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Okanagan—The Orchard Valley of the West

A Spot in British Columbia Where Nature Spilled a Generous Share of Blessings

A FEW years ago if you had asked any school boy to describe our farthest west province and tell what he knew of its products and industries, he would probably have answered you that it was a mountainous country far-famed for its timber lands, its mines of gold and silver, coal and copper, and its wonderful salmon fisheries. It is likely that he would have said nothing about British Columbia's possibilities as a fruit-growing country nor the many acres of arable land awaiting cultivation. Probably at that time the possibilities were not realized, though since then a wonderful transformation has taken place and today British Columbia boasts one of the finest farming and fruit-growing districts in the world.

A series of valleys, known as the Okanagan, lie in the dry belt between the Selkirk Mountains in the East and the Coast range in the West, and run for 125 miles south from Sicamous Junction on the main line of the C. P. R. to Penticton, at the head of Okanagan Lake. The valley consists in the main of a wide stretch of plateau country, plentifully watered by lakes, rivers and smaller streams, and presents itself under the diversified aspect of broad meadow reaches, fertile bottoms, orchard-clothed benches and hilly pasture ranges.

In this valley a tremendous activity is taking place. Half a dozen thriving towns have sprung up, fifteen miles or so apart, natural centres for the surrounding fruit-growing areas. The most important of these are Vernon, Kelowna, Armstrong (where the finest vegetables in the province are grown), Penticton, Enderby, Peachland and Summerland. Don't the two latter remind you of fairy tale names, countries visited by the good little girl when off on frolic with some of her fairy friends? You might, indeed, think that you had dropped into a make-believe world if you were to visit there in the springtime of the year and see the myriads of trees dressed in their pink and white frocks and smell the delicate odour of a million blossoms.

Vernon, the largest and most important centre,

By MONA H. COXWELL

now has a population of thirty-five hundred. It is situated on the side of a long, low hill, whose slopes are terraced with avenues and dotted with residences surrounded by well-kept lawns and beautiful gardens. It is the seat of the provincial government offices and court house, in which connection

Lumby and Armstrong. The city has also excellent educational facilities, and the Central public school building recently completed is the finest in the interior.

In the business section of Vernon are represented all the principal lines of commerce. The stores are well built and carry an excellent class of goods and sufficiently extensive stock to supply the needs of the rapidly-developing outlying districts. Prices, of course, are high, but not exorbitant, when you consider transportation facilities and that Vernon is several hours' railroad journey from the mainline.

In the vicinity of Vernon are some of the finest fruit-ranches in the West. Five miles out lies a thousand acres of magnificent orchard-land owned by Lord Aberdeen, and known as the Coldstream Ranch. Sir Eric Swain, Governor of Honduras, also is the owner of extensive property not far from the city.

THOUGH Vernon is not situated on the water, it is only a matter of a few minutes to reach either one of two of the most beautiful lakes in the district. Long Lake, which name has been recently changed to Kalamalka, lies three miles away and is a favourite resort of campers and residents of the district, who believe that summer is not summer unless it is spent close to the water.

Every thirty-eighth inhabitant of Vernon owns a motor car! I doubt if that average could be beaten in the city of Detroit, where the output of motors is something over a thousand a day. Motor-ing in the valley is one of the most popular recreations and the splendid condition of the roads makes almost every part of the surrounding country accessible. A motor drive from Vernon to Kelowna, a distance of some thirty-eight miles, is a never-to-be-forgotten journey. For the first half hour or so after you leave Vernon, you cling the road that is cut out of the hillside and mounts steadily upward, giving you a glorious panoramic view of the valley, its sloping meadows, the emerald-green lakes which dot it, and in the distance the great, piled-up masses of grey hills. Farther on you descend to the



Bruin Poses for His Photograph. A Bit of the Road Between Vernon and Kelowna, Once an Indian Trail and Now a Smooth Highway Through Scenes of Surpassing Beauty.

buildings are in the course of erection at an estimated cost of \$200,000. It has a fine post office and customs house and many handsome churches of all denominations. The 30th Regiment British Columbia Horse has its headquarters at Vernon, with squadrons stationed at Kelowna, Enderby,



A Series of Slender Lakes Thread Their Way Through the Valley. It is Along the Line of These two, Kalamalka and Woods, That the Kettle Valley Railway is Constructing Its New Road Which Gives Promise of Being One of the Most Beautiful Scenic Routes in the Province.