

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

which I now wish to speak about. It was once maintained that California, except to a limited extent, could never become an agricultural country. Industry and enterprise, induced from the same cause working now upon our people—namely, the necessity of productive labour for the means of subsistence—have proved the fallacy of such a doctrine beyond controversy, for to day California excels the world in her annual exports of cereals.

It is not necessary to prove the position I take, that British Columbia is, in the strict sense of the word, an agricultural country, or that she will largely participate in the exportation of grain for the world's use. In speaking of the Mainland, to which my remarks will be nearly solely confined, I can safely assert—first, that we have, like California, a vastly greater amount of good agricultural land than we have credit given for. Secondly, these lands will support an enormous resident population, without the aid of Oregon or California. Lastly, that there is now no country on the Pacific coast, or perhaps in the world, where the investment of labour and capital in agriculture pays so well as in British Columbia. In reference to the first position, I may mention the valley of the Lower Frazer, from the junction of the river with the Gulf of Georgia to the district of Hope, a distance of 100 miles, and containing at least 900 square miles altogether, or about 800,000 to 900,000 acres, for the most part, where not timbered, arable land, the most fertile belt in the country, and in many places equal to the celebrated valleys of Sacramento, San Jose, and Santa Clara, in California, or the Willamette, in Oregon. New Westminster lies 16 miles up the river; and until after confederation we had only 6,000 acres in cultivation up to that place, but since then, most of it has been either pre-empted or bought from Government, until the reserve was put on for railway lands. Cattle can feed on this land the whole year, and become enormously fat. However, four years back, we had only 400 head on this lower portion. Near the mouth of the river the productive capacity was tested by Mr. W. Ladner, on his place, and found to be immense, wheat to the extent tried yielding as high as 60 bushels to the acre; cauliflowers he sent up to the agricultural show at New Westminster weighed as high as 26lbs., cabbages 41lbs., mangel wurzel 36lbs., carrots 9½lbs., turnips 36lbs., squash 76lbs. Flax grew well, also hops, which averaged 2,500lbs. to the acre, spread over the house, and the quality seemed excellent. The land is also suited for barley, oats, and rye, and will grow about three tons of hay to the acre, all without manure. The lowest portion of this land would require to be levéed, or dyked, about three feet high, but that is not expensive. Above New Westminster, for about 60 miles, including the settlements of Pitt River, Keitsey, Matsqui, Langley, Sumass, and Harrison River, there are about 25,000 acres in occupation of resident settlers, with about 1,500 head of cattle, which has been proved by a succession of crops to yield 35 bushels wheat to the acre, with other things in proportion. There are also several parcels in speculators' hands for purchase, but I have not the record of their holdings. From this section of country we are supplied in New