

## The Colonist.

The Colonist Printing & Publishing Company, Limited, Liability  
27 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C.

## THE SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

One year ..... \$1.00  
Six months ..... .50  
Three months ..... .25  
Sent postpaid to Canada, United Kingdom and United States.

## PLANT PESTS.

Last winter's exceptionally cold weather did a great deal of good towards reducing the number of fruit and other pests, but there is a good deal yet to be done. The tent caterpillars are in evidence, not quite as strongly as they were a year ago, but at the same time in altogether too great numbers. It is the duty of every one, upon whose premises these tent caterpillars are, to see that they are not now, at least very soon. There are other pests, some of them being in the form of gnawing insects, which are to be on the watch for these and exterminate them in every way; and when we say garden, a grub may seem a harmless sort of thing, but it is not. It may look as if it were doing no harm, but it is a pest, and it is while it is a grub, but most of these creatures turn into something with wings and then they go everywhere. We urge that the people of Victoria and vicinity, and every place where upon plant pests of every kind. If we do so, we can keep our trees and gardens comparatively clear of them.

## CAREFUL FARMING

In view of the cost of clearing land on Vancouver Island, it is of great importance that as much of the possible cleared land as possible should be made of it after it is cleared. Cleared land represents most of a farmer's capital stock, and if it is not made of it, just so much of his capital is non-representative. Throughout America we are extremely prodigal of cleared land. In the United States the land devoted to tillage and pasture amounts to something like eight times the amount of the population. In Canada it is somewhat less. In France it is one acre per head. It may be said that the United States and Canada are large exporters of farm and live stock produce, which is true, but at the same time both countries are large importers of the same classes of goods, so that if a balance were struck, the difference would not be as largely in favor of the exports as most of us would be inclined to think. France imports great quantities of farm produce, but she also exports great quantities, so that her position is not at all so very different from that of the United States and Canada. The secret of the less per capita cultivated area lies in the fact that French farmers are exceedingly careful cultivators. By carelessness in the use of land both space and time are lost, and the loss of area is much larger than is generally supposed. Fencing is one source of loss. In some places the practice is to fence the pastures and not the tillage fields. The fences are removed when the pastures are changed. In such places, and this is especially evident in the Province of the Maritime, the land is cultivated almost up to the wagon tracks, in the highway range. This plan may not be everywhere feasible, but the use of wire fences is reducing the loss to a minimum. It is also reducing the expense of maintaining fences.

An American writer once estimated that the cost of building and maintaining farm fences most of which are unnecessary, was greater every year than the national debt of the United States at the time when the indebtedness of that country was at its highest mark. The too common practice of selling to clear a field thoroughly is another source of loss. A few stumps which could be easily removed with a little powder, will often take a very large percentage of the tillable area of a field, as well as render the work of cultivation more difficult. The same is true, though to a smaller degree, of isolated rocks. If you spend a hundred dollars in clearing an acre that dred dollars in the first place fifty dollars and by leaving a few stumps reduce your tillage area, you are really costing you at the rate of \$177.50. There is a great loss of area because of bushes, which are allowed to grow up after land has been cleared. As one drives out into the country around Victoria, it is a surprise to see how much land that was very costly to clear, has been allowed to grow up.

Time is lost, and the results of much labor and expense also, in too many cases through lack of drainage. An impression prevails among some people that in a country where the summers are dry, drainage is not only unnecessary, but it will be injurious through making the land too dry. This is a mistake. There is only a certain amount of water that can be drained out of the soil, namely that which is not retained by capillary attraction. All other water in the soil is worse than useless, and if it can be got rid of so much the better. If drains were put in the land as close as they could be together, they would not draw out one drop of water that capillary attraction could retain, that is they could not take away any that is needed for the development of plant life. Instead of draining leading to drought, as we sometimes hear it stated even now, it is a safeguard against it, because it makes the land warmer, and in consequence the roots of plants penetrate more deeply than they otherwise would and thereby reach the moist soil to which the heat of the sun only penetrates to a limited degree. Time is saved by drainage in the spring; time is gained by it in the autumn.

