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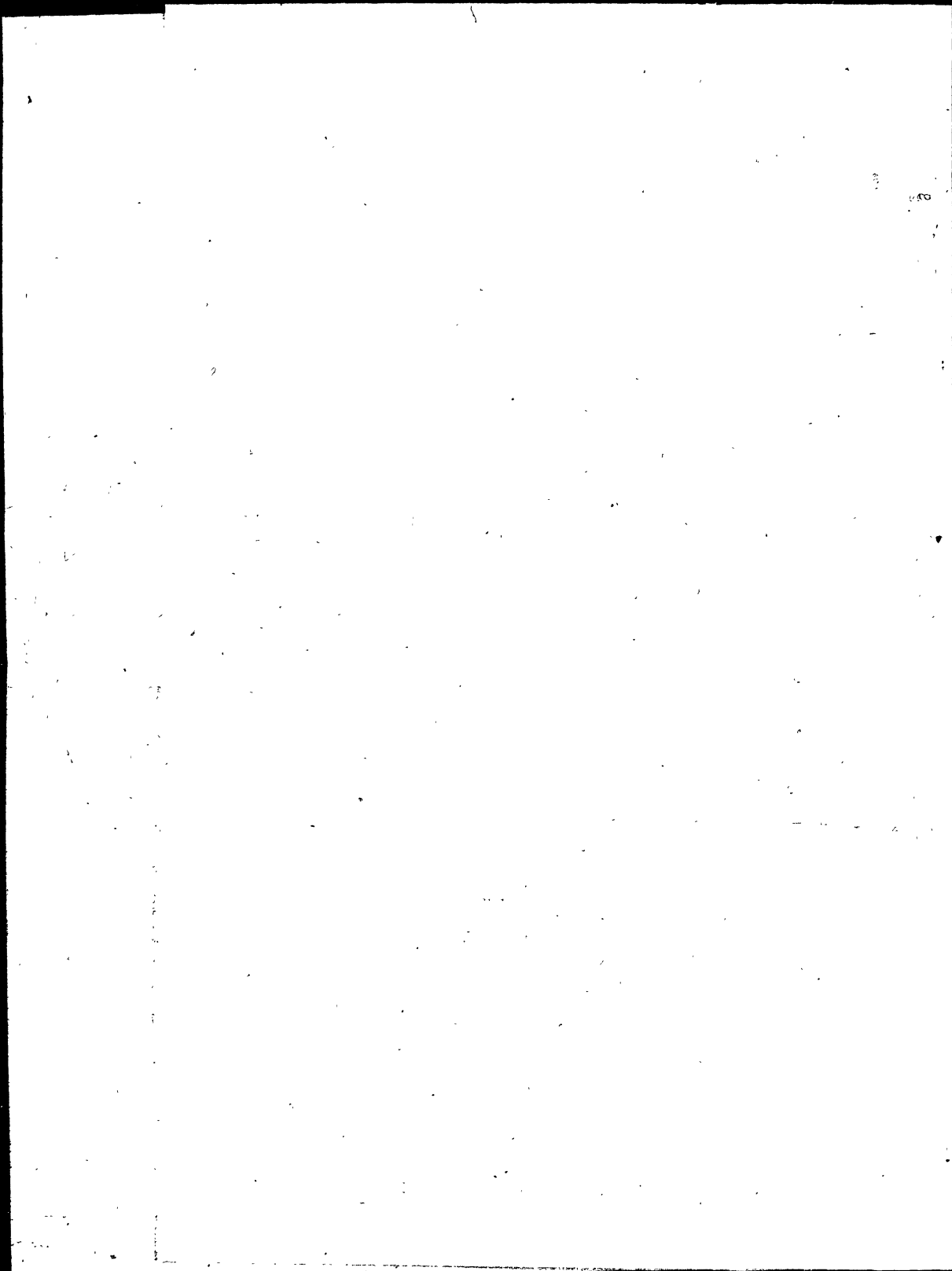
