

# THE WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST

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## Our True Policy.

Vancouver Island, perhaps we would be justified in saying British Columbia, cannot be regarded as an agricultural country, in the broader sense of the term. By this we do not mean to deny that it possesses much fertile land and a climate eminently adapted to agricultural production. But what we mean to say is this, that taking the relative areas of cultivable and non-cultivable land and taking the contiguity and relations of the former to the seaports, it is warrantable to conclude that British Columbia will not become a large exporter of agricultural products. In other words, she will never owe her greatness and her wealth to the outflow of her superabundant agricultural productions. That she will be enabled to supply her neighbors with certain articles is not to be doubted. If we turn to stock-farming it will be found that this Colony has no rival anywhere. Apropos of this branch of our subject, it may be remarked that a gentleman of many years' experience in California and elsewhere, possessing a thoroughly practical knowledge of the subject, has just returned from the country watered by Nichols Lake, where he has selected homesteads for himself and friends. This gentleman tells us—and it is really nothing new—that no part of the world has seen unhusked stock, or, indeed, the most tenderly cared-for stock, looking so well as in British Columbia. He saw thousands of herds of the finest cattle, looking fat and sleek as Marbs, after having foraged through the winter for their food and never having come under shelter other than that provided by nature. To some this may appear extreme. But we know that it is not so. The abundant and singularly nutritious grasses of the interior keep cattle rolling fat all the year round; and it is not unworthy of remark that the meat of animals raised upon these grasses possesses properties eminently favorable to curing. It is asserted by competent judges that the cured beef of the interior is superior to that of any other country. Under conditions so highly favorable and with the ten per cent. protection of the Canadian Customs Tariff thrown around that branch of industry, there would appear to be little doubt that at no distant day this Colony will become pre-eminent for its beef and will be a large exporter of the same. Nor is it unreasonable to conclude that she will also become a large exporter of dairy produce. But, to revert to the proposition with which we set out, in so far as those articles are concerned which fall strictly under the head of agricultural production, we do not limit the opinion that British Columbia will ever become a large exporter, while, East of the Cascade Range, there is, doubtless, a very large area of fertile land, for the most part ready for the plough, still it must be present to the reader's reflection that the cost of moving the produce of that section of country to the seaboard, the only apparent outlet for it, would, under the most advanced modes of transport, be a heavy tax upon the toil of the husbandman. It, however, we were asked whether British Columbia is an agricultural country. In the more restricted sense which implies home supply, we should feel bound to return a different answer. Taking the Colony as a whole, we are led to believe that it has within itself the capacity to supply the wants of its own people, even when they shall be numbered by the millions of the future. By this it is not to be understood that foreign food will absolutely cease to be eaten. There are geographical and commercial reasons which will always forbid such a condition. The seaboard communities will always buy more or less foreign produce, but, taking the whole colony into account, it is preearable that, after the lapse of a few years, we shall not import more than we export, and shall thus be enabled to maintain something like an even balance as a self-feeding colony. The means follows that, because British Columbia cannot claim to be an agricultural country in the larger sense, it does not, therefore, present a tempting field for the profitable pursuit of that industry which underlies all assured prosperity, which is at once the most healthful and independent of all industries. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the very opposite condition does not in reality present itself in the Colony, whether a mathematical distribution of resources and a wise apportionment of capacity do not contribute to produce a condition which renders British Columbia a more profitable field for the agriculturist than could be the case, were it not the unbroken sweep of fertile prairie land resources are as varied as they are abundant. First think of its sea-food fishing-ground that are capable of feeding and rearing one third of Christendom.

Look at its mineral deposits; its coal-stores before which the commerce of all nations must come and kneel, which, in manufacture, must make Vancouver Island the England of the Pacific. Look at its huge mountains and cañons of the more desired minerals; its inexhaustible forests of matchless timber; and then see how all these vast and diverse resources react one upon the other so as to produce a combination of collective well-being such as few countries are capable of. Under these circumstances, what is our true fiscal policy? Shall we, by building up a wall of protection, force industry, into an unnatural channel or unduly into one channel, and thereby starve or paralyze all others? The true policy for Vancouver Island is free trade, cheap living, cheap labor, large communities and large manufactures. To attempt to force agriculture beyond its natural gait and proportions will be to dwarf and stifle other branches of industry which constitute a combined interest greater than agriculture can justly claim to be on this Island. We may be told that free trade is beyond our reach. There was a time when it was not; but the people, foolishly, as we think, threw it away. But if free trade is beyond our reach, which, however, we do not admit, the next best thing to it is presented for our acceptance. We allude to the Canadian Tariff, in all probability about to be accompanied by Reciprocity Treaty with the United States. Only let our people have free food and a free market, and it will be seen how resources, now dormant, because bound by an iron protection, will spring into active life and profitable development. Not will the agriculturist be the last to realize the beneficial influence of liberation from a mistaken system which has left him without a consuming population or a cash market. In truth, there is no class that would be more benefited by the change than that very class which blindly clings to a pseudo-protection. In order to be great this country must be free—to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.

County Court.

New Morrison vs. J. Murray.—Suit brought out to recover \$20 alleged due for labor done. The plaintiff was non-suited.

Flour.—Extra flour is selling in town at \$10 50 per barrel. Wheat goes off at 4 cents per pound, and other articles of daily consumption at like advanced rates.

How strange it seems that drought in California should cause a rise in the necessities of life in a foreign market so remote as this where the crops promise to be abundant. If when it jumps a little higher, Vancouver Island, the greatest, or with one, support a locomotive mill, will draw its supplies of flour from the interior of the mainland.

The following information about the river might not be uninteresting to some. As it comes from a mind, one who has been over the route more than once, and should you consider it worth inserting in your paper, by all means do so:

The ice has broken up and the river is clear. The head of tide water is about forty miles from the settlement. The head of steam-boat navigation is at Marmora's landing, about 60 miles from here, and the head of navigation of a steamer drawing seven or eight feet is about thirty miles from the above settlement or harbor, at the mouth of the North branch of the Skeena River.

The distance for canoe travelling to the Forks of the Skeena is one hundred and eighty miles. From Babine Lake to Tashia Lake (about 35 miles) to Cross Lake (about 10 miles) to Babine Lake, about ten miles.

The mine is now a good pack-trail from Babine to Hazelton miles, and thence sixteen miles down the main river, a beautiful smooth river, on rates, or by improved contrivance, to Hazelton Creek.

The Hazelton River is navigable by steamers with a load of 1000 tons, and holds out for the

Other side the passenger steamers, the freight of the beach boats, the miners of the Hazelton River, and the respective boats.

For Sale.

Our DRUG BUSINESS is located in San Francisco, Cal. After our best wishes and exertions on the part of the proprietors, we have received for more than twenty-one years, during which period we have been compelled to compete with the largest concerns, we are now compelled to give up the business of the rapid growth of Dr. Walker's formula. We offer it to sell our large, established, and well-established business on favorable terms.

This is a rare opportunity for men with means, of entering into a profitable business with advantages never before offered.

For particular enquires, R. H. McDONALD & CO., Wholesale Druggists, San Francisco, Cal.

Until a man makes up his mind to enter into our immortal and keep a large stock of fresh goods constantly on hand, and sell at prices ready competition.

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