

VANCOUVER ISLAND'S

VANCOUVER ISLAND, and its strategic position on the British Pacific seaboard, have, owing to recent developments in the field of transportation, suddenly assumed a more conspicuous position in the public eye, and it is universally agreed that the time is not distant when it must, of sheer necessity, be given rail connection with the Mainland of British Columbia. It has recently been declared by those competent to speak with considerable authority, that the industrial progress of the island has reached a point where further expansion and development of the marvellous natural resources depend upon securing better transportation facilities. It is the purpose of this article to present a general survey of the situation, which may be pertinent on an occasion when the question of securing improved connections with the Mainland is very much to the fore.

The extreme length of Vancouver Island is 285 miles from Comox Point to Cape Scott, and its greatest breadth is 80 miles. Its area is 16,400 square miles, about 10,000,000 square acres, of which about one-third is practically unexplored. Separated from the Mainland of British Columbia and the State of Washington by Queen Charlotte Sound and the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca, Vancouver Island stands in about the same geographical relation to the continent of North America as England does to the continent of Europe. It forms a natural rampart to Great Britain's possessions bordering on the North Pacific, guarding the mouths of the Fraser and Columbia rivers and commanding the entrance to the Straits. From a defensive and a strategic point of view, Vancouver Island is the key to the North Pacific, and her position should make her the absolute mistress of the commerce of these waters. Lying between the 49th and 61st parallels of north

latitude, her shores are accessible from Japan, China, India and Australia, by the short "northern route," free from violent storms and more healthful than the southern, landing the cargoes from the Orient in a cooler temperature and affording a shorter haul across the continent to the eastern trade centers and the Atlantic seaboard.

The one physical disability under which Vancouver Island lies is the circumstance that it is separated from the Mainland of British Columbia by a small strip of water termed Seymour Narrows, and it is to devise ways and means of removing this disability, in so far as it may be feasible, that public attention is now being directed to an extent never before manifested. The Narrows proper are about 800 yards wide and about a mile and a half long, though Discovery Pass, to which it is the entrance, is about 23 miles long. At flood tide the tides run from six to twelve knots an hour, and at ebb from six to eight, the flood and ebb running equal intervals of about six hours each, with about ten minutes still water. Valdez Island, lying at the entrance to Bute Inlet and forming the right shore of this channel, is a finely timbered island, with a number of logging camps upon it, and some well-to-do ranchers back from the shore. The Elucataw or Back Narrows, of almost equal notes among navigators, on the other side of the island, are quite rapid. It was to this point where it was originally proposed to bring the line of the Canadian Pacific railway, through the

which are valleys, some of them of considerable area, and with rich soil inviting cultivation. The coast, being protected from the ocean is less bold in outline, and the slope from the water to the mountains is moderate, and the country is fairly level. Everywhere except on the highest summits and the steepest declivities, the country is forest-clad, and a great part of the growth being exceedingly heavy.

Not even a close approximation can be given of the extent of arable land on Vancouver Island. Very much of the surface has not yet been explored, and a still larger area has only been examined in a very superficial way. No systematic effort has been made to ascertain the possible tillage area, if any, of the island, and the explorations made by the Canadian Pacific railway company in the southern part of the island are exceptional, but the partial results reported show that the arable area will be found to be much greater than has usually been supposed. There are two classes of tillage land on the island. One is heavily timbered. It would

be poor policy to encourage the destruction of the valuable forest for the sake of converting such into farms. The soil is often exceedingly fertile, and the crops will well repay the great cost of fitting the land for cultivation, but the value of the standing timber is so great that the effort ought rather to be to preserve it than to encourage its destruction. In the course of

time, after the timber has been used for commercial purposes, thousands of acres will be converted into farms. The other class of land is lightly timbered. It can be cleared without very great expense, and the timber is of no exceptional fertility, consisting of alder, birch, and poplar, and is naturally free from timber, for the reason that the climate is so favorable to vegetable growth, and because of the amount of rainfall the danger of destruction by fire is so slight, that trees will grow anywhere where they can gain a foothold.

