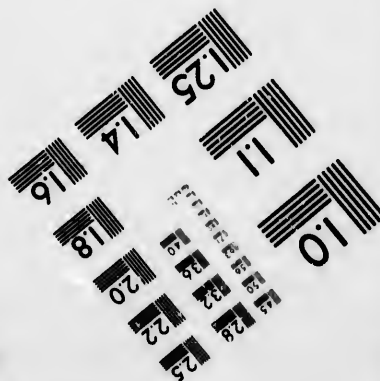
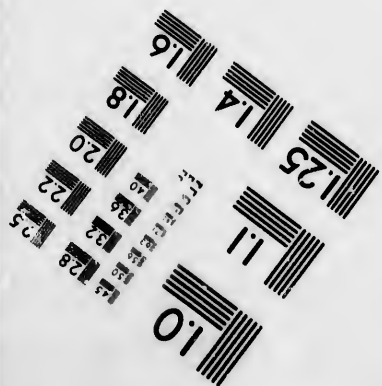
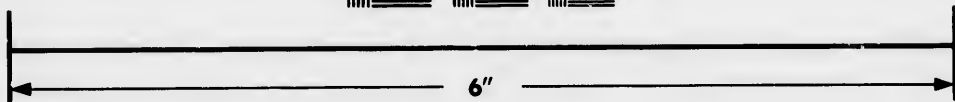
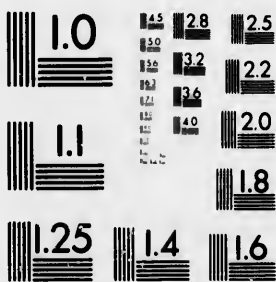


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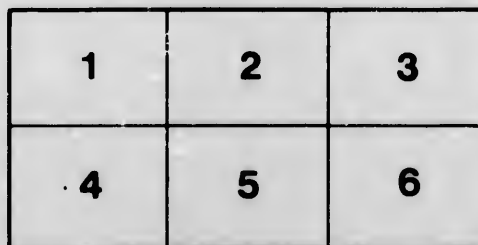
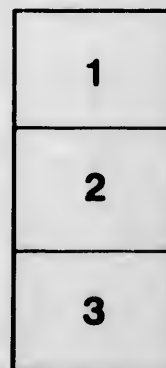
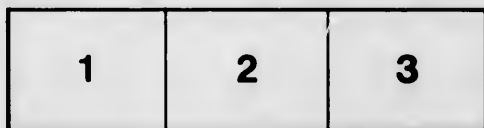
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# With the Author's Consent

To be read at a Meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, to be held at the Whitehall Rooms, Hôtel Métropole, Whitehall Place, on Tuesday, February 9, at 8 P.M., Lieut.-General R. W. Lowry, C.B., in the Chair.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA: A PROBLEM OF COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT.

By the Rev. CANON BEANLANDS, M.A., of Victoria, B.C.

I FEEL that I owe an apology at the outset for taking up your time with the remarks I am about to make. If the audience before me had been composed for the most part of those who had never had experience of life outside the Mother Country there would have been an excuse for presenting to them opinions upon Colonial matters which must be necessarily immature, but which might at any rate be suggestive and convey information. But I see before me to-night men of wide Colonial experience, accustomed for many years past to dealing with those questions which have only recently presented themselves to my mind; and I have to ask their kind indulgence in promoting a discussion which may to them appear wholly vain and unnecessary.

The portion of the British Empire with which I have been intimately associated for the past seven years is British Columbia. I have lived in its capital, Victoria, since before railway days; and I have slept in the backwoods of Burrard Inlet where now is the heart of the new city Vancouver. That was in 1884. Since then I have seen the population double and quadruple. I have seen the value of land round the towns rise by what would appear excessive bounds, but I have not seen that development of the resources of the country which I consider its merits justify one in expecting. Nor does it seem probable that such development will be brought about until the country comes to be regarded at Home from quite a different point of view to that from which it has been regarded in the past.

