



#### SHIPPING SLUMP SHOWS NO IMPROVEMENT.

Tacoma, like all the ports of the world, is having its period of slackness in shipping. Just what the outcome for the summer is to be shippers do not state, but that there will be no revival until the wheat seasons opens is pretty certain.

So far the shipments and records make a very poor showing. Since the first of the year outward cargo business has dropped about half. Each month shows a big drop, and the present month will be no exception. The coastwise shipments remain good, and are on the increase. One line that is a great help to the port is the smelter shipments, which are assuming big proportions.

Among shippers it has been noticed that there has been an upward turn in the charter market for lumber cargoes off shore. It is understood that 55s has been refused for lumber carriers for the United Kingdom. It is stated that a desirable tonnage has been taken up by the wheat exporters, and the tonnage wanted for lumber is hard to get. Logs are reported on Grays Harbor to have taken a drop in price. The last two weeks has shown considerable inquiry for tonnage in the off-shore trade.

For the coming wheat season present prospects are favorable. It is understood that could the wheat be obtained, there would be some shipments to Mexico and the south now. Several vessels are reported to have been fixed at Union rates on the Columbia. Locally the opinion is that the bulk of cargo taken from Tacoma this season will go by steamer.

There is considerable interest being manifested in what will make up the cargo for the new Japanese line. With conditions as they are at present and competing Japanese lines out of Seattle and San Francisco, the new line will have to hustle for freight. The conditions of the trade have not yet been fully worked out by the shippers. The Interstate Commerce Ruling is held to blame for a great deal, and the unsettled conditions in the east for a part.

#### TACOMA MARU IS LARGE VESSEL.

With the arrival of R. Fukao, representative of the Osaka Shoshen Kaisha line, at Tacoma, the commercial side of this fleet of vessels to be operated in conjunction with the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railway is beginning to assume shape. Mr. Fukao is getting himself established in offices here, and as soon as the first rush of work is over will be able to make announcements regarding the company he represents.

This is the first visit of Mr. Fukao to the United States, and while he realizes that conditions here are not what they should be, is very optimistic and is deeply impressed with the trade possibilities in this country.

Mr. Fukao states that the Tacoma Maru, the first vessel to cross the Pacific for the new line, is about completed. She will leave Kobe on May 20. She will call at Moji,

Hongkong and Shanghai. Then she will go to Osaka, Kobe and Yokohama, leaving for the Sound about June 29, arriving July 19. Outward bound she leaves August 1.

The Tacoma Maru, which is built at the Kawasaki Dockyard, is one of the fleet of six vessels the company is building for the Puget Sound-Oriental service. The Seattle Maru, now building, is soon to be launched.

The Tacoma Maru is a vessel of 6,000 gross tons, and a displacement of 11,300 tons. She measures between perpendiculars 400 feet, with a beam of 51 feet, and depth of 32 feet 6 inches. The draft loaded is 25 feet. Speed is 14 knots an hour.

The vessel is purely a freight carrier, but can handle steerage passengers. She is fitted with six cargo hatches and 14 derricks of six tons each. One main derrick has a capacity of 30 tons. The crew numbers 46 men.

#### WILL SOON START WORK ON BIG DOCKS.

Work on the new wheat elevators and dock of the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound is expected to be under way within a few days. The contracts for these buildings have been let to the Burill Bridge & Dredging Co.

This work includes the Balfour-Guthrie Company wheat warehouse and elevator and Oriental dock and lumber dock. The Balfour-Guthrie Company dock will be 500 feet in length by 175 wide, with a floor capacity of 17,000 tons of wheat, and storage capacity of 100,000 bushels. It will be the highest upright grain elevator on the Sound. There will be 24 grain bins.

The Oriental dock will be 50 feet long by 175 wide, and the lumber dock 300 feet long. It is expected that announcements regarding shops will be made in the near future.

#### GOVERNMENT STORAGE TANK COMPLETED.

Work on the new storage tank built for government use at the Alaska-Pacific Dock has been completed. This tank will be used to store submarine cable before it is placed aboard the cableship Burnside.

This tank is built of concrete. It is 35 feet 2 inches in diameter and 10 feet 7 inches deep. It is arranged so as to be filled with water. It is understood that the cable will keep better this way than when stored in the warehouses and above water.

#### CHANGES FOR WELL-KNOWN OFFICERS.

The recent purchase of steamers by the Merchants Transportation Company, and their operation on new routes, has placed a number of Tacoma steamboat men on new vessels.

Among the changes are Harry Whitworth, formerly of the steamer T. W. Lake, to the Multnomah as chief; Billy Altmanberger is in charge of the engine department of the Magnolia, while Chief Puffer, formerly of the tug Falcon, has gone on the Dove. Captain George Browner has charge of the Dove, while John Jones, first officer of the Greyhound, has charge of the Magnolia while that steamer is covering the run of the Greyhound. George Willey is in charge of the engine room of the tug Falcon.