There are parts of Canada where the farmer will go first and the capitalist will come after him, but in Vancouver Island, as a rule, the capitalist must precede the farmer. There are numerous places on the island where pioneer settlers can establish themselves with advantage, when once the country is opened by railways; but in most cases it will be necessary for capital to inaugurate some kind of industry, to provide a local market for produce, or to ensure the maintenance of such communication with outside markets as will enable a farmer to reach them with his crops. This reference is to the undeveloped parts of the island. Many localities near the centers of population are now available to persons desiring to engage in agriculture. For dairy farming there is hardly a better country. Cattle do well out of doors all the year round, except in the stormiest winter days, when, as occasionally happens, there is snow on the ground. It would, of course, be exceedingly poor policy to permit the whole twelve months, but corn, oats, hay and roots can be grown to any extent as supplementary fodder. The land is too valuable for other purposes to warrant its use to any great extent in grain growing. It is cheaper for the dairyman to buy bran and other mill products for his cattle. If more scientific methods of farming were resorted to, and by the use of manure and roots the capacity of the land to maintain dairy animals was fully utilized, the island might be made the greatest dairy region in the world. Recently the attention of the people has been much directed to fruit culture.

The advantages of Vancouver Island in this regard are only now being at all widely appreciated, and during the last year or two there has been an increasing influx of people. Men, who have accumulated a competency in

the Pacific lose much of their burden before they pass over the summit. On the higher levels there is always considerable snow in the winter, but in all places where the altitude is less than, say, 800 feet above the sea, the snow fall rarely exceeds a few inches, and it only remains on a few days for a day or two as a rule. Days when the thermometer registers freezing weather are very few, and many consecutive hours are very few, when the temperature falls below zero.

For mixed farming Vancouver Island is admirably adapted, all kinds of crops yielding luxuriantly. Next to fruit culture, dairying is likely to become the most important branch of what is now done in this line is only a small fraction of what may be accomplished. As yet there is very little "intense" farming on Vancouver Island. So beautiful is nature in regard to crops, that to attempt to improve upon the most ordinary methods of agriculture seems unnecessary. By no means the best results are obtained from the soil by any but a very small minority of instances. If less dependence were placed upon natural pasturage at all seasons of the year, the cultivation of the different varieties of fodder plants were more generally practiced and greater economy used and exhibited in the saving of barnyard manures, the productivity of Vancouver Island in the finished products of the farm, such as butter, cheese, eggs, poultry, beef cattle and pork, might be vastly augmented. In no part of the temperate zone are the conditions more favorable to agriculture than on this island.

Other resources of Vancouver Island are timber, coal and the various metalliferous ores, limestone, building stone and fisheries. These will be more particularly referred to in the chapters dealing with those industries. It is sufficient to say here that they present a unique combination of natural wealth. The 16,000 square miles included in the island simply teem with these resources, which everywhere form the foundation of great prosperity. In this regard it is one of the most remarkable of islands.

On "Vancouver Island and Its Resources": "So far as we have been able to ascertain Vancouver Island has probably more mineral to the square inch than any other section of the world. We have along the east coast a strip of land extending from Cowichan up to Salmon river, which comprises the coal measures. Of course where there is coal we do not look

into the interior of the island. I cut a trail from Ladysmith for the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway Co., 16 miles into the interior of this section where the average runs up very high indeed. There is a place up on Robertson River, Cowichan Lake, I am satisfied that several thousands of acres there will average 300,000 feet to the acre. They have been logging on Cowichan Lake, and there is a number of places where the timber trees grow up like candles and form an umbrella top, without a single limb below. On the south side of Cowichan Lake we have enormous acreage, amounting probably to one thousand million feet. I am only giving these figures very roughly in order just to convey to your minds some idea of the magnitude of our resources there. Then up in the neighborhood of Comox the Chemainus Lumber Co. have a very fine block there of 20,000 acres, and others—all averaging about 50,000 feet to the acre. All this has not been touched yet. On the West Coast instead of fir we have cedar, and there is considerable cedar scattered all through the timber limits on Cowichan Lake and Comox, and to the north. But the cedar decreases as we go northward, and here we have more spruce. I have not been through the Klahan portion of the country, but reports have been made by Mr. Fry and Mr. Gray. They report considerable areas of cedar and spruce.