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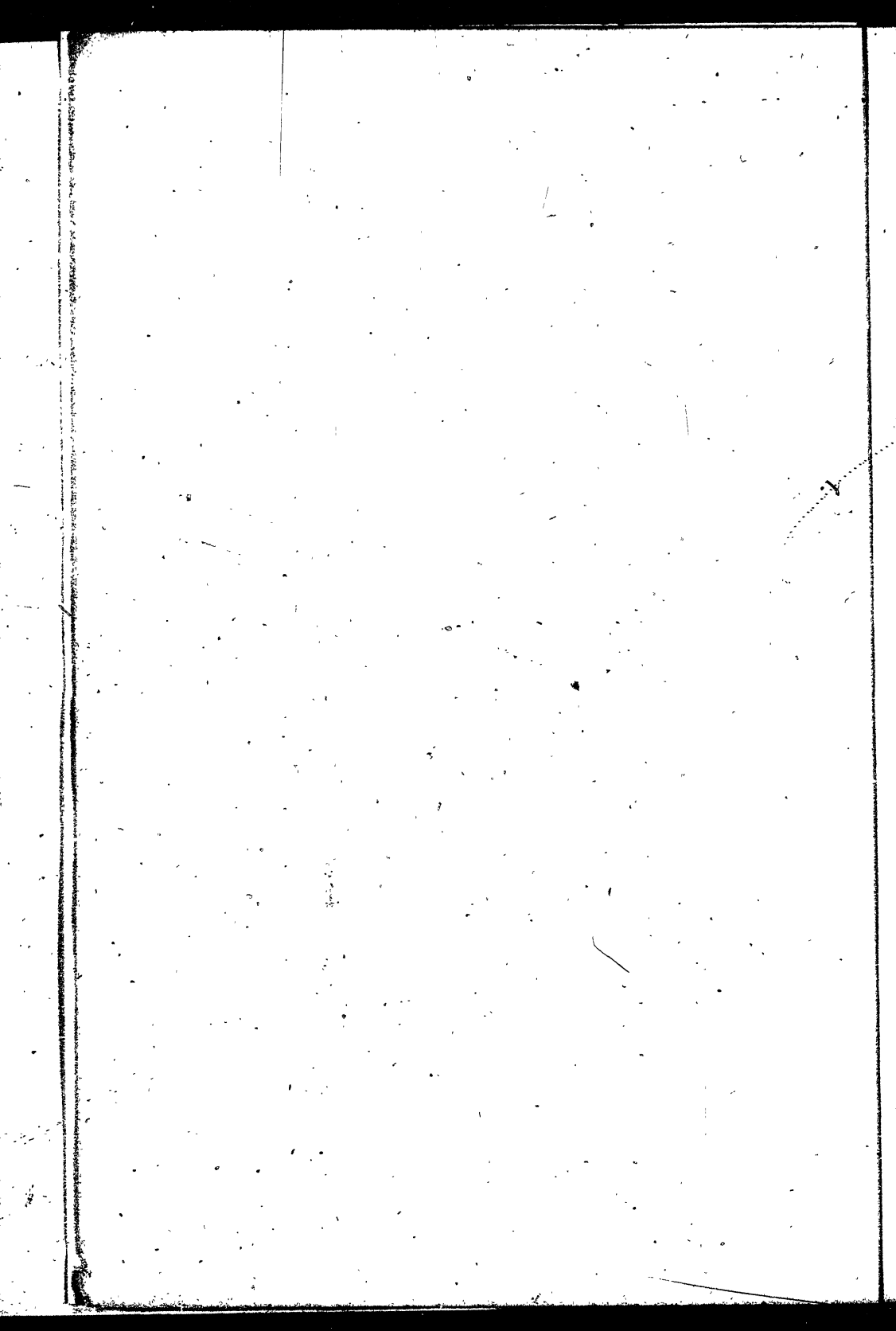
MEMORANDUM.

