

# Awakened Interest in Land Settlement

**Department of Lands Report Shows Largest Number of Pre-emptions Ever Issued, While 884,000 Acres Were Added to Lands Available for Pre-emption.**

The report of Hon. W. R. Ross, Minister of Lands, shows reasonable progress for 1914, although the back payments on land are discouragingly large. The most notable event is the large number of pre-emptions taken out, making a total of 4,304, the largest in the history of the Province, and betokens an increasing interest in agriculture.

The report in part is as follows:—

By reference to the statistics of the head office of the Lands Branch it will be seen that the revenue of the head office for the year was \$589,687.36, as against \$946,944.23 for the previous year. Of this sum, \$449,050.53 was brought to account as land-sales; the two other items of importance being \$54,471.26 as land rentals and \$57,700 as fees received for licences under the "Coal and Petroleum Act." Under both of these headings there was a marked decrease from the revenues of the past year, due chiefly to the inability of lessees and licensees to meet their payments.

Land-sales for the year throughout the Province totalled 45,036 acres, of which 5,403 acres represented the sale of surveyed lands and 39,632 acres the sale of unsurveyed lands. These figures indicate the smallest sales of Crown lands since 1904, and the sales for the previous year aggregated 421,262 acres.

On December 31st, 1914, there was outstanding as deferred payments and arrears in connection with surveyed lands approximately \$5,804,260, and in the matter of lands remaining unsurveyed the arrears have been estimated at \$3,216,788, and on account of townsites and suburban lands the deferred payments and arrears amount to \$3,178,059. These figures represent the amount due on account of principal; no interest being shown.

In the matter of land settlement, greater progress was made during the year than during any former period in the history of the Province; the issue of pre-emption records having reached the total of 4,304—a marked increase over the previous year, and a steady growth since 1905, for which year the figures were 955 records.

During the year 114,410 acres of reserved lands were opened to pre-emption entry. Of this acreage, approximately 90,000 acres represent lands which had been closed to pre-emption pending survey, and the remaining 23,710 acres represent logged lands which had been subdivided prior to opening for entry. These lands were divided into 979 pre-emptions, and at the openings 382 of the parcels were filed upon. The greatest demand was for the logged lands near the Coast, and, with the exception of the area opened in the vicinity of Kennedy Lake, on Vancouver Island, all the logged lands on the Coast were applied for on the first day on which they were opened to entry.

During the year 3,668 of the pre-emptions throughout the Province were inspected by officers of the Department with a view to securing compliance with the provisions of the "Land Act" as to occupation and improvement, with the result that 899 of the outstanding records were cancelled, chiefly on the ground of non-residence. In many of these cases the delinquent pre-emptors were given an opportunity of taking out new records for the lands formerly held by them.

A number of sales were held during the year of townsite property owned by the Province. The most important of these was the sale of lots in the townsites known as Fort George and Prince George, at which sales aggregating \$771,505 were made. Smaller sales were held at Quesnel, McBride and Clinton to meet such local demand as there was for town lots in these centres.

In the matter of surveys, there were 1,012,000 acres added to the surveyed area of the Province as the result of the 1914 season's work. Of this acreage, 100,000 acres represent lands already held under pre-emption, and 884,000 acres were added to the acreage available for pre-emption. The remaining 28,000 acres represent lands held under applications to purchase, in which cases the cost of survey becomes an added charge in connection with the land-purchase.

The results accomplished in surveys for 1914 are slightly in excess of the acreages surveyed in 1913. Since 1907 the total acreage surveyed by the Province is given at 4,895,910 acres, of which area 950,000 acres have been Crown-granted to pre-emptors or are held under pre-emption record; 250,000 acres are held in reserve for sale by public auction; 800,000 acres have been reserved for University purposes; 500,000 acres represent sales of various descriptions; and 2,395,910 acres remain available for pre-emption entry.

In the dry-farming experiments carried on during the year in Lillooet and Nicola Districts under the supervision of Professor W. J. Elliott, with a view to determining the agricultural values of large areas in the Interior, marked interest was manifested. From the report submitted covering the first year's practical work it is evident that very gratifying results were secured on the Lillooet Farm, but in the Nicola the grasshopper pest very seriously interfered with the experiments made.

[We will present at an early date a synopsis of Professor Elliott's report, which has a very important meaning to the agricultural development of the "dry belt."—Editor.]

## PRE-EMPTION RECORDS, ETC., 1914.

|                         | Pre-emption<br>Records | Certificates<br>of Improve-<br>ments | Certificates<br>of Purchase |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alberni .....           | 234                    | 114                                  | 144                         |
| Ashcroft .....          | 8                      | 1                                    | 2                           |
| Atlin .....             | 1                      | .....                                | 7                           |
| Barkerville .....       | 523                    | 73                                   | 87                          |
| Clinton .....           | 439                    | 41                                   | 81                          |
| Cranbrook .....         | 134                    | 9                                    | 21                          |
| Fairview .....          | 109                    | 27                                   | 35                          |
| Fernie .....            | 21                     | 5                                    | 13                          |
| Fort Fraser .....       | 444                    | 75                                   | 64                          |
| Golden .....            | 49                     | 8                                    | 10                          |
| Hazelton .....          | 117                    | 67                                   | 206                         |
| Kamloops .....          | 163                    | 69                                   | 33                          |
| Kaslo .....             | 7                      | 9                                    | 22                          |
| Nanaimo .....           | 26                     | 7                                    | 4                           |
| Nelson .....            | 54                     | 10                                   | 42                          |
| New Westminster .....   | 4                      | 5                                    | 6                           |
| Nicola .....            | 116                    | 19                                   | 27                          |
| Prince Rupert .....     | 418                    | 130                                  | 226                         |
| Revelstoke .....        | 5                      | 2                                    | 7                           |
| South Fort George ..... | 948                    | 190                                  | 187                         |
| Telegraph Creek .....   | 2                      | .....                                | 2                           |
| Vancouver .....         | 346                    | 74                                   | 320                         |
| Vernon .....            | 102                    | 61                                   | 61                          |
| Victoria .....          | 34                     | 6                                    | 198                         |
| Totals .....            | 4,304                  | 1,002                                | 1,805                       |