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large lenses that have been formed by the replacement of the shists. Then on Texada Island we have bodies of copper ore. Taking the West Coast, we have copper and iron found by the San Juan valley—quite promising deposits of both iron and copper. Then following down the coast, we have copper and iron occurring at the Sarrat river. Then we have copper and iron ore on Copper Island, and close to Sechart we have found cinnabar, an ore of mercury. Passing along the coast, we have found iron ore up on Massie Island, in running one one of our survey lines we had to stake it off, as the magnetic attraction was so great that the compass turned

completely around. There is no doubt that there is a large body of ore in that neighborhood. Then I arrived at Kennedy Lake, a few miles up Elk river, they have been finding some important deposits. There are deposits of iron ore quite large in extent, also gold-bearing quartz with pyrites. Then up Deer Creek copper has been found. On Sidney Inlet we have important copper deposits. So you see we have copper and iron found almost every few miles along the West Coast. On the East Coast you can understand the difficulty of having first to cross the fringe or strip of coal measures, rendering it difficult to get to the backbone of Vancouver Island. It is along the centre of the island where we will find the most of our minerals, because it is along there where the old series of rocks crop out to a greater extent, also they are better exposed, as they raise their summits to the sky, and are free from vegetation. That is one of the difficulties we find on Vancouver Island—the amount of vegetation and the amount of drift that has covered everything over and in addition the extreme rank undergrowth that we have to penetrate.

Taking up the timber question there is hardly an acre on Vancouver Island that is not covered with timber. The only place where there is no timber is where water has covered the ground and made a swamp. But wherever there is a chance for a tree to grow it does grow. Of course, the best timber is found in the valleys, but in some places the timber clings to the mountains wonderfully. I found fir trees growing 2,000 feet high on the Beaufort range. As a rule, the fir reaches an elevation of 2,000 feet but in some places the fir we have hemlock. We have perhaps the largest belt of timber in and around the Salmon River country. That is