But I must not be misunderstood: this is not an appeal *ad misericordiam* on behalf of my fellow-residents. They are by no means to be pitied, for a more relatively comfortable or prosperous life than that which is enjoyed by British Columbians I think would be hard to find within Her Majesty's Dominions. There is no

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poverty—that is to say, no class-poverty; on the contrary, every working man either is, or has the chance of speedily becoming, a capitalist. In fact, nowhere does the wealth of the country seem on the whole to be so evenly distributed—nowhere are the relations between labour and capital less violently strained. Even the great Chinese question, pregnant source of strife between employer and employed in the Colonies, hardly can arouse discussion, except when some political emergency brings it to the fore as the useful gag of a discontented party. Nor is there any cause to deplore the financial condition of the Province. The Treasury is not unreasonably burdened with debt; taxation is not heavy; the expenses of administration are very moderate. Free education, the heaviest charge upon the revenues, is provided with a liberality of which any Government might justly be proud; schools being established throughout the length and breadth of the land where it would have been absolutely impossible for the settlers themselves to have secured the poorest kind of instruction for their children. And yet, notwithstanding this general and satisfactory progress, the country, as I say, is not being developed as it should be; its resources are still potential; it has failed to commend itself to the English business man as a place where his energies and means may be profitably employed.

Of a certain class of emigrant we could easily get more than enough, the difficulty is rather to dam the flood than to provide a channel for its flow: for, though it is very possible a miscellaneous population would, after experiencing the usual miseries and hardships, settle down into various occupations and prove useful wage-earners, the experiment is too dangerous to be tried by any country which has a reputation worth losing, least of all by one whose present position as regards the labouring classes is particularly free from anxiety and strain.

But you may reasonably ask, "What is the matter?" Why not be content with the healthy progress of the past? Why try to force a country beyond its natural rate of development?

It is true that were British Columbia of no more especial moment to the British nation as a whole than the so-called dependencies of our Crown are to the average British householder, we might be content to relegate it in our minds to the position of a dumping-ground for incapacity and discontent. But it is far otherwise. This Province is the only foothold which Great Britain possesses on the North Pacific coast. It is, fortunately, a very large foothold. Now, the trade of the Pacific has increased enormously within a

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moderate lifetime. The old steamer, the *Beaver*, the first to visit the western shores of America, lies on the rocks at the mouth of Burrard Inlet; a few years ago she was riding in Victoria harbour. Last year the freight carried from the ports of western North America exceeded 18,000,000 tons, and that is but a small earnest of the future.

You may hear every degree of opinion ventilated as regards Oriental trade. The most sagacious men will vary in their estimate of its value from zero to infinity.<sup>1</sup> But it is difficult to believe, in the face of the manifest determination on the part of so enterprising a people as our neighbours of the United States to utilise their western seaboard, in the face of such commercial energy as is displayed by Australians, and in the face of the gradual but still evident change which is stealing over the Oriental mind as regards admission of European and American forms of civilisation—it is difficult, I say, in the face of these, to doubt the gigantic part which the Pacific is destined to play in the future history of the world's commerce. One thing to my mind is certain. Whatever the extent of trade may be, there will be a bitter struggle some day between Britain and the United States as to who shall control it. The latter has been content, while fostering her internal resources, to see Atlantic trade in the hands of Europe; she will not regard Pacific developments of commerce with the same equanimity. Europe may keep her armed demonstrations to herself; the war in which America will rather fight must be one of freight-cutting, line-controlling, and in general a war of commercial competition reduced to the most perfect science, the most ingenious art. The struggle will be a severe one, for it will practically, though without actual bloodshed, decide the mastery of the Pacific. Had we retained the Puget Sound district to the mouth of the Columbia there could, I think, have been little doubt who would ultimately have conquered. But, worsted by the Ashburton Treaty, as we have been in all negotiations with our wide-awake neighbours, the advantages of our shorter route are minimised by the presence of a host of lively, striving people with harbours as good as our own, independent communication east and west, timber,

<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Pacific Railway Company have had the courage to test it in the only way in which it can be tested, and their effort in this direction deserves the thanks not only of Canada but of the entire British nation. That the finest fleet of steamers on the Pacific should sail from and to British ports, and thus provide a purely British route to our Eastern possessions, is indeed a matter for congratulation.

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minerals and farming-land, and everything to stimulate commercial activity, close to our own doors.

And that is why I regret to see the comparatively little interest taken in the development of British Columbia, and why I seek to arouse in Britons a spirit of indignation at the thought that they may be dropping behind in the race of national competition.

British Columbia used to be stigmatised by the opponents of a trans-continental railway as "a sea of mountains." That designation, though apparently justified by reference to any ordinary map, which generally represents the Rockies as coming down to within a few miles of the Pacific coast, is a most unfair and inaccurate one. Hemmed in, as indeed it is, by great ranges, for which there is every reason to be thankful, it contains extensive areas of valuable farming and grazing land, sufficient to support a large population in comfort.

