

"parts of the country, it is pleasing to know that the general character of the inhabitants is not so by any means. It may be said, on the contrary, that in no part of our Majesty's dominions are there to be found among the humble ranks of society, more intelligence, better manners, purer morals than in the remotest parts of the Highlands and Islands from the Mull of Kintyre to the Skaw of Mist in Shetland.

"Sec. 340: * * * It would be difficult to replace them by another race of equal ability and worth.

"Sec. 341: It is not only in regard to fishing that the Crofting and Cottar population have a peculiar value. They constitute a natural basis for the naval defence of the country, a sort of defence which cannot be extemporised, and the value of which, in possible emergencies, can hardly be overrated. The sea-faring people of the Highlands and Islands contribute at this moment 4431 men to the Royal Naval Reserve, a number equivalent to the crews of seven armoured war steamers of the first class, and which, with commensurate inducements, could be greatly increased. It may be added that most of the men incorporated in corps of militia and volunteers would be able to serve ashore and afloat with equal efficiency.

"Sec. 343: The Crofting and Cottar population of the Highlands and Islands, small though it may be, is a nursery of good workers and good citizens for the whole Empire. In this respect the stock is exceptionally valuable. By sound physical constitution, native intelligence and good moral training, it is particularly fitted to recruit the people of our industrial centres, who, without such help from wholesome sources in rural districts, would degenerate under the influences of bad lodging, unhealthy occupation and enervating habits. It cannot be indifferent to the whole nation, constituted as the nation now is, to possess within its borders a people, hardy, skillful, intelligent and

"prolific as an ever-flowing fountain of renovating life."

I can hardly give a higher or better authority than the foregoing, and we might incidentally mention that the daughters of these hardy fishermen would become excellent domestic helps in a country whose chief dependence for that purpose is now so largely drawn from the almond-eyed Mongolian.

Hitherto I have dealt with the project mainly as a speculation having a very wide field for successful development. I now desire to regard it as a necessity, not less national than and second only in importance to the building of the C. P. R.

All the available evidence goes to show that the west coast of British Columbia has wonderful piscatorial as well as other material resources. Owing to peculiar conditions it is well nigh impossible for private or non-state-aided enterprise to succeed in developing the fisheries, which, basing an estimate on the wealth of the Atlantic Coast waters, should maintain a population wholly employed in fishing of about 75,000 persons. The fisheries being situated far north and the principal market being thousands of miles away, it requires a resident fishing population, a huge system of cold storage, and a line of fast steamers to make a success of it. To ensure success, provision must be made for sending a regular and continuous supply of fish, assorted and in prime condition, to the markets of the east. Upon this everything hinges as a purely commercial venture. These enormous facilities, if I may be permitted the expression, involving such a minutiae of expensive detail and generally such a large outlay of money, requires "enormous" capital, more, in fact, than private enterprise can afford or is even likely to invest in the undertaking.

But there is still another factor, which has almost been entirely overlooked, and one which, in these days of combination of interests, must be