

LANDS FOR PRE-EMPTION.

On May 18th at Vancouver, Alberni, Fort George, Fernie and Quesnel, the Government Agents will open to pre-emptors about 700 parcels of surveyed lands which have been in reserve and have been subdivided for settlement. The lands are located at points ranging from about 30 miles from Vancouver, near Sechelt, to Sunderland Channel, along the Mainland coast; on Malcolm, Nootka, Redonda, Cortes and Thurlow Islands; adjoining the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in the valley of the South Fork of the Fraser; in Canoe River Valley, and at various points in East Kootenay.

On the coast and islands numerous tracts of logged-off lands, former timber licences, which, in accordance with the policy of the Government to render timbered agricultural lands available to settlement as soon as the timber is cut, have been surveyed into tracts averaging 40 acres in extent. These will be opened to pre-emptors at the office of the Government Agent in the Court House at Vancouver on May 18th. These blocks of lots are situated near Sechelt, in vicinity of Lund on Malaspina Peninsula, on Redonda, Thurlow and Cortes Islands and on Jackson Bay, Sunderland Channel. A pamphlet describing them has been prepared by the Department of Lands containing maps and full particulars regarding these tracts.

On Malcolm Island, 247 lots, each of 40 acres, and 40 lots of 40 acres each on Nootka Island, will be opened to settlement on May 18th at the office of the Government Agent at Alberni. Malcolm Island, a timbered, low, undulating plateau divided from Vancouver Island by Broughton Strait, was reserved in 1901 as a Finnish colony. The colony continued for some years, operating and carrying on business on a community basis. Circumstances finally caused the abandonment of the community system, and the greater number of the original settlers took up land individually, others locating on Vancouver and various places in the vicinity. There are now living on the island about 250 people, chiefly members of the original Finnish colony. The main settlement is at Sointula, where there is an excellent school, having an average attendance of 47 pupils, a Government wharf, post office, and co-operative store. During the past summer about 10,000 acres was subdivided, and is now being opened to settlers. The lots on Nootka Island, where there has been much settlement during the past few years, are subdivisions of former timber licences.

At Fort George on May 18th about 30,000 acres, divided into lots averaging 160 acres in extent, situated between

a field of ripening wheat. The grain stood four feet high, and made an ideal place for hide-and-seek.

Frank kept looking at the field, and then said—softly, as if he were afraid of being overheard—

“Let’s play hide-and-seek in the wheat.”

Peggy looked scared and said quickly—

“But father said that we mustn’t play in the wheat, because it tramples it down.”

“Oh, we’ll be very careful. It won’t hurt—just for this once.” Frank’s tones were very persuasive, and Peggy, too easily swayed, gave in with a faint protest.

Soon the game was in full swing. The children romped around, tracking one another by the sound of the swishing ears of corn. It was not long before quite a large area of grain was badly trampled down. Presently Peggy stepped out from the tall stalks into the clear space under the shed. On seeing the dreadful havoc that they had wrought, she began to be overcome with penitence, and thoughts of father’s annoyance made her feel frightened.

“Oh, Frank, look what we’ve done!” she cried, as her brother came up, panting with exertion.

“It does look rather bad, doesn’t it?” said Frank, slowly, as he looked at the ruined wheat. “Let’s try to straighten it up.”

However, trying to straighten it was useless. The stalks would lie where they had fallen, in spite of all efforts to raise them. At last the children gave up in despair, and sat down to think over their disobedience.

Presently Peggy said solemnly:

“I think that we’ve been very naughty children. We’d better say our prayers.”

“P”raps we had,” said Frank.

Then they both knelt beside an apricot box, and both said the only prayer that they could remember just then. These were the words:

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep:
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.”

Then they got up, feeling very much relieved, and walked back to the house.

They couldn’t understand how it was, but they did not feel the least bit afraid when they walked straight up to mother and told her all about it. Of course, mother spoke very seriously about being disobedient, and gave them each a task to perform, to make them remember what she had said. But they were really sorry, and the punishment seemed to them almost too slight for the enormity of their crime.

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