But, as all the world knows by this time, it is not to its agricultural resources that the country looks for its future importance. And here arises the first difficulty in the way of providing it with an industrial population. For the average emigrant, whatever his former life may have been, seems to invariably expect to become a farmer. So much has been said about the great wheat-growing countries of the west, that there seems to be only one idea in the mind of the vast proportion of would-be settlers, How soon can I get a free grant of land and grow a crop?

If the emigrant is not this sort of a man, he is generally something worse: the fellow who is ready to do anything and can do nothing.

Now, the chief resources of the country are of such a kind that special skilled labour is required to develop them. Lumbering, mining, and fishing are not occupations, such as I recently heard an ingenious Florida agent describe orange-growing, "requiring no previous knowledge of the subject." If an employer of labour has to engage men who are raw hands in any of these occupations he soon finds that he is paying for their education at about the same rate as if he was sending them to an English University. And that is discouraging. Yet, on the other hand, none of these industries are at present conducted on a sufficiently extensive scale to make it desirable to import skilled labour in anything like considerable numbers. For instance, although the lumber trade is acknowledged to be a most important staple, the exportation of lumber in 1890 amounted to only \$449,000, and even if this be doubled, as it probably ought to be by the amount sent east over the Canadian Pacific

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Railway, and a handsome percentage allowed for that which is consumed at home, an annual turnover of only between 200,000*l.* and 300,000*l.* would be reached, which, it will readily be seen, does not represent a large sum in wages when other expenses are deducted. There can, I think, be little room for doubt but that the lumber industry of this Province is capable of great extension. The quality of the timber is so excellent, the quantity so prodigious, the facilities for cheap transport so great, and the Government charges so moderate, that nothing but energy and skill are wanted to ensure success. I believe that the Puget Sound trade, though in no way has it the advantage, unless it be in these latter qualities, is much greater than our own. But then Puget Sound has 60,000,000 Americans at its back, and we have no real pressure from the east at all. Indeed, it is a significant fact that the largest lumber mills on the island of Vancouver are American enterprises, as if Americans, and Americans only, appreciated rightly the value of those forests of which we talk so much.

There is, however, one external influence to which we may, I think, look with no small degree of confidence in its ultimate bearing upon our lumber trade; and that is the Nicaragua Canal.

The successful completion of that work will without doubt do more to stimulate Pacific trade, and especially the lumber trade, than anything else. It is devoutly to be hoped that, now the Panama Canal appears to have got its final quietus, nothing will stand in the way of carrying out this great and perfectly feasible scheme. Of course it will be executed by American engineers with American money, or English money borrowed by Americans: for, as in the case of the Suez Canal, our countrymen will never sufficiently appreciate its importance until after it has been completed.

But there is an industry from which far more has been expected than that of lumbering. I refer to mining in the precious and base metals. British Columbia first came into notice as a gold-producing country. It had a short but brilliant career as one of the richest placer-fields in the world. Now every other home of alluvial gold has become subsequently distinguished as a quartz producer. It was no matter of surprise, then, when geologists told us that this Province was destined to achieve a reputation as a great quartz-mining country. Even in the days before railway communication it was common enough to speak of the vast mineral wealth which was supposed to lie hid in the mountains of British Columbia, and the advocates of the Canadian Pacific line used to rely upon this argument when opponents spoke slightly of these grand works of Nature.

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It would indeed have shown a singular partiality on the part of Providence for American institutions if the series of rocks which were productive south of the boundary line had suddenly ceased to be so north of it, had traversed British territory exhibiting only illusive indications of mineral, and on entering Alaska had once more rewarded the prospector with profitable deposits of ore.

As a matter of fact, the discovery of rich prospects, which has been made since the railway gave more access to the Kootenay region, has been quite phenomenal. From the Toad Mountain south of the Kootenay Lake, northwards into the Big Bend of the Columbia, the number of these discoveries is almost legion, and there can be little doubt that eventually the mineral wealth derived from these sources will be very great.

Nor are they the only ones; throughout the interior plateau discoveries of apparently permanent leads are being continually reported, while the neglected gold quartz of Cariboo bids fair soon to redeem that famous placer-ground from the long winter of discontent which has fallen upon it since the bright days of the "sixties."

It is somewhat humiliating to confess, after so rosy a description of our prospects, that the actual production of the precious and economic minerals is, with the exception of coal, practically nil.