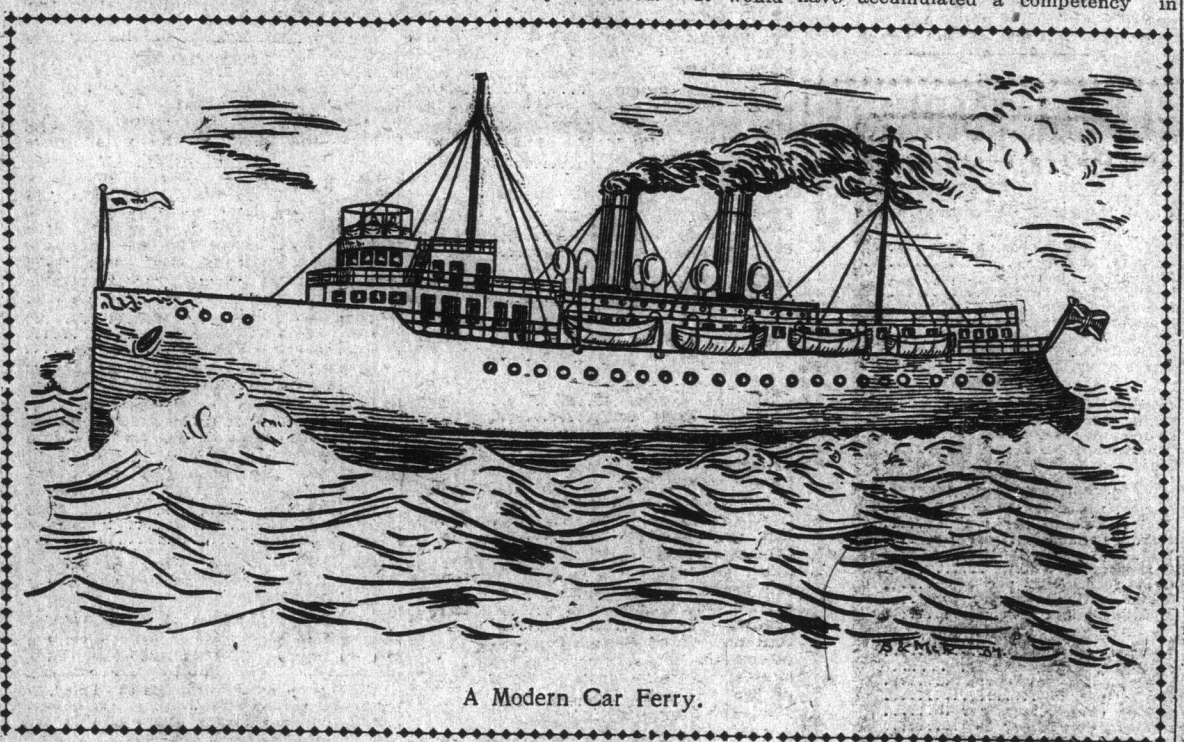
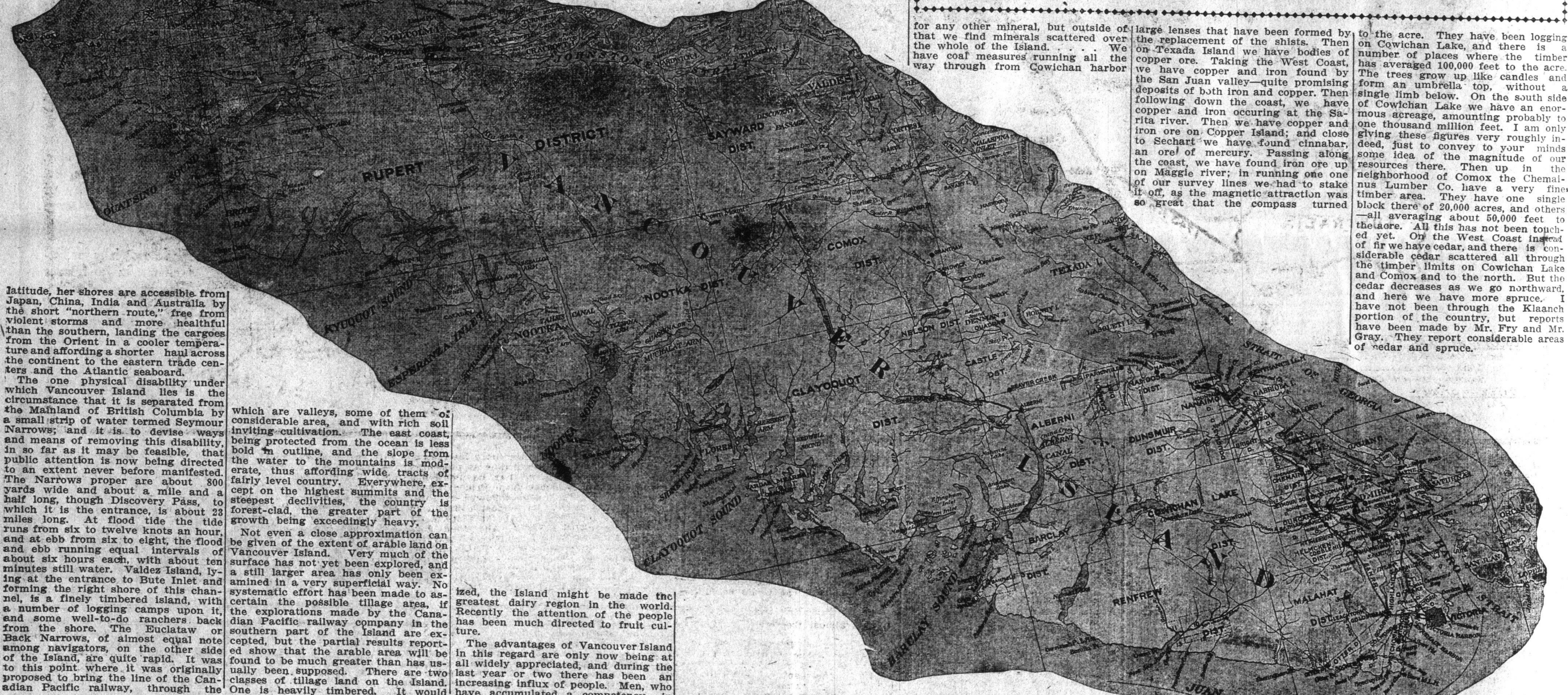
very large area, and the very finest timber, running approximately 500 feet to the acre. That is what the best timber on Vancouver Island averages. We have some special places where the average runs up very high indeed. There is a place up on Robertson River, Cowichan Lake, I am satisfied that several thousands of acres there will average 300,000 feet

