

posts were stationed in various places along the coast and scattered throughout the interior, some of which have subsequently become cities of considerable extent and importance. It was from this humble and insignificant beginning that Victoria, the present capital, now containing a population of a little over 4,000 inhabitants, sprung.

The topography of the colony is generally mountainous. The Cascade range, a continuation of the Sierra Nevadas of California, intersects the entire length of the country, running from north to south at a distance of about 100 miles from the coast. Several spurs of the Rocky Mountains extend into the interior, one of which forms the range wherein the gold mines of Cariboo are located. A number of large and voluminous rivers take their rise in these various ranges, the main stream—the Fraser—flowing through the country for a distance of about 1,500 miles, thereby ranking as the second largest stream on the Pacific Coast. As it traverses the most mountainous section of the country, its course is consequently through a continued chain of impassable gorges and cañons, causing it to be utterly unnavigable to steamboats, excepting 100 miles of its lower waters and about 80 miles midway between its source and mouth. Even its navigation by boats, although frequently successfully accomplished, is replete with danger, and has been frequently attended with disastrous results. The Pitt, Bridge, Thompson, Quesnelle, Chilliwaek and Harrison Rivers are all branches of the Fraser, of greater or less magnitude and importance. A large number of lakes, varied in size, nestle between the mountain ranges. Some of these lakes are navigable to steamboats of light draught, and vessels of that class are at present employed on their waters. All these lakes and rivers, as well as the bays and inlets along the coast, swarm with fish of different descriptions. Much of the country is covered with dense forests of pine, cedar, and other kinds of timber, especially so near the sea coast and in the interior mountain districts. The lumber business has become quite an important one, the exports of that article amounting to about \$300,000 annually. The spars obtained from its forests cannot be equaled elsewhere, in length and quality, and large numbers are shipped annually abroad.

Although comparatively an indifferent agricultural country, British Columbia's agricultural resources have been valuable assistants in the development of her rich and extensive mineral deposits, to which the time and attention of a large portion of the white population has been exclusively devoted. Sumass, Kamloops, Lilloet, Dog Creek, Soda Creek, Williams Lake and Alkali Lake are all valuable agricultural districts, some of which are somewhat extensively cultivated and annually produce fine crops of cereals, thus effectually stopping the importation of breadstuffs from Oregon and California to any point above Victoria. Thousands of acres of invaluable land, now partially submerged by the flood tides, exist at the mouth of the Fraser River, which, by an inexpensive system of dyking, can be easily reclaimed and immediately placed under a high state of cultivation. This land is now being rapidly pre-empted, in anticipation of the speedy construction of the New Dominion Trans-continental railroad, and the establishment of the Pacific terminus at Burrard's Inlet. The soil of the country is in most places of a light character, deficient in depth and quickly exhausted. These low lands of the Fraser are, however, exceptions to the rule, and possess a rich and deep soil. Some portions of the interior also possess a deep and highly productive soil, as evidenced by the spontaneous growth of various kinds of fruit. In this respect the Similkameen Valley is a perfect garden, varieties of garden fruit growing abundantly in as advanced a state of perfection as the products of domesticated trees and shrubs.

As a grazing country British Columbia is probably preëminent, the plains and valleys of the interior being covered with abundance of bunch and other nutritious grasses, and affording an unlimited range for the support of numberless flocks and herds. Twenty thousand head of horned cattle are stated to be now feeding in the extensive valleys of the Fraser, Thompson, Bonaparte and Nicomin Rivers. These valleys are comparatively free from snow during the winter, and contain good feed throughout the year. Their peculiar adaptability for stock-raising has been indisputably established and demonstrated by the practical results obtained from several years' experiments. Sheep-raising has of late years been introduced into the colony, and is proving a source of great profit to those engaged in it. Good markets for stock and farm produce are always to be obtained in the mining districts, which are situated in ungenial and unproductive parts of the colony.

Mining constitutes the most attractive resource of the country, the rich placers of Cariboo, and other regions, having yielded large fortunes to many miners, and incited to extensive explorations and great enterprises. The fabulous yield of some of the creeks in Cariboo is familiar to almost every household throughout the civilized world. These mines have been worked uninterruptedly from the time of their discovery, and continue to yield at the rate of about \$2,000,000 per annum, about 2,000 men being steadily employed in its production. Other gold fields are to be found at Big Bend, Kootenay, the Peace, Fraser, Thompson, and Stikeen Rivers on the main land, and on Gold Stream and Leech River in Vancouver Island. The bars and benches of the Fraser, although abandoned by the whites, continue to profitably employ a great number of Chinese. Up to the present time the alluvials alone have been operated upon, the era of quartz mining not having yet been properly inaugurated. The Cassiar mines, on the Stikeen River, yielded largely in 1874, some miners realizing as high as from five to fourteen ounces per day for their labor. The Omineca mines also yielded well. The total product of the Province for 1874, as reported by Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express, was \$1,636,557, and since the discovery in 1858, the product is estimated at about \$25,000,000.

Veins of silver have been discovered near Fort Hope, and on Cherry Creek, near Shushwap Lake, but so far remain undeveloped. Nuggets of native silver have been found on the Peace and Stikeen Rivers, indicating the presence of extensive deposits in the neighborhood. Veins of copper and lead are numerous, and a certain amount of prospecting has been done on the former, but with no satisfactory results. Beds of valuable bituminous coal have been profitably worked for several years at Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island, the annual quantity of coal raised amounting to about 50,000 tons, valued at the pit's mouth at \$6 per ton. The annual export of coal, principally to San Francisco, amounts to about \$200,000. Beds of coal of similar character, and of a superior quality, have been lately discovered on Queen Charlotte Island, and operations for their speedy development have been commenced. A large area of the northwestern portion of Vancouver Island is mainly of the bituminous coal formation, much broken up, however, by the upheavals of the earth's crust. The whole surface of the island, which is the principal dependency of British Columbia, is very mountainous, and covered with dense forests of pine and cedar. It contains very little land available for agricultural purposes, but it is supposed to be exceedingly rich in mineral deposits, although coal is the only one yet profitably worked.

The climate throughout the colony is genial during the summer, but exceedingly cold on the mainland during the winter—especially in the mining districts—the temperature often falling as low as 40° below zero. Snow falls in large quantities during the winter, which, in melting in the spring, causes the creeks and rivers to assume enormous proportions. It is, however, an exceedingly healthy climate, although rigid, as sickness is almost unknown among the inhabitants. Along the coast the rain is excessive in winter, and it is often cold and foggy in summer, but as soon as the Cascade Range is passed, a different climate prevails. Particularly is this shown in ascending the Nasse Skena, and other rivers which break through the range near the coast and open into broad, grassy prairies of great beauty and fertility, which invite the farmer and the grazer to their occupation. These grassy regions are occupied by the native tribes, who obtain a living by fishing and hunting. Game is abundant throughout the Province, and fish in myriads swarm along the coast. Among the former are the brown, black and grizzly bear, elk, black-tailed deer and reindeer, (cariboo), panther, lynx, beaver, otter, wolves, fishers, foxes, martins, minks,