A hundred thousand pounds worth or so of gold is annually washed out of the creeks and "benches"; there is no hydraulicking on a large scale; there are one or two smelters, lying idle for want of ore; not a single concentrating plant, that I am aware of, nor any ore shipments, except for experimental purposes. And the reason of this is not that there is any deficiency, any pinching out or "petreing" out of the metal, but because British Columbia has not yet "caught on" to the mining market; the real mining capitalist has not yet turned his attention to it; the work being done is the amateur effort of local people, prospectors and the like. I think it is very possible there may be another reason why more inaccessible regions should have the preference in the eye of the professional mining man. There, much more extensive grants, huge areas of mineralised territory can be obtained, and the relatively enormous capital required in the working of these is really easier to get from shareholders than the more modest sums which might be requisite for setting on its legs some project in British Columbia. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that quartz-mining in this Province is starving in the midst of plenty, and that, though the Government are most liberal, equitable, and anxious to assist the bonâ-fide operator to the best of their power, there is very little interest shown

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outside the few who have courage and perseverance enough to continue steady exploratory work in the face of every discouragement.

Where there is far the most activity is nearest the boundary line, the Americans manifesting more interest and more faith in the country than either Englishmen or Canadians.

What can be done by energy and perseverance to develop the mineral wealth of a new country was shown by the late Mr. Dunsmuir, who, under great temporary disadvantages, succeeded in establishing at Wellington, on Vancouver Island, the collieries which have rendered that island famous as a coal-producing country. Had it not been for his extraordinary pluck and pertinacity there is little doubt but that the Province would for many years have been deprived of one of its largest sources of wealth, and of the population which has been engaged in its production. When the high wages of the Vancouver coal miner, some 12s. or 15s. per day, are considered, together with the number of men employed, one cannot feel too grateful to the memory of the man who has enabled so many of his fellows to live in comfort and prosperity.

Then let us turn to the fisheries. What have we not heard as to the abundance of fish off this favoured coast? And it is perfectly true. There is both a prodigious supply of fish and unrivalled facilities for pursuing the life of a fisherman. But we cannot be surprised at the small advantage that has hitherto been taken of these favourable circumstances. I have elsewhere pointed out that a fishing population is, perhaps, the most difficult of any to transplant. A hardy and simple folk, they rely entirely upon local knowledge of their own waters, and will naturally be reluctant to sacrifice that for prospects however tempting in a strange country. But the experiment is about to be tried on a somewhat extensive scale with the Scotch Crofters, and should it be successful, which there is no great reason to doubt, it will have gone far to solve one difficulty in providing the country with a population. There are two industries connected with fishing that deserve special notice, not on account of their backwardness, but because more energy and enterprise have been shown in connection with them than perhaps in any other industry. I refer to the salmon-canning and seal-fishing. Of the former, which has become of so great importance to the Province of recent years as to occupy the second place in her exports, there is nothing for me to say which is not sufficiently familiar to you already. There has been some talk of the market being overstocked recently, which may or may not be true, and there is, I am glad to see, an attempt being made to introduce a

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system of preserving the fish in glass jars, which will no doubt do much to overcome the natural prejudice of those who object to tinned goods.

But I cannot leave the subject of our fisheries without reference to the sealing question, for it is one the merits of which, I feel convinced, are not sufficiently appreciated outside the Province.

Perhaps in no way has real enterprise shown itself more conspicuously in British Columbia than in the development of the sealing industry: in no way has it been more calculated to foster the nautical genius of the people, upon which hereafter so much will depend: in no way has it met with more cruel reverses.

The circumstances of the past are to some extent familiar to everyone. How, no sooner did our American cousins suspect us of developing too much energy in this direction than, availing themselves of the figment of a *mare clausum*, they proceeded by acts of legalised piracy to drive British ships from the Behring Sea. Our vessels were boarded; their cargoes of skins confiscated, in some cases the ship itself taken into an American port and sold—in fact, every indignity practised upon the unfortunate sealers.

The inevitable diplomatic negotiations ensued, and, meanwhile, our position, as established even by the law courts of our opponents, was deemed so strong that, notwithstanding reverse, fresh capital was readily supplied and the seal fleet recruited by many new schooners. But the authorities at Washington had cunningly changed front. It was not from motives of national aggrandisement, but to preserve the poor seal from destruction that these disinterested efforts were being made. The British Government was invited to join in a holy crusade against the extinction of God's creatures. Everything was to be above board, "the fullest enquiry courted," an arbitration would satisfactorily settle all disputes.

