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### The Resources of British Columbia with some Account of their Recent Development.

When, in 1871, the Province of British Columbia was added to the Dominion of Canada, immediate benefits to each beyond political considerations were but uncertain. That great factor in unity—ease of communication—was lacking, and was not supplied for fifteen years. Till then the Dominion had as little practical evidence of the possession of a Pacific Province as if the latter had been situated in South Africa; and the province, in its turn, had to look to San Francisco as a base of supplies, and to expect mails and settlers to be conveyed by way of the United States or Cape Horn. No adequate and inviting means of communication with the interior existed, and the country, beyond its borders, was regarded as fit for little but a field for the adventurer and sportsman. But when the Canadian Pacific railroad was successfully completed, a new era began, and, for practical purposes, British Columbia as a Province of the Dominion came into existence.

One hundred years ago the country had just been discovered. Cook and Vancouver had made exploratory voyages along its coast, to be followed by a few adventurous trading vessels in search of furs. On the same mission came representatives of the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies, who made their way through dangers and hardships from the east, and have their memories perpetuated in the rivers bearing their names, which brought them to the coast. The territory later came under the permanent occupation of the Hudson's Bay Company, with their headquarters at Victoria, on Vancouver Island, and was named "New Caledonia," and had reached the initial stage of development—that of a "fur country."

In shape the province, thus first settled, is an irregular parallelogram, lying on the Pacific Coast between 49 degrees and 60 degrees of north latitude, and having an average width of 400 miles. Its area, including that of Vancouver Island—which shelters for 250 miles the more southerly portion of the coast of the mainland—is estimated at 383,300 square miles—a larger area than that of any country in Europe except Russia. The coast line on both island and mainland is sinuous and indented to a remarkable degree. The interior of the country is described by geologists as belonging to the Cordillera belt of the west coast, and comprises the Rocky, Gold and Coast ranges of mountains. The existence of Vancouver Island is due to the appearance of a fourth and submerged range. Between and through these ranges flow the other distinguishing features of the province, its rivers—the

Fraser Skeena and Stickeen, with part of the Columbia and Peace. Separating the basins of the Columbia and Fraser rivers, and extending northward, lies an elevated table land; the rest of the province consisting, generally speaking, of alternations between mountain and valley.

Considerations of, and criticisms upon, the state and prospects of British Columbia must have regard to the fact that accurate knowledge of the country is confined to its southern and coast districts. Much of the northern portion has not yet been surveyed. In consequence of this, and of its present-time inaccessibility, not only has no development there taken place, but its very possibilities are but guessed at. If they prove as great as those in districts already known, no adequate computation of the prospective wealth of the province has yet been made.

Transition from the standing of a fur country to that of one yielding gold was of a somewhat sudden and unexpected nature, but was what first awakened interest in its possibilities. The gold excitement of 1849, which had brought a motley crowd of adventurers to California, had scarcely passed its height when a report was spread of gold discoveries on the Fraser river, and in a few weeks thousands were camped at Victoria. Considerable reduction was, however, soon made in their numbers when the difficulties of penetrating beyond the coast were realized, but to the pioneers who remained, British Columbia owes the recognition to that mineral wealth which, from the very configuration of the country, must ever remain its chief resource. While nature has not afforded inducements for settlement in the way of a general and unstinted productiveness, she has laid up—now proved beyond a doubt—vast stores of gold and silver, coal, iron, copper and other minerals, as the reward of enterprise. Her gifts in the matter of forests have been lavish in the extreme, and these are destined in the future to serve as a store for half the world. She has filled the waters with fish, affording most palatable and nutritious food, and has altogether so neutralized the rugged, forbidding features of the country as to fit it for the home of an industrious, wealthy race.

**GOLD**—In seeking to trace the progress that has been made towards development of the mineral wealth of the province, gold, the original attractive feature, first claims attention. Its distribution is general—so general that there are few districts which do not show evidences of its presence in at least a small degree. Previous to the great gold excitement it had been discovered and worked in the Queen Charlotte Islands; but from 1858 interest was almost entirely confined to the Fraser river, and the district drained by it. The early prospectors, believing that the fine gold discovered on the

"bars" of the lower Fraser was only an indication of richer deposits in the interior, made their way in face of great hardships to the Cariboo district, some four hundred miles from the sea, and there found their anticipations of rich deposits more than realized. Less primitive methods than those previously in use were adopted, shafts were sunk, tunnels were run, and pumping machinery introduced, with the result that the output of gold of the province for the years 1862-3 was estimated at something over \$1,200,000. The output for 1864 alone was estimated at \$3,735,851, since which year figures have shown a gradual but steady decrease, rising slightly in 1891. Already, however, the province has contributed gold of an approximate value of \$50,000,000 to the stock of the world. For the purpose of comparison the following figures may be taken:

Year.	Value of Gold.
1870 .....	\$1,336,956
1880 .....	1,013,877
1890 .....	494,435
1892 .....	399,526
1893 .....	379,535
1891 .....	456,000

So far all has been produced by alluvial or placer gold mining, with light appliances, and with supplies and labor commanding almost prohibitive prices. "The cheapening of these essentials," says Dr. G. M. Dawson, of the geological survey, "produced by improved means of communication, and by the settlement of the country, coupled with the attendant facilities for bringing heavy machinery and appliances into use, will enable the profitable working of greatly extended areas." The increased yield for 1891 may be ascribed to the adoption of heavier plant and systematic methods by a few mining companies which have in the last two or three years been preparing the way for hydraulicizing operations on a large scale, and the season about to open should witness a much greater output from these sources.

As yet "quartz," or vein mining, has received no practical attention, though evolution in the future towards that from present methods will only be natural. The authority quoted above says the following on this point: "It becomes important to note and record the localities in which rich alluvial deposits have been found. . . . Their existence points to that of neighboring deposits in the rock itself, which may be confidently looked for, and which are likely to constitute a greater and more permanent source of wealth than that afforded by their derived gold." This has been verified in California and Australia, while the Treadwell mine in Alaska pays richly at the rate of \$3 for every ton of quartz mined, and is situated in rock formations identical with those of the coast region of British Columbia.