

British Columbia

Through the Chilcotin.

A CORRESPONDENT TELLS OF A TRIP OVER THE
FERTILE PRAIRIES IN THE MONTH OF
FEBRUARY.

What is our young Canadian land,
Is it fair Norembega's strand,
Or Jape Breton by the sea,
Quebec, Ontario, Acadie,
Or Manitoba's flower-decked plain,
Or fair Columbia's mountain chain;
Can any part from strand to strand
Be a Canadian's fatherland?

Nay! for our young Canadian land
Is greater, grander far than these;
It stretches wide on either hand
Between the world's two mighty seas.
So let no hostile lines divide
The fields our feet should freely roam;
Gaul, Norman, Saxon—side by side,
And Canada, our native home,
From sea to sea, from strand to strand,
Spreads our Canadian fatherland.

—Fidelis

Leaving Empire at the early break of morn, while the winter scene around was dreary as winter scene could be, the forest trees clothed in their frosty garbs and the bosom of old Mother Earth looking desolate in her winter wrappings, the prospects of a pleasant and enjoyable trip were unusually bright. With all their wintry surroundings those forest trees—the spruce, fir, pine and maple, emblems of our native land—had an attractive appearance about them, which served to make the trip all the more enjoyable.

The distance from Empire valley to W. Wy-cott's is 12 miles. In constructing a road from Empire to Hanceville this would be the only difficult point to contend with, the approach to St. Mary's river; but, after all, this does not require any great engineering feat to overcome. A good, substantial bridge would be necessary, as the present one is in a most deplorable state and unsafe to cross. Here I saw quite a few of the bounding deer, and a gray and bald-headed eagle, perched upon a tree within 50 feet of me, apparently contented, and seemingly unconcerned as to my appearance. Well might their timidity be sanctioned, as the carcass of a deer lay at no great distance off.

Some 26 miles of a ride brought me to what is known as the Home ranch, owned by the Canadian Western Ranching Company. Here I passed a pleasant evening with Mr. Bryant, who was feeding 100 head of calves. The morning followed rather cloudy, which made the surrounding woods of fir and pine rather obscured. Fifteen miles, and I was at the bank of Big Creek, at the margin of the Chilcotin plains or prairies. Fifteen miles from Big Creek are the residences of Messrs. Minton and Bergue, the country consisting chiefly of prairie open land, with belts of timber here and there. The snow was only about four inches deep. Messrs. Minton and Bergue devote their time to stock ranching and farming, and they have without a doubt one of the finest farms in the Province. The crops have yielded 3,000 pounds to the acre and an average throughout of 2,000 pounds. A mile or two from Minton's is the Stone Indian reserve. The Indians of this tribe formerly made their living by hunt-

ing and trapping, but since the advent of the white man, they have changed their mode of livelihood by tilling the soil. Mr. Hanes and Johnston brothers' ranches are also models. Here the snow was only a couple of inches deep. The river is crossed on solid ice, and some three miles further on is the finest reservation of the Annahan tribe. They have some three or four thousand acres of the finest land that one could cast his eyes upon, with a large stream of water flowing through the very heart of it. I counted a dozen women on the top of a shed roof and probably thrice that number of children, all as busy as a swarm of bees in a hive. Each had pans in their hands—this is their system of cleaning grain in the wind. I thought to myself it was a strange procedure. Only a few yards off was a fanning mill, and still it was not in use. I have no doubt that the mill belonged to a private individual. The women presented a neat, tasty appearance, and I would judge are fond of bright colors, though many exhibit considerable taste by the selection of dark shades, suited to their complexions. This tribe raise a large amount of grain, and have goodly buildings on their reserves. A church loomed high up among the buildings, telling that here the footholds of Christianity have been planted by the early missionaries: still with all the preaching of religion, the mind of the Chilcotin Indian is full of weird and strange fancies and imaginations. Grouping in darkness, in almost total ignorance of the vast discoveries of science, with nothing to guide his erring steps, it is no wonder that in his blind struggles to solve the secret problems which are more or less a mystery to us all—the origin of man and the creation of the world—that he has wrought out the varied mixture of ignorance, superstition and vulgar imagination which mainly compose his legends and traditions. Doubtless many of his theories are based upon actual occurrences in the remote ages, which he has mingled with his own fancies; others upon the exploits and achievements of his ancestors, though the great number are pure fictions, fairy tales and stories, handed down from generation to generation.

I am told there are some 200 aborigines on this reserve. Their fencing spoke well of their enterprise and industry. The great drawback in the small returns of crops seems to lay in the deficient tillage of the soil; whether this is for the want of better implements or better steerage of the plow I do not know, but my impression is that both are lacking. If the Indian agents would only explain to them the physical points of successful farming, I am sure the poor Indians would derive much benefit therefrom. A few miles further on Nightingale and Hemer are reached. Here I saw some fine samples of wheat and oats raised on the ranch. The wheat was slightly touched with frost, but as the past season had been frosty through all parts of the world, Chilcotin was not exempt. This being the end of my journey I returned to Hanceville.—Extract from special correspondence to the Vancouver World.

The contract for the repairs to the Dominion Government steamer Quadra has been awarded to the Albion Iron Works, of Victoria. The repairs will occupy about 60 days.

British Columbia Mining Prospects

"W. B. M. Davidson, F.G.S., Associate Royal School of Mines, arrived in Vernon recently from a professional visit to the Kootenay Lake and Shonkan districts," says the Vancouver News-Advertiser. "While there he completed Dr. Dawson's map of that section, filling in the country between Kootenay and Arrow lakes; and examined the principal mines and prospects in both the new and old camps. He formed a very high opinion of the future mining possibilities of that region, but states that the development of its mineral resources is being enormously retarded by the exorbitant prices at which mere prospects are held. Speaking of British Columbia generally, Mr. Davidson said that in his capacity of mining expert he had been employed in almost every mining country in the world, but had never seen mineral so widely distributed and in such quantity as in this province. He considered British Columbia the coming bullion producing country of world."

Sheep Grazing in British Columbia.

A news item in another column is to the effect that a herd of 8,900 sheep had been driven down from Chilcotin and are feeding along Hot creek range and that the ranchers in that locality are very much opposed to it. Complaints of that nature from the interior of British Columbia have been frequent and as the attention of stock men of that province has been turning to sheep raising the preservation of ranges is fast becoming a subject for serious consideration. The chief objection to sheep pasturing on the ranges occupied by cattle is that they graze very close, which, with their sharp trotters, destroy the roots of the grass, thus causing it to die and impoverishing the ranges. Of course, sheep raising is a legitimate occupation and it is very difficult to legislate against it or adjust the interests between cattle and sheep ranchers. What makes the matter of immediately serious concern is that the older cattle ranges of British Columbia are already overgrazed, the effect of which on the beef industry of the province is already being felt and which was clearly perceptible last summer in the large and unusual export of beeves from Manitoba and the Northwest. If sheep are allowed to overrun these ranges their destruction will be made complete.

To some extent legislation has been directed towards a protection of the cattle interests and during the last session of the legislature Col. Baker, the new minister of immigration and education, emphasized the necessity of action. But clearly, there must be a more definite division of the ranges, and the two, cattle and sheep, kept apart. How this is to be accomplished satisfactorily and fairly to parties concerned, is a problem.

In any event ranching methods must be revised in order to secure a permanency of stock raising. More attention is necessary to the feeding of cattle in the winter. Very few of the ranchers feed and as a result in spring time cattle are too poor for the market. In the north when there was a limited market to supply, the over stocking of ranges did not enter into consideration and grass was abundant; but now conditions have been altered, and ensilage or some other system of supply is requisite to