

the enterprise took a more definite and practical form in the hands of men who saw how the interests of the Crofters could be brought into effect in developing the deep sea fisheries of the west coast of this Province, and at the same time accomplish the other end in view. The Crofters, as their name indicates, are essentially a pastoral class, but situated as some of them were on the bleak and inhospitable shore of their native land, they became a fishing population as well. As a class they became noted as daring skilful navigators in fishing smacks and small boats, and acquired not only a wonderful knowledge of local conditions, and the habits of the fish inhabiting their waters, but great skill in fishing.

The west coast of British Columbia presented conditions akin to those of the west coast of Scotland, its waters being rich in the economic and food fishes, and requiring just such a class of fishermen for the development of deep sea fishing, the suggestion was a natural one that the men who lived in the latter place, and were to the manor born, would more easily and successfully adapt themselves to this industry in British Columbia than would any other class of fishermen who could be selected. Here was a new and undeveloped field of wealth; waters teeming with halibut, cod, "skil," herring, salmon, oolachan, dog-fish, etc., only waiting for skilled hands and willing hearts for its development, and a commercial organization as an adjunct to direct the work and find a market for the fish. The time was ripe for colonizing a number of persons whose discontent at home was not only well known, but a matter which had called for action on the part of the Imperial Government. When the Crofter Scheme was first mooted in British Columbia it found but little favor. In the first place on general principles a colonizing scheme was likely to be a failure, and had almost invariably proved to be so in the past. In the second place, to dump down a lot of Crofters with their families, on a bleak, uninhabited coast, even with a few hundred dollars of good British money in their pockets to start with, would be regarded as an act of positive cruelty and disregard for human rights. At first sight, that was a plausible presentation of the case, and although the newspapers occasionally made reference to it, little was thought about it.

However, a gentleman with wonderful clear head and practical genius, Major Clarke, of Winnipeg, had incubated a scheme, which not only anticipated all possible objections but provided apparently for all possible contingencies. The general scheme may not have been all his, but the details were. Himself a Scotchman, with the most ardent patriotism, he was not likely to mislead his countrymen. With Major Clarke were associated several other gentlemen with shrewd, practical, Scotch brains, who, likewise, would neither encourage nor engage in a wild cat enterprise, nor permit of a deception in carrying out a colonization scheme affecting, more particularly, the interests of Scotchmen. The public did not know what was in contemplation, and therefore the public was not to blame if it rushed to conclusions unfavorable to the project. With characteristic reticence the promoters did not wish to disclose all they had in view until they were quite ready, but they steadily developed their scheme, first at home and then in British Columbia, until a perfectly formed plan, sanctioned by both Imperial and Provincial Parliaments, and state aided, was evolved. Men of the very highest standing in Great Britain gave it their influence and support. As may be seen by the prospectus, and as is provided for by

Acts of Parliament, the interests of the colonists are looked after, inasmuch as they are to be migrated to British Columbia, given lands to settle upon, housed, provided with fishing boats and appliances, and every other necessity of living that human foresight could suggest. In other words, when the colonists arrive they will find their land cleared and their houses ready, the beds made and the dinner cooking. More than that, it is contemplated to have their fishing boats moored at the wharf ready for the fishermen to go out the following morning, as at home, and fish, and upon returning again at night to find a buyer for their day's catch—conditions made for them such as they, after years of hardship, might have evolved for themselves. Such, in the rough, is what is to be done for the Crofters in British Columbia.

On the whole, the project is one of the most colossal, far-reaching, unique and important that has been undertaken in the material interests of Canada since that of building a Canadian transcontinental railway was consummated. The mechanism of the scheme, from industrial, commercial and colonization point of view, as I endeavor to show, is wonderfully complete and practical. It means making the Pacific Coast equal in wealth and population to the Atlantic seaboard. But first, I must review the steps taken in the formation and development of the great plan, and in doing so I shall speak by the book as to the facts.

I have said that while the Crofter scheme, as applied to British Columbia, was part of the general colonization idea, it was still quite distinct in its objects and *modus operandi* compared, for instance, with what was accomplished in the Northwest. By an Order-in-Council in 1888 the British Columbia Government appointed a commissioner to submit a proposal to the Imperial Government, offering in consideration of a loan of £150,000 being granted for that purpose, to transfer 1,250 families of Crofter fishermen from the Scottish coasts and settle them on the West Coast of British Columbia. A select committee of the House of Commons was appointed to enquire into the various schemes proposed, and in March, 1891, it reported as follows on the British Columbia scheme:—

"The project presents the rare recommendation that it demands from the public purse or from local funds no assistance beyond the Imperial loan, the repayment of which is guaranteed by a solvent and promising Province, which seems to possess ample resources for the settlement of a large population, in the respects of climate and seaboard it is well suited for the reception of a class accustomed to both sea and land pursuits. In many particulars the requisite machinery is incomplete, but your committee see no reason to doubt that the enterprise of the Colonial Government would soon supply what is deficient, aware, as they would be, that the success of their undertaking would depend upon their very first shipment of emigrants being well selected and well provided for in every way. Your committee think that it is no way could the object recognized as necessary be obtained with less outlay or risk to the national exchequer, and they can conceive of many considerations in which the colonization of British Columbia by a maritime population would appear to be desirable in the interests of the British Empire. They do not think that by any one scheme the adequate relief of the congested districts can be attained, and they recommend the government of British Columbia to the early and favorable consideration of Her Majesty's Government and Parliament."

In response to the above report the Imperial Government offered to lend £150,000 to the British Columbia Government, in three instalments of £50,000 each, repayable within thirty years, at 3 per cent. per annum. The Local Government, however, prepared to submit the matter to the Legislature before accepting the offer, which necessitated the delay of a year before action could be taken.

Up to this point the Crofter Scheme was still in *tabula*. No definite plan had been evolved for placing the Crofters, and the details had all to be filled in, but just here it took a practical shape by the introduction of a commercial factor. A syndicate was formed in London, Eng., to co-operate with the Government, called the Vancouver Island Development Syndicate. This had in view the marketing of the fish caught by

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