The Indian Reserve Commissioner very respectfully begs leave to subjoin, for the information of the public, an extract from the report made last year by the Provincial Commissioners to the Provincial Government, on the subject of Indian Reserves. He will be glad to receive any suggestions or comments thereon from those who are acquainted with the subject, to assist him in performing his duties satisfactorily as far as may be, both to the white settlers and the Indians.

GILBERT MALCOLM SPROAT.

YALE, 12th May, 1878.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE REGION VISITED.



It is hardly necessary to remark that the southern interior of the Province is a stock-farming, not at present an agricultural region. The rainfall generally is deficient for the growth of crops in soil otherwise arable; and farmers have to depend on the water of streams for the irrigation of their land. Men of moderate means can irrigate only where water can be easily applied from streams coming from higher levels, and though there are a good many of these streams, yet the available ones are few compared with the extent of the district. Unfortunately, the channels of the rivers and streams are, for the most part, deeply sunk, and it is difficult to take water from them for irrigating purposes.

The area of land fit for cultivation, even with the use of water, is not extensive, though larger, perhaps, than is commonly supposed.

The general soil in the Thompson country, probably a fertile soil, but lying too high for successful agriculture is known as "boulder clay." It is composed chiefly of unmodified drift, but without a stiff clayey character. It is for the most part a yellowish grey mixture of clay and sand, rather hard and with stones intermixed. Exposed to the weather, it softens and becomes intermixed with vegetable matter.

The other class of soil, known to be extremely fertile and lying low enough for agriculture, is that upon the benches and terraces, and irregular slopes of some of the valleys which once probably were the bed of a great lake. The sediments of the old lake now cover

these to a considerable depth. This second named sort is composed of modified or redistributed drift, modern alluvium, etc., and is chiefly the product of the disintegration and re-arrangement of the boulder clay, though mixed also with the detritus from the waste of local rocks since the glacial period, or carried down by rivers when flowing at a higher level, as they seem here to have flowed at some time.

The population of this part of the Province is not now, and probably never will be numerous—at least not the rural population. The occupied portions are along the rivers and streams. The valleys are narrow with here and there low flats. Back from the rivers are “benches” and numerous hills of all sizes with a rounded outline, rising from the extensive mountain slopes. The mountains themselves are generally speaking, softly outlined with grassy lightly timbered sides and broad summits also well grassed. One can ride over most of them.

The common grass of the country, up to about the 53rd parallel of north latitude, is the well known bunch grass. There are a few natural hay meadows by the side of streams, and you find what is called timber grass and other rough grasses on the mountains. The bunch grass formerly grew in the valleys and on the lower hill sides as well as over the mountains generally, but it has been greatly eaten off in most places near the wagon-road and around farm houses. When eaten closely, this grass does not grow again. Sage takes its place, and fortunately the cattle will eat sage in winter. As you ascend the hills you find the bunch grass growing more plentifully among the scattered red pines. Horses, it is said do not consume so much bunch grass as cattle, but they probably destroy more. They can live on the higher lands in winter, as they paw through the snow to get at the grass. The

cattle require in winter sheltered spots with little snow on them.

We are inclined to think that the natural pastoral capabilities of this part of the Province have been overrated in loose talk. The stock is not numerous—probably not more than a dozen men have over 1000 head each, yet the settlers strive already for good wintering places. As above said, the bunch grass is largely eaten off in some parts, though probably there are extensive bunch grass tracts in the back mountains, suitable for summer pasture which we did not see. The grass varies much in quality in different parts, and the pasturing of stock on originally fine pasture seems to be more destructive in some places than in others, perhaps owing to the different character of the soil, and the greater or less hold which the grass has in it. What mainly governs the stock farmer's business as at present carried on, and what will continue to do so until higher prices for cattle enable him to cultivate for the production of winter food, is the extent of natural winter ranges owned by him, or within his reach upon the public domain. It is useless to pasture cattle in summer, if they are fated to die for want of food and shelter in winter. The natural winter ranges in the southern interior are not so extensive as to justify any great addition to the stock now in the country. It is believed that most of these ranges are known though so many causes affect the character of winter ranges that few men, even residents in the district, care to express an opinion about the suitability of places which have not been tested by experience. The aspect and lie of the land, its openness to winds which sweep the snow from the surface, and its nearness to night shelter when the winds are too keen, have all to be considered. The cattle themselves generally find the best places in a rough sort of way, preferring, of course, places to

which most of the herd have been accustomed. There has been a waste of pastures by both white men and Indians and more especially by Indians.

THE STOCK BUSINESS.

These few remarks will enable any one to form a rough general idea of the principal conditions under which the stock farmer's business is carried on in the Thompson country. Allowed by law to pre-empt 320 acres, he seeks a suitable place for a homestead and for a little cultivation, with, if possible hay meadows, or a piece of a range for winter pasture, or access to such a range on unoccupied crown lands. The homestead being formed, the cattle and horses branded with distinctive marks, are turned out to roam over the extensive mountains and valleys on the public domain.

