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## THE CROFTER SCHEME OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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No project affecting so wide interests is less known or more imperfectly understood than what is referred to in British Columbia as the Crofter Scheme. This does not relate to the general Crofter Scheme of colonization which has been before the Imperial Parliament for some years, and which has for its special object the relief of the congested Crofter districts of Scotland, one or two colonies, under which have been planted in the Canadian North-west. Although affiliated the enterprise, so far as British Columbia is concerned, is commercial as well as colonizing in its scope, and as such is quite distinct. At the outset, the idea of locating Crofters in British Columbia originated in the parent movement referred to, and had for its promoter a gentleman whose zeal in the cause earned for him the sobriquet of "Crofter Begg." Subsequently, however, the enterprise took a more definite and practical form in the hands of men who saw how the interests of the Crofters could be brought into effect in developing the deep sea fisheries of the west coast of this Province, and at the same time accomplish the other end in view. The Crofters, as their name indicates, are essentially a pastoral class, but situated as some of them were on the bleak and inhospitable shores of their native land, they became a fishing population as well. As a class they became noted as daring and skilful navigators in

fishing smacks and small boats, and acquired not only a wonderful knowledge of local conditions, and the habits of the fish inhabiting their waters, but great skill in fishing.

The west coast of British Columbia presented conditions akin to those of the west coast of Scotland, its waters being rich in the economic and food fishes, and requiring just such a class of fishermen for the development of deep sea fishing, the suggestion was a natural one that the men who lived in the latter place, and were to the man or born, would more easily and successfully adapt themselves to this industry in British Columbia than would any other class of fishermen who could be selected. Here was a new and undeveloped field of wealth; waters teeming with halibut, cod, "skil," herring, salmon, oolochan, dog-fish, etc. only waiting for skilled hands and willing hearts for its development, and a commercial organization as an adjunct to direct the work and find a market for the fish. The time was ripe for colonizing a number of persons whose discontent at home was not only well known, but a matter which had called for action on the part of the Imperial Government. When the Crofter Scheme was first mooted in British Columbia it found but little favor. In the first place, on general principles, a colonizing scheme was likely to be a failure, and had almost invariably proved to be so in the past.