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16R Ferry Steamer Scotia

Car Ferry of Intercolonial Railway, Straits of Canso.



A Modern Car Ferry.

Yellowhead Pass down Bute Inlet and connecting with a line of railway to Victoria by bridging the Narrows, the recently proposed route of the Canadian Northern.

Structurally, Vancouver Island is a huge mountain, whose sides show to some extent the softening processes of time. It is shaped like a rude weaver's shuttle; that is, its length is

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the prairie country, are learning that on Vancouver Island they can find conditions which make life easy and comfortable. The factor which impresses people most strongly is the climate. This varies somewhat according to locality. For example, there is much more rain on the west side of the central mountain chain than on the east side of it. The moisture-laden winds

Speaking at a meeting at the city hall on the evening of February 10, 1907, W. J. Sutton, M. E., said during the course of a very interesting lec-

Only a very small part of the island is occupied. Nine-tenths of the people live upon a strip along the coast at the southeast end. This strip, which is by no means confined to the settled, is about one hundred miles long, and certainly not more than five miles wide on an average. On it are situated Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, its suburb, Esquimalt, Nanaimo, Ladysmith and Cumberland, Duncan, Comox and in fact every important center of population with the exception of Alberni, a fine agricultural and mining district on the west coast. A few settlements, none of them numbering more than a few hundred people, are located at other points on the west coast. Less than one-sixteenth of the whole island is occupied by actual settlers, and of this sixteenth not one half is actually utilized. The population of the island is nearly 60,000.

It is only during very recent years that great attention has been paid to the development of the resources of this part of Canada, exclusive of coal and timber. A marked change is now in progress. New enterprises are being started; new districts are being examined and very great attention is being paid to making known the advantages of the island as a residential place. Already the fruits of this work are becoming apparent, and it is beyond all question that it will become not only the seat of extensive agricultural, mining and manufacturing industries, but also a great tourist resort, and the home of thousands of people of means who wish to reside in a region where the climatic conditions are of the most favorable nature and where the natural surroundings are attractive.

Gold and gold-bearing quartz have been found from one end of Vancouver Island to the other. There is an important belt of slates from Goldstream through to San Juan. There is a large area there which is auriferous, and may state that gold has been found in small quantities in almost every mountain stream leading into the interior. Considerable gold was found on China Creek, also on Bear river. . . . We have considerable gold in the black sand all along the northern shore of Vancouver Island. In fact, all the streams head- ing into the central portion of Vancouver Island contain more or less gold. The most important finds so far have been copper. I look upon the "into the central portion of Vancouver Island" as a place for copper deposits of great excellence. The best locations so far have been the Mount Slicker deposit. . . . There is a belt of shist crossing from Puffin Harbor to Maple Bay, and extending away

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