

# COURTENAY

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COMOX DISTRICT

VANCOUVER ISLAND

British Columbia



Issued by Authority of  
THE COURTENAY BOARD OF TRADE

1914

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE language of extravagance has so often been used in booklets of this character that the intending settler or investor with some justice discounts much of what he reads. The Board of Trade of Courtenay (by whose authority this booklet is issued) feel that the best way to meet this condition is not by exaggeration in anticipation of a certain amount of unbelief, but by a plain statement of fact which contains nothing which they are not prepared to justify. The inquirer on the spot may not decide to settle in the district, but he shall at any rate realize that this booklet has not brought him here under false pretences, but that it has been issued under a real sense of responsibility.



BUSINESS STREET, COURTENAY, B. C.

## THE CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT



The Town of Courtenay is the business centre of the district to which Comox has given its name. It has occupied this position for some time, but so long as the only communication with the district has been by means of steamers arriving at Comox Wharf, it has not been sufficiently realized (except amongst those who have visited the place to do business or to settle) that Courtenay is the natural point from which the intending settler will begin his inquiries and to which he will come to do business when he has found his home.

With the opening of the railway giving direct communication with Victoria and intermediate places on the East Coast of the Island, it will no longer be necessary to draw attention to this fact, and a glance at the sketch map which accompanies this booklet will enable it to be better appreciated.

But Courtenay is not only the business centre of the district, for its situation on the banks of the beautiful Courtenay River, formed by the junction of the Puntledge and Tsolom Rivers, flanked on the one side by extended pastures and on the other by rising country culminating in snow-capped mountains, vies with that of Comox, so justly famed for its outlook on one of the loveliest harbors on the coast.

The Tsolom River traverses the Courtenay Valley, one of the oldest settlements on the Island, and perhaps in the proper appreciation of this phrase, in its application to the conditions obtaining to-day, lies the particular claim of the locality. For here is no district in the making, no forlorn looking clearings shut in by the monotonous pine or bordering on charred tracts of land half cleared by some development company, but broad cultivated lands, some lying along the banks of the river, some on gently sloping rises, and all broken here and there by trees of pleasant variety, whilst the pine is removed to its proper place on the background of hills which give so bright a contrast.

The valley dotted with farm houses, extends many miles up the river and at its lower end almost adjoining Courtenay, the village of Sandwick (very like an English country village, with its church on the hill and its cluster of houses on the river bank), divides it from about a thousand acres of fertile land, dyked from the sea, and bounded by

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

rising ground which stretches on the south to Comox Harbor, and on the east to the open sea, and there gives a wonderful view of the snow mountains on the mainland. This stretch of rising country with its sea frontage on two sides, makes a particular appeal of its own. Here numerous houses command extensive views of the surrounding country, and are occupied by those who are attracted by the natural charms of the district and the opportunities for sport rather than the business possibilities, and in this part of the district is the centre of the growing poultry industry.

To the south of Courtenay lie the farm lands, known as Happy Valley, and much excellent land and good sea frontage is being opened up by the railway.

Such is a short description of the district, which, already well settled by a contented community in spite of the prejudice created by the lack of train service, is now receiving so much attention with the advent of the railway.

Go to Vancouver or Victoria and ask any real estate agent of experience in which of the country districts on Vancouver Island he would like to invest his own money, and it is almost a certainty that he will name Courtenay and its neighborhood, and with reason, for land there is still at a reasonable figure, while the solid advantages of the place give it a value much higher than that dependent on the manufactured boom, and make it a safe field for the investor, who can rely on the certainty that its many known advantages shortly to be backed by increased accessibility, will create a rapidly growing demand which must inevitably raise the price of land. For the neighborhood of Courtenay makes its claim on every character of settler. In this district a farmer may seriously set himself, not to hack the bush, but to farm; not with the object of carving out one of those fortunes so frequently made on paper, but to follow his congenial occupation amidst delightful surroundings and earn good interest on his investment. Here the man with little experience, an income which needs augmenting and a wish to lead an outdoor life, may invest a moderate capital in a poultry ranch, or the fortunate individual whose income is sufficient for his needs, may choose himself a beautiful place and enjoy as good shooting and fishing, motoring and motor boating as he could wish.

In the following paragraphs will be found some of the details as to which anyone interested is likely to desire information, and it only remains to add that an inquiry on any specific point will bring a prompt reply if addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Trade, Courtenay, Vancouver Island, B. C.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

### ACCESSIBILITY

Steamers give a service between the District and Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo and intermediate ports and call at Comox Wharf five times a week. These steamers are furnished with dining saloons, sleeping cabins and all conveniences. Within the next seven or eight months the Canadian Pacific Railway will have passenger trains running from Victoria to Courtenay. The Island Highway runs through the district. This is a road much used by motorists and runs through fine scenery from Victoria up the East Coast of the Island. The Canadian Northern Railway Company is projecting an extension of its line from Victoria which will run through the locality.

