

DOMINION OF CANADA, PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

GENERAL FEATURES.

The object of this pamphlet is to present in as concise and plain a form as possible, for the information of intending settlers, the leading features of the Province of British Columbia, with reference to Position, Harbours, Inland Waters, Climate, Resources, Minerals, Agriculture, Fisheries, and other facts of interest to the intending settler, and generally the conditions of settlement.

British Columbia, which entered the Canadian Confederation in 1871, is the most westerly of the Canadian Provinces. It has a coast line on the Pacific Ocean of about 600 miles, that is, in a straight line. If its almost innumerable indentations and bays were measured, the coast line would extend to several thousands of miles.

The area of the Province, according to the Census measurement, is 341,305 square miles. Its position on the American continent is one of great commercial importance, and its resources are in keeping with its position. If it were to be described from the characteristics of its climate, its mineral wealth, and its natural commercial relations, it might be said to be the Great Britain and California combined of the Dominion of Canada.

The Province is divided into two parts, the Islands, of which Vancouver is the principal, and the Mainland. Vancouver is about 300 miles long, with an average breadth of about sixty miles, containing an area of about 20,000 square miles.

British Columbia has numerous harbours and rivers, some of which are of importance, and all are remarkable for their bountiful, in fact, wonderful, supplies of fish. The scenery which it possesses is magnificently beautiful.

The climate on the coast is more equable and much milder in winter than in any other part of Canada; but as the mountains are ascended, greater cold prevails, with more snow, and the characteristics of greater dryness of atmosphere which mark the climate of the interior of the continent are found.

The population of British Columbia, by the Census of 1881, did not exceed 459, of which 25,661 were Indians. This comparatively sparse population is due to the hitherto isolated position of the Province; but now that railway communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Dominion of Canada, is being rapidly pushed forward to completion by a route which offers the easiest gradients, and the most important natural commercial advantages of any possible line across the continent of America, the inducements the Province offers to settlers are beginning to attract the attention, as well of the emigrating classes of the Old World, as of the emigrating classes of this continent; and population is already beginning to flow rapidly in. It is beyond doubt that the percentage of increase which will be shown at the next decennial census, will be a statistical fact to excite men's wonder.