By the proper use of little patches of ground that might otherwise lie idle, a farmer can very greatly improve his daily living by adding sundry small items to his bill of fare, which people in cities have to pay for at pretty good prices. One of the things, which assist in creating discontent among young people on the farm, is the absence of little delicacies. Of substantial foods there is always enough to spare, but of the extras, which make so much difference, there is often a lack. This ought not to be, and need not be, if due attention is paid to the utilization of small areas which yield nothing but waste land upon them. In brief, where land is expensive, it ought to be fully utilized. That is the only way to make farming pay. The time is coming when this will be better appreciated on Vancouver Island than it is today. This will be a country of small well-tilled farms, rather than one of extensive ranches, with acres of waste land upon them.

## A NEW RAILWAY.

An illustration of how little Canada is understood by some Canadians is afforded by an article in the Montreal Witness in which a railway to Arctic Canada is described. The proposed line is from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, which is on the Athabasca River south of the 54th parallel of latitude, or about as far north as the head of Portland Canal. The Witness says that the country that far north is excellent for settlement, which is not much of a new discovery, seeing that it has been successfully grown for the last quarter of a century at Fort Vermilion, which is fully a hundred miles further north than Fort McMurray. The railway will be about two hundred and fifty miles long. It will afford a means of reaching the great water system of the Mackenzie. Between Fort McMurray and the Arctic there is only a short distance on the Athabasca and the Mackenzie that is untraversable, so that it will be possible to provide ready means of transportation to the Arctic ocean. Not very far north of Fort McMurray, the Athabasca flows into the lake of the same name, from which a great navigable river flows to Great Slave Lake, a vast fresh water sea, which some people say is as large as the ocean. It stretches away to the eastward towards what are called "the Barren Islands." Miners' interests around this lake are very promising. The shores of the lake itself are not very fertile, but in many places they are heavily timbered. A great timber belt extends from the north shore of the lake to the south, and the body of water, known as Great Bear Lake. Yesterday morning the Colonist had a paragraph telling of explorations being undertaken by the way of Chesterfield Inlet, which is an extension westward from Hudson's Bay. The view of finding a waterway by which the Mackenzie system can be reached. The existence of such a waterway has been reported for over a century. It would probably connect with Great Slave Lake. At any rate, the land distance to be covered between the head of Chesterfield Inlet and the lake would not be very great, so that in the event of the saving of time, being regarded as of the greatest importance, it is within the range of possibility that during the summer months, one day sail to the head of the Inlet, where connection will be made with a line to Great Slave Lake, on which fast steamers will ply to connect with an extension of the proposed railway. This is not any more a suggestion, but a fact. The Canadian Pacific was thought to be forty years ago, or the Hudson's Bay route was regarded ten years ago.

## THE PEACE OF EUROPE

Notwithstanding a great deal of loose talk in the German press and on the part of German public men of the second class, there is a feeling abroad in Germany in favor of a full understanding with England, and a growing impression that the peace alone can the peace of Europe be preserved. While admitting this, German writers go on to point out that their country is of such tremendous strength that it has nothing to fear from any source whatever. Thus we find Delbruck saying in Le Petit Parisien: "We are too powerful to wish for anything but peace." He also said that Germany is one of the "plethora of power" and was a danger to the equilibrium of the world. This is a boastful statement, but it is not without some foundation. Germany has yet to try her strength against a nation fully equipped for war. Her defeat of France has made her vain of her prowess. It is true that during the last three years and more which have elapsed since Sedan, the utmost energy of the nation has been exerted to create an invincible army, a powerful fleet; but these gigantic preparations for war have yet to be maintained.

There is a marked change in German comment upon the proposal of the British premier for the limitation of armaments presented at The Hague Peace Conference. A week or two ago it was impossible to find a man in Germany who did not take the position that this was intended as a blow at his nation and plan on the part of England to isolate the Continental power. Now a German paper says that Prince Bulow's very own proposal to consider a suggestion of disarmament may have the effect of stimulating these elements in the United Kingdom which are opposed to the proposal of the premier, and that Germany would lose rather than gain thereby. The organ of the South German Liberals thinks it the duty of the government to list the proposals to England's proposals, and demonstrate their impracticability. If that can be done, yet another path is opened to the hands of the enemies of Germany and paving the way for her complete isolation.

