

prietors of the territories which had been granted them, holding the lands "in free and common socage, and not *in capite*, or by knight's service;" and they were empowered to make laws and regulations for the government of their possessions, which may "be reasonable, and not contrary or repugnant, but as near as may be agreeable, to the laws, statutes, and customs," of England. The whole trade, fishery, navigation, minerals, etc., of the countries under their control was granted to the company exclusively, all others of the King's subjects being forbidden to

Majesty's plantations or colonies, in America, called Rupert's land."

Thus it will be seen that the Hudson's Bay Company possessed by its charter almost sovereign powers over the portion of America drained by rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay. This great company gradually extended its sway until trading posts and forts were established on the shores of the Pacific itself. With the advent of the Hudson's Bay Company the history of British Columbia really commences. The early history of Canada on the Pacific is, in fact, but



Government Street, Victoria, in the Sixties.

"visit, haunt, frequent, trade, traffic, or adventure," therein, under heavy penalties, and the company was, moreover, empowered "to send ships, and to build fortifications, for the defence of its possessions," as well as to make war or peace with all nations or people, not Christian, inhabiting those territories, which are declared to be thenceforth "reckoned and reputed as one of His

the story of the occupation of this western land by that company.

As early as 1842 Chief Factor James Douglas (afterwards Sir James), had recommended the Indian village of Camosun (now Victoria) as a very proper site for a trading station and fort. The situation, to quote his own words, is not faultless or so completely suited for a place of settlement as it might be; but,