It is needless to say that our Ministers fell into the trap.

The schooners had once more reached the forbidden ground, when they were boarded, this time by a British man-of-war, and a proclamation read that ships flying the British flag were not to enter the Sea pending negotiations between the Governments. Indemnity against actual loss was, however, guaranteed. The poor sealers had to retreat crestfallen to the south. The season was a splendid one, but the few who succeeded in making up a cargo outside the Sea formed a very poor total against the excellent harvest of skins which would have been reaped if this arbitrary measure had not been resorted to, and it will be interesting to see how the British

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ratepayer will enjoy paying for the sealskins he has not had, when the question of compensation arises.

But the triumph of American diplomacy was again achieved, for while in consequence of these restrictions the price of skins went up by leaps and bounds, the fur-trading company who lease the Alaska rights from the United States Government, and on whom, strangely enough, no such embargo had been laid, had an excellent time. It was a fact well recognised when the old Alaska Fur-trading Company's lease expired, that the new lessees were paying so enormous an increase for the privilege that it would be difficult for them to make any profit at the current price of skins, and it is quite characteristic of Mr. Blaine that he should help out his tenants by this stroke of diplomatic sagacity. The practical result, so far as we are concerned, is this : that the British public is paying, or promising to pay, the British sealer to keep out of an open fishing-ground, in order that the price of sealskins may be inflated and the profit put into the pocket of the United States, while an industry of vital importance to the progress of a British possession is strangled and those who have devoted time and money to its development are discouraged and disgusted.

Unfortunately for the complete success of Mr. Blaine's scheme, the British Government actually appointed a competent scientific man, Dr. G. W. Dawson, to enquire, with Sir George Baden-Powell, into the facts of the alleged extinction from overfishing. As there is consequently some danger, after all, of America getting the worst of the argument, it need not surprise us to read in the papers that the terms of arbitration have not yet been satisfactorily arranged. They certainly will not, in my opinion, be until the season is sufficiently advanced to form an excuse for again jockeying the British Columbian sealer out of his cargo.

Knowing the facts of the case, there is something supremely ridiculous in the last appeal to the great, soft, foolish heart of John Bull. No sooner had the British Commissioners got well away but we are apprised of the cruel fact that thousands of baby seals have been discovered, starved to death for want of a mother's care ! The natural inference, so far as any inference can be drawn, is that the mothers have been done to death by the brutal British poacher. And that is the inference which has been adopted by more than one English paper. If the thing be not a fiction, or a gross exaggeration, it is still to be proved who slaughtered the unhappy parents, and it would be well to reserve one's indignation until that is established. But of course the purpose of the canard is achieved ;

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John Bull sheds a manly tear, his wife's sealskin jacket vibrates with a sympathetic sob, and brother Jonathan conceals a smile as he piously attends to the last obsequies of the slaughtered innocents and raises the price of seal-skins. A great deal of nonsense is talked about and a great deal of sentiment is wasted upon the supposed extinction of the seal. A migratory sea-animal cannot be rendered extinct like the buffalo of the plains. It can, no doubt, be reduced in numbers below a commercial profit, and, when that is the case, will require time to recover. But there is nothing to show that that point has been reached in the Behring Sea, nor that it cannot be warded off by reasonable game-preservation laws, which will foster rather than destroy the industry. Nor is it fair to speak of the barbarity of slaughtering seals as if they ranked with the innocent dickey-birds who contribute their little lives to the decoration of a lady's bonnet. Either the seal is a valuable fur-bearing animal whose skin is rightly deemed the most charming and comforting of winter garments, and who deserves preservation for commercial purposes, or he is an arrant fish-poacher, with nothing but his amusing pranks to commend him to the special protection of man. We do not hear the same sentimental gush about that much rarer and exceedingly beautiful creature the sea-otter, who, I should imagine, runs an infinitely greater chance of extinction.

I have pointed out in one or two ways the difficulties which lie in the way of progress in British Columbia, difficulties mainly due to the absence of skilled professional effort and judiciously applied capital. These can only be obtained from Home or the States, and it is pretty certain that, in the end, if they do not come from the one source they will from the other.