The settler could do little as a stock farmer with his mere pre-emption of 320 acres. That only gives him a footing in the country. He uses the public domain, and as the cattle belonging to different settlers naturally congregate where there is good grass, these places, comprising good summer and winter grazing, are liable to be overgrazed, and some of them have been destroyed. A few of the settlers who have money have, even at the upset price of \$1 per acre been adding to their holdings by purchasing winter ranges or sheltered places with good herbage for young stock, but nobody will buy a tract of the ordinary summer ranges at \$1 per acre in the present prospects of the cattle market. The remedy, in the opinion of some, is to lower the price of government land so as to induce settlers to buy it, who thus would have an interest in preserving the grass, but others say that the effect of this lowering of price would be to throw too much of the pasture lands into the hands of the richer

settlers, and to spoil the business of the poorer settlers by cutting off pasturage, especially winter pasturage, which they now use but might be unable to purchase.

It will be obvious, without any further explanations, that the work of the Commissioners in proceeding, according to their instructions, to mark off definite areas of arable land and summer and winter grazing land for the use of the Indians in a region inhabited by settlers carrying on their business as above described, was of a nature to expose the action of the Commissioners to considerable criticism, but they, personally, were well received everywhere.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE INDIANS.

The above facts of stock farming in the interior are quite appreciated by the Indians. They have been employed by white settlers and have observed their ways of work. They know good land from bad, and what is suitable for summer and what for winter grazing. On the coast the Indians desired a proportion of land free from gigantic timber; in the interior they desired land of which portions could be irrigated and which afforded, especially, natural winterage for stock. Mere acreage, without reference to nature and quality, was not what they asked for. They wanted, in kind, if not in quantity, precisely what white settlers in the same business require. The Indians in short, seem to have been expecting a fair share of the natural advantages of the region for the exercise of the only industry open to them above the occupation of a laborer. There would have been an inherent futility in any adjustment of the Indian land question which did not take full account of these facts.

HOW TO JUDGE OF A RESERVE.

It follows from what has been stated that it was necessary for the Commissioners, and will be necessary for any one who wishes to put himself in the position of being able to judge of their action, to examine upon the ground the following facts connected with each reserve.

What proportion is unavailable from rocks, lakes, streams or very wet swamps?

What proportion of it is arable land capable of tolerable easy cultivation with or without water?

What proportion of it is arable land on which possibly water for irrigation might at some time be brought by skill and expenditure?

What proportion is natural hay land?

What proportion of it is woodland, for buildings, fences and fuel?

What proportion is No. 1 grazing?

What proportion is No. 2 grazing in its natural character, or from having been permanently damaged by over grazing?

What proportion is No. 3 grazing or browsing land among woods and rocks?

What proportions of the above grazing lands in mass, may be classed as summer grazing and as winter grazing?

The general principles on which, in the absence of instructions as to any settled basis of acreage, the assignment of land might be made had next to be considered.

It seemed reasonable that, roughly speaking, the number of male adults should be considered in estimating the quantity of arable land, and the number of animals in estimating the quantity of grazing land. This, however, to be kept in mind more as giving a line of direction than as a principle of action to be

rigidly or universally applied. The nature of the country, limited as it is in its arable and grazing capabilities; its now being and having to be the habitat of intermingled white settlers and Indians; the existing legal rights and fair expectations of white settlers as regards both their own lands and the portions of the public domain which they have customarily enjoyed; the avoidance, as far as possible, of what might check future white settlement—all these were, in each case, very powerful controlling considerations.

But, probably, it would not have been safe to have taken the existing numbers of men and of animals for the purposes of general guidance as above stated. A reasonable allowance was necessary for a probable increase of men and for a certain increase of animals, but this we thought should proceed, not upon any theory, but upon the facts of the industrial progress and present condition of the people.

PROGRESS OF THE INDIANS AS CULTIVATORS.

In 1865 Mr. Nind, Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands wrote as follows to the Government:—

“These Indians do nothing more with their land than cultivate a few small patches of potatoes here and there; they are a vagrant people who live by fishing, hunting and bartering skins; and the cultivation of their ground contributes no more to their livelihood than a few days digging of wild roots.”

In the present year (1877) the Indians on every reserve have grown the ordinary grain and root crops which farmers cultivate in their fields, and they supplied the Commissioners abundantly with all kinds of garden vegetables.

