims that pour forth a perfect rain of bullets, and on the seacoast are defenses, including the stringing of tangles of barbed wire to hold back an attacking force while the machine guns mow the enemy down.

**Fortifications
Command the
Straits of Fuca**

The forts already completed are in charge of a force of