But it may be said, "You have a considerable population already in the Province, and a great deal of capital is at your command, as your excellent financial status, the thriving condition of your banks, the governmental valuation of real and personal property all tend to show. You are not a poor people, how is it, then, that these resources, of whose potential value we have heard so much lately, are not being more actively developed by yourselves?" One answer to this is, I believe, an answer the truth of which will be recognised by all men of experience in the life of new countries. Our surplus capital is being expended rather on speculation than in enterprise. Not that the land boom has reached alarming heights as yet on the British Pacific, but that there are a series of concurrent circumstances which tend to induce men to invest their capital in the

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purchase of land, with a view to its sale at a higher price, rather than in any form of enterprise.

It would seem to be a difficult and impossible matter to persuade men to recognise the difference between speculation and enterprise in their ultimate results to the country. So long as ever there is a prospect of further rise in values, so long as there is the remotest chance of some obscure townsite blossoming into commercial importance, so long will the majority of capitalists be found to buy, even at the risk of hampering their own legitimate business, and the minority of cautious men will be found to lend at a high rate of interest rather than hazard their capital on enterprises the issue of which must always be more or less doubtful. It cuts, therefore, both ways: for the sanguine speculator will keep up the rate of interest to a point which makes it always profitable for the mortgagee to lend. It is vain to point out that a collapse must some day come unless the actual resources of the country are made remunerative. People will go on "trading jack-knives" until they will have to pawn their coats to get them a meal. Nor, on the other hand, must this be regarded as an unmitigated evil. New countries no doubt owe a great deal to the spirit of land-speculation. As Sir George Chesney very pertinently pointed out at the December meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, the money is locked up, but not lost. Capital flows into the country which would not otherwise have been attracted, and it certainly, for the most part, comes to stay. When the craze is over, when the flatness due to a replete market ensues, those who have got the money must employ it in profitable ways; and those who have got the experience must set about, "wiser and sadder men," to recoup themselves for their losses by the display of additional energy. If they have only invested in the place where they reside, neither will their business be so crippled, nor will the hopes of a recovery be dissociated from personal efforts to achieve it. This is, perhaps, the very best guarantee for making good colonists. But if, as is not unfrequently the case, I am sorry to say, on our coast the investor has taken his money out of the business in which it is employed to plunge it in the hazard of a townsite south of the boundary, though he may fortunately double or treble his capital, the almost inevitable result will ensue that the United States will profit at his expense, and his personal allegiance will be weakened, while his interest is divided between the place where his treasure is and the place where his heart ought to be.

As a matter of fact land-speculation at best is a poor thing. Like the inevitable charity bazaar which no one likes, but every one

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avails himself of, its only justification is that "you can't do without it."

But, apart from this tendency, it must be remembered that we are not a community so wealthy as to find capital for any great enterprises. When one hears of the millions which have been plunged in the United States and Argentina, one cannot help wondering whether the same money would not have made a better return if it had been expended in fostering the industries of Canada. Are we too near home, too English, to tempt Englishmen? or are our hopes delusive, and that great Dominion nothing but a great sham, a hollow, bottomless concern, through which a nation is dropping into the arms of the United States?

I have tried, though I confess very imperfectly, to indicate wherein the future strength of British Columbia, as an integral part of the Empire, must lie; and to show that, unless England takes more interest in the work of her development, she will stand a sorry chance by the side of her energetic neighbour.

Say what you please about the inflation of the Puget Sound district, make all due allowance for straining of credit and financial unsoundness, land-booming and overspeculation, the real progress of that country has been simply marvellous. Much as we may deplore its loss, we must, I think, confess that, under British rule, such progress would have been impossible. The reason is not difficult to see. In America well-to-do people are continually migrating to the West, while an idea unfortunately prevails amongst a large section of the English public that none but paupers or adventurers need go to the Colonies. In America men catch the western fever as they would the measles, they remove bag and baggage to a new country, set up their business there whatever it may be, plunge *con amore* into the interests of their new home, and leave not a stone unturned to make it in every sense a thriving place. They are inspired with confidence of ultimate success, and that very confidence makes success assured. Unless the Mother Country learns to identify herself in the same fashion with her Colonies, Greater Britain will never be the homogeneous nation that, in spite of its strangely diverse elements, the United States has become. The Colonies will be left to themselves, save for the dribblings of English life, and, notwithstanding talk about Federation, the breach will continually widen. I am no pessimist, but I feel keenly that public opinion in this matter at Home needs educating and transforming, and I rejoice in the solid and substantial work in this direction which the Royal Colonial Institute is achieving.