### CLIMATE

Though most of the rain falls in the winter, August and September do not find the country parched and brown, and the heat is never too great to be unpleasant, since the rainfall is more reasonably distributed throughout the year than in some of the southern districts. Neither the heat nor the cold is excessive and there is plenty of bright sunshine.

### THE PRICE OF LAND

The price of land to-day is not necessarily its price to-morrow, as values are steadily rising.

### AGRICULTURE

Comox has the reputation of being the best farming district on Vancouver Island. Courtenay is the market town of the large fertile valley watered by the Puntledge and Tsolom Rivers which unite immediately above the town and run down as the Courtenay River into the Comox Estuary and harbour. It is seven miles north of the southern and 30 miles south of the northern boundaries of the Comox District, and lies on its western border. It is distant from Victoria 147 miles, and 82 miles from Vancouver, whilst Hardy Bay is roughly 250 miles away as the crow flies. The Comox District is thus quite central and is free of the extreme wet of the north and east and the long droughts of the south. All fruits and vegetables do well, besides heavier crops, and dairying, for which the district is famous. At present the local demand from the mining town of Cumberland and the newly opened mining areas, such as No. 7 and No. 8 mines, where large towns are springing up, as well as from the logging camps, the sea-ports of Union



COURTENAY VALLEY, B. C.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

and Comox, is greatly in excess of the supply, and fancy prices rule for most vegetables and fruits, which are now largely imported from the States to make good the shortage of local supplies. Rapidly as these industries and others grow and will increase the demand, the inrush of settlers specializing along these lines of supply should by-and-by meet the local demand and have a surplus which will find a ready sale at good prices at Vancouver and Victoria. There is also a market for such supplies in Australia, New Zealand and the Fiji Islands, whose seasons are the reverse of ours. British Columbia has already sent shipments of onions and is about to ship 300 tons of apples, taking oranges and lemons in exchange. The Australian liners and many cargo boats from the Far East call at Union (nine miles south of Courtenay) to coal and could easily load apples for foreign markets from the Comox District, whose local saw mills could turn out the boxes or barrels in which they are shipped. With the Panama Canal *en fait accompli*, vessels from all parts of the world will load bunker coal at Union, whose export of coal will increase during the next few years from its present 2,000 tons per day from the Cumberland Mines, to an estimated 10,000 tons per day when the new shafts sinking and loading facilities are completed. This will give every facility to the Comox District for direct shipment abroad.

There is no doubt that a few years will see the Seymour Narrows bridged and grain from the North-West Prairies come in to the Island as the nearest sea point for foreign shipment. The cars need not be hauled back empty when the large and small fruits and vegetables of the Comox District can go back to the North-West, where they will be much needed.

The amount of cleared land now being farmed in the Comox District is estimated at more than 10,000 acres. There is also a great deal of good land still uncleared and this is being rapidly taken up. The soil is good, and the climate well suited to most branches of agriculture, the outside markets are now to become easily accessible by means of the C. P. R. extension and the local markets are altogether exceptional. This last point is worthy of expansion. In very few other districts either on Vancouver Island or on the mainland of British Columbia is the local market so large in proportion to the agricultural resources of the surrounding country. And it is important to observe that the purchasing power of the district does not depend (as is frequently the case), on a rise in real estate values, but on solid industrial development. The mining and logging industries in the vicinity involve a continuous circulation of money which gives the bulk of the population the power to live well and to buy foodstuffs such as early vegetables at prices which would make them a luxury in other less favorably situated



DAIRY HERD, COURTENAY, B. C.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

districts. The two principal companies which are responsible for the payroll are the Canadian Collieries Company and the Comox Logging & Railway Company. The former have their headquarters at Cumberland, a town of 2,000 inhabitants, situated about six miles from Courtenay, and connected by about 10 miles of railway with the Company's coal wharves and foundry at Union Bay. The Company operates five mines, including that known as No. 8, connected with Union Bay by a railway shortly to be electrified from the power plant on the Puntledge River, of which some account is given elsewhere. The Company ships an average of 50,000 tons of coal per month, and their month's payroll, irrespective of supplies, is in the neighborhood of \$100,000. They employ about 1,600 men.

