

WHAT BRITISH COLUMBIA OFFERS.

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Report of Lecture delivered by the Hon. J. H. Turner, Agent-General, at
the London Institute, Finsbury Circus, London,
27th. November, 1902.

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I have had the honour to be invited to read to-night a paper on the Province which I represent in Great Britain. It gives me great pleasure to do so, but if you expect a literary treat, such as you are accustomed to in this Institute, there will, I fear, be disappointment. My paper is more a plain talk and statement of facts about that western section of the Dominion of Canada.

Having now resided in England (my original home) for over twelve months, after having lived in British Columbia nearly forty years, I am impressed more and more, daily, by the unequal, I had almost said unfair, distribution of population in the world. Here, within an area of a few miles, you have crowded together, shoulder to shoulder, some five or six millions of human beings; the greater part of the vast number having apparently to worry and fret, toil and elbow one another for a living. One feels sometimes as if there is not room to breathe, that there cannot be air enough for the multitude, and if you go to the country you find large cities and towns everywhere showing similar conditions; whilst over there in the shining west lies the great Province that has so long been my home, with its vast spreading plains, grand mountain ranges, its beautiful lakes, rivers and fiords. A country over 600 miles long by 500 miles broad, with an area of 260,000,000 acres, yet with less than 200,000 inhabitants, whilst here in Greater London, with an area of about 440,000 acres, you have six and a half millions. There a country far larger than England, Wales and Scotland, and here one city with over thirty times as many people as there are in the whole of that land, which is greater than many kingdoms of old.

In Europe there is the difficulty of life on account of excess of inhabitants, whilst over there the country is suffering for the want of them. No doubt here, as well as everywhere else, people desire to improve their condition, to get on in the world. That being the fact, it is worth careful consideration whether it would not greatly add to the chances of improved conditions for many if they struck out for life in a new country—not a foreign country, not a country with a different language, or religion, or climate, except, perhaps, that the climate is better. I feel confident in my own mind that any young man with health, intelligence, ability and determination to work has a much better prospect before him in such a country than he has here, and with my knowledge of British Columbia I can truly say that I believe it is a highly desirable country for such men. At the same time, I do not advise anyone to emigrate without most careful consideration. It must not be forgotten that hard work is necessary in a new country, that disappointment and difficulties are there as well as here, yet I would not hesitate, if I were young and knew the conditions as I do, to try and build up a home there. I don't think that any part of the earth is fairer or better adapted for Britons.