On one reserve 520 acres were fenced, of which 180 acres were cultivated. It would be contrary to experience to anticipate that this progress will soon stop and that a people will fall back into savage ways of

living, after having to some extent adopted civilized habits, and acquired a taste for the better food which the cultivation of the land now enables them to enjoy. They may die out in time, but it is extremely improbable that they will recede into the condition of being contented with merely savage requirements as regards their material wants.

The question of their arable land, however, on examining the ground, was quickly divested of considerations which might have been interesting in a more extensive and richer agricultural country. It gave way to the question what is it possible to give to these Indians for their arable land requirements? There are Indians among these tribes who, singly, have fenced and partly cultivated farms from 70 to 100 acres. If what these few Indians have done were taken as the standard for what the majority may do, and consequently for the general area of arable land required to be included within the reserves, this area would be a great proportion of the arable land in the southern interior of the Province. The scarcity of land fit for cultivation and within the reach of water for irrigation, became quickly apparent, particularly as the Indians naturally wished to have all their arable land near their villages for the sake of old associations, and that they might use farming implements in common. Their villages being generally in good parts of the country, white settlers had naturally made farms in the neighborhood. Upon the whole, the arable land question was not an easy one.

The average quantity of arable land in the amended Indian reserves is about $18\frac{1}{2}$ acres to each male adult.

This might be increased, but not to any considerable extent, if a heavy expenditure were made to bring water to irrigate portions of the reserves which seem to be fertile but cannot be cultivated without water.

The above quantity of arable land has to supply the land needed for all purposes—gardens, field crops for ordinary purposes, and by and by for the production of food for cattle when the natural winter grazing lands may be insufficient, or partly exhausted. A portion of the land must occasionally be in fallow.

Should the above quantity of land appear at first sight small, it may be considered that it is not likely that all these Indians will become farmers, though they are more dependent on the land for their support than the coast Indians. Some of the old men will not cultivate land but will live with their sons, and probably a number of the young men will betake themselves to profitable occupations of various kinds, particularly should there be an increased demand for labor consequent upon the development of mining industries as seems likely to be the case.

An important observation may here be made. These arable lands from the nature of the soil, are not unlikely to be permanently damaged or worn out by unskillful irrigation or over cropping. The Province is bound by the agreement with Canada, to find more land when the Indians actually require it, but more arable land can only be got by buying out white settlers at a cost which every year will be increasing. This is an illustration, among many that could be given, to show how deeply the Province is concerned with the proper administration of Indian affairs. Without going into the question whether the Province could be fairly asked to find fresh lands at heavy cost, from time to time, in lieu of originally good lands worn out by bad treatment, it is obvious that if the Indians are permitted to ill-use their land they will become dissatisfied when it is exhausted, and the Indian question will come again to the front. Local supervision of these reserves is necessary.

The above observations directly apply also to the next branch of the whole question which we will mention, namely, the grazing lands.

GRAZING LANDS.

Indians, not knowing better, rush into investments without understanding the conditions. Like all partially civilized men they do not look ahead and they do not reflect. The Cowichan Indians, five years ago, had 12 cattle, now they have 800, and the locality is over stocked. This is unsound progress.

The broad view must be taken that it is not the policy of either Government to make the southern interior or any portion of the Province an exclusive Indian domain. The above region has certain capabilities, but as we have shown these are not so great as is supposed by many who have not personally examined it. The stock farming business of both white settlers and Indians must be regulated in reference to those capabilities. The nature of the country will largely determine the economic position of its inhabitants. The Government, by its land regulations, is only supposed to give the white settlers and the Indians an opportunity of placing themselves in a reasonable position. If they injudiciously permit their animals to increase in number far beyond the capabilities of the country they must suffer loss, and seek a remedy in reducing the number of their animals, or in the direction of an improved system of farming and better food and shelter for cattle in winter. The Indians as above said, especially need this warning. They may by and by require to be told to limit the number of their horses which, except in inter-tribal traffic, have small value, and as regards cattle, rather to have a few good ones than many indifferent ones.

With respect to the hill grazing lands assigned for the use of the Indians, we may remark that, as an an-

imal owned by an Indian will eat as much as an animal owned by a white man, it will probably be conceded that as already said, the number of animals rather than the mere number of men should be kept in mind for general guidance in estimating the quantity of grazing land required. The certainty of an increase also should not be overlooked, for the number of animals is not so large as to require the warning and advice to limit it which we have suggested above, may by and by, be necessary in the interest, both of the Indians and of the public.