The Comox Logging & Railway Company is the supply point of the Fraser River Mills at New Westminster. It is estimated that 60% of the entire cut of British Columbia comes from the Comox District, and there is sufficient timber to last the Company for fifty years. The Company, which it is understood, is the biggest logging outfit in the world, runs eight camps and have about seventeen miles of railway connecting the headquarters of the various camps with the Company's booms in Comox Bay, from which about half a million feet of lumber is being put into the sea per day and towed by the Company's fleet of tugs to New Westminster. This Company employs about 600 men, and their monthly payroll, exclusive of supplies, amounts to about \$40,000. There are also several sawmills in the neighborhood and when the number of stores, etc., necessary for serving the interests already mentioned as well as the farming and residential communities are taken into account, it will easily be seen that \$200,000 to \$250,000 is no extravagant estimate of the monthly payroll of the district.

This district is unquestionably the finest dairying district on Vancouver Island. This has lately received additional recognition in the shape of negotiations for the erection and operation of a cream condensing plant. It is understood that the promoters of the undertaking have already succeeded in obtaining a contract for the produce of 500 cows. Such an undertaking should prove a valuable resource for the farmer as giving him an alternative to selling cream for butter-making. With the advent of the railway it should also be possible to ship milk and sweet cream to Victoria, giving a third most profitable outlet. There is plenty of good land on the market in every way suitable for dairying farms, and those who wish can begin in a small way, feeling sure that they will find a good market for small or large quantities of produce. The growth of hay and clover is extraordinarily



RANCH, COURTENAY, B. C.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

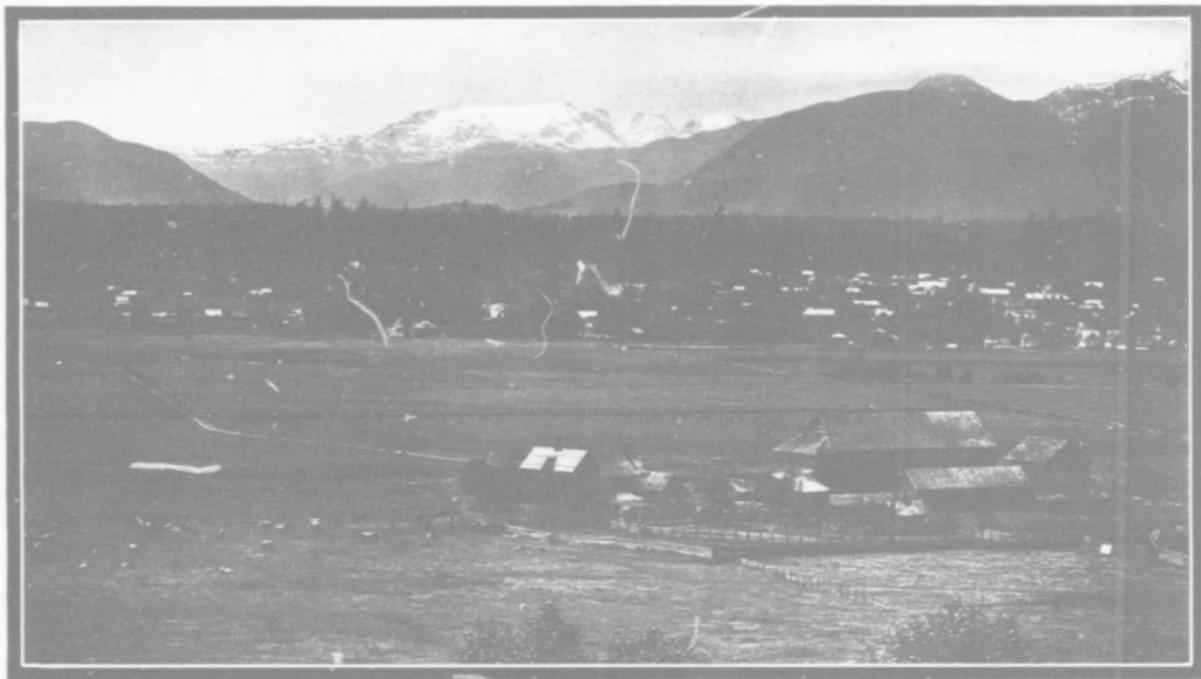
good. A piece of burnt land sown with grass seed will become a tangled mass of vegetation within a year. Cattle fatten on the native grasses and vetches in a wonderfully short time.

The poultry industry has not as yet received anything like the attention it deserves in this district, which is admirably adapted to it. The poultry farmers at present here cannot begin to supply the local demand and the incoming settler should certainly give this branch of farming his serious consideration. Statistics showing the cost of starting a poultry farm and the profits to be expected may be found in other publications, but roughly it may be said that a poultry farmer who does the work of the farm himself, should obtain an annual return of 20% to 30% on the amount of capital invested. Moreover, poultry farming under the conditions here does not demand expert knowledge so much as intelligent care and attention, and it affords perhaps the best opportunity of an outdoor life at his own home for the man who wