

(B) British Columbia.

Varied climatic conditions prevail in British Columbia. The Japanese current and the moisture-laden winds from the Pacific exercise a moderating influence upon the climate of the coast and provide a copious rainfall. The westerly winds are arrested in their passage east by the Coast Range, thus creating what is known as the "dry belt" east of those mountains, but the higher currents of air carry the moisture to the loftier peaks of the Selkirks, causing the heavy snowfall which distinguishes that range from its eastern neighbor, the Rockies. Thus a series of alternate moist and dry belts is formed.

The climate of British Columbia, as a whole, presents all the conditions which are met with in European countries lying within the temperate zone, the cradle of the greatest nations of the world, and is, therefore, a climate well adapted to the development of the human race under the most favorable conditions. As a consequence of the purity of its air, its freedom from malaria, and the almost total absence of extremes of heat and cold, British Columbia may be regarded as a vast sanitarium. People coming here from the East invariably improve in health. Insomnia and nervous affections find alleviation, the old and infirm are granted a renewed lease of life, and children thrive as in few other parts of the world.

In his first report on British Columbia, Professor Macoun, of the Geological Survey, stated as follows:

"It only remains for me to add that as years roll on, and our possessions become developed, the value of this second Britain will come so vividly before our people that men will ask with astonishment why such ignorance prevailed in the past. To-day there are 400 miles of coast line in our Western possessions clothed with a forest growth superior to anything else in the world at present; its shores indented with multitudes of harbors, bays and inlets, teeming with myriads of fish; its rocks and sands containing gold, iron, silver, coal and various other minerals. And, besides all this, a climate superior to England in every respect, both as regards heat and moisture; and yet men ask what is it all worth? I answer, worth more than Quebec and all the Maritime Provinces thrown in, and sceptics may rest assured that the day is not far distant when these words will be accepted as truth."

In the Kootenay district, which embraces the drainage area of the Columbia River, the high average altitude renders the air rarified and bracing. The rainfall ranges from 18 to 20 inches per annum, with a snowfall of from one to three feet. In summer the thermometer rises as high as 80 to 90 degrees in the shade, but the nights are compensatingly cool. At times in the winter there are cold spells, when the mercury falls below zero, but these are of short duration.

Throughout the great interior plateau a much drier climate is found, the total precipitation being from seven to twelve inches, according to locality. Luxuriant vegetation is confined to the borders of lakes and water courses, while the general landscape presents the usual round-topped hills and bunch grass of typical pasture or range land. In the many valleys thriving farms show the effects of careful cultivation, and wherever irrigation has been practised the result is seen in ample crops.

South of Shuswap and Kamloops Lakes the climate presents the mean between the dryness of the bunch grass country and the humidity of the coast. There is sufficient rainfall for all purposes, and the climate closely resembles that of Central Europe.