The increase of stock among the Indians since the date of the letter of Mr. Nind has been more remarkable than the increase of cultivation. Some of the tribes have only begun stock farming within five years. Individuals have over 100 head of stock. One tribe has an average of 30 head of stock to each male adult and if (as is not improbable) the other tribes reach this standard, the stock possessed by the tribes we have dealt with would be trebled. It is conceivable that the number of Indians might diminish and the number of their stock increase.

Here, however, the remarks made under the head of "arable lands" as to the improbability of all the Indians becoming farmers, come again to the front, with the additional fact to be considered that though, probably, in a short time, most of the land near the reserves may be sold, there will always be unsold tracts of at least summer grazing, in the public domain not far from most of the reserves.

In studying the general question of grazing land requirements, it was necessary to form some idea of the grazing land necessary to keep a steer, without injury to the land, in such a region as that between Kamloops and the frontier. But this was not so simple a matter as it may appear to those who have not had occasion to deal with it practically. The question was answered variously by twenty-three gentlemen, all of whom were experienced stock farmers in the interior. The maximum estimate was ten times the minimum, and the maximum estimate was by a gentleman whom all would acknowledge to be a competent judge of that part

of the country of which he had experience. The minimum estimate seemed to have originated in the condition inserted many years ago in Government leases of pasture lands, no doubt on the best information then before the Government, that the lessees should not keep more than one animal to every ten acres. Whether this condition was observed we do not know, but the fact is patent that the grass is destroyed on some lands that have been leased, and nobody now would take a gift of these lands, if he had to pay the taxes. The truth probably is that the question is one extremely difficult to answer. It cannot be answered off hand even in an enclosed, long-farmed country like England. In the southern interior of British Columbia, stock farmers, owing to the great undefined ranges which their cattle enjoy in common, have not been under any necessity of forming, and indeed, have not had generally the means of forming definite trustworthy ideas on the subject. The matter, in practice, is left very much to the best judges, namely the cattle themselves. When they have thoroughly exhausted one part of the public domain, they go to the next best place. We are inclined to think that, as already said, the natural capabilities of the bunch grass lands are greater in some parts than in others, from the different qualities of the soil; and the snow, it may be added, has different effects in different places upon summer and winter pastures. Local conditions much affect the capabilities of grass lands. We tested the question, practically by "staking out," that is picketing horses, and measuring the area they cropped in a given time, and by judging of the condition the grass was in afterwards, and of the probabilities of its recovery before the animal, within a given area, would have to come round to the same pasture again, but this was imperfect, and only useful from a certain point of view. We should be surprised if in most parts of the Thompson country, an enclosure of 1000 acres of good bunch grass land, say such as is found back from Kamloops on the Nicola road, would not "give out," if continuously cropped by 100 steers.

The hill grazing lands assigned for the use of the Indians are on the average of 24 acres for each animal they now possess.

Within this area summer and winter ranges have to be found, and it is not all No. 1 grazing land—the No. 1 graz-

ing land is about one half of the whole—; it includes the three following grades:—

No. 1. Grazing land.

No. 2. Grazing land, that is to say, "No. 2" from its natural character, or from having been permanently damaged by over grazing.

No. 3. Browsing land, among woods and rocks.

As already shown, this has to meet the requirements, especially as regards winter pasture, of an increase of stock, which may be regarded as more than a probability within no long period of time.

It seemed to us desirable that the Provincial Government, whatever policy they may see fit to adopt with respect to the public domain in this part of the Province, should be put in the position of being able for a long time to come, if not for ever, to dismiss the probability of their being called upon to add to the area of the Indian pastoral reserves, under the agreement with the Dominion Government that the Province should find lands when required—an agreement which in the future, as we have said, would probably involve the necessity of purchasing lands at high figures from white settlers. In a question of extreme practical difficulty, with admittedly fluctuating data before them for their guidance, the Commissioners can only hope to have come to conclusions, capable of reasonable explanation in the general public interest, as well as in the more special interest of the parties concerned, namely, the white settlers now in the bunch grass country and who may come into it, and the Indians, for reasons such as the foregoing, to which in the bearing on each case the Commissioners have given their best and most anxious consideration, and which they now respectfully submit for the judgment of the Provincial Government.