On the whole the European situation looks decidedly more favorable than it did a few weeks ago. No one seems to suspect the Kaiser of any desire to engage in war, but at the same time every one appears to think that he will employ all the means in his power to place the nation, over which he rules, in a position to maintain the policy of Europe. German writers seem to think the only obstacle in the way of his complete success is the exceptional ability of His Britannic Majesty.

## THE OMINECA

A report of a rich gold strike in Omineca comes from Edmonton. This will surprise no one. What is known as Omineca is the region on the side of the Rocky mountains in which the head of the Peace river takes its rise. The Finlay, flowing from the northwest, and the Parlane, flowing from the southeast, unite to form the Peace just west of the mountains. On the tributaries of the Parlane, notably Manson and Germansen creeks, there were good washings some years ago, which were worked as far as they could be with the available appliances. There are known to be large bodies of auriferous gravel by hydraulic process. Distance from communications, and other causes, which would have been for the hindrance but for the carrying on of operations as any other. On the Finlay river there is a noted deposit of such gravel known as Pete Toy's bar, out of which the Finlay has been working for some time, and upon which mining was stopped only because the primitive method of handling the gravel available at such a point at that time rendered work not very profitable. The country has been prospectively prospected, and those who know it best will be the least surprised if the Edmonton report proves to be correct.

One reason why this region is not better known is the place. Miners are given to "stampedes." They are engaged in what is fairly profitable work, when word comes in that a big strike has been made somewhere else.

## Disinfect Everywhere and Know It.

"HYDROCRESOL" is not an odorless disinfectant. It imparts a pleasant odor to the atmosphere; kills disease germs and purifies everything. Use it for the kennels, chicken coops, backyards, sinks, and also try a little in your bath; a few drops in your toothwash, or use it in the proportions stated on the label, for bathing cuts, etc. It has a universal use. Sold wholesale and retail by THOS. SHOTBOLT, PIONEER DRUGGIST, No. 55 JOHNSON ST., VICTORIA. 25c and 50c a bottle.

The fact that it may be hundreds of miles away, and that to get there involves the sacrifice of what he has already in hand does not carry much weight with the pioneer prospector and miner. To him faraway grvels are always golden, and he will pick up his outfit and start to the uttermost parts of the earth at a day's notice and without any very great amount of evidence that he has a chance of finding anything better than cer miner, who was in Omineca in the old days. "If I had just remained where I was, and been content with what I was getting, I would be a rich man now, instead of having barely enough to keep me without working, and the same is true of many I know, some of whom are not nearly as well off as I am. Then he went on to tell what has just been said about placer miners. He assured the Colonist that he was expecting any day to hear that some one had "struck it rich" in Omineca.

There is undoubtedly mineralized rock in place in the Omineca district. A very fine specimen of galena was brought out by the prospector a few years ago. Only casual prospecting for metallic ores has been done in the district, but it would be true to say that none had been done at all in a systematic way, for what was the use in finding rich ore when it was impossible to get machinery to the deposit? Things will shortly be changed in this respect, and we look for the Omineca to play a very important part in the industrial progress of the province.

## A GREAT VALLEY

A great structural valley extends from north to southeast this side of the Rocky mountains. The reported discovery of rich placer gold in Omineca, elsewhere referred to, and the construction of the Kootenay Central, mentioned in yesterday's Colonist, are calculated to direct attention to this valley. If you take a map of British Columbia and look at the southeast corner, you will see the Kootenay river flowing southward, following the Kootenay to its head and crossing a line which the Panamint is supposed to be the source of the Columbia. Following the Columbia down stream, you will find that the Canoe river flows into it from the northwest. Ascending the Canoe to its head, and crossing the divide, you come to the head waters of the Fraser, where the river emerges from the Yellow Head pass. Going down the Fraser, you come to the head of the Peace, and here is the valley which is called Crooked river. This will take you down to Lake McLeod in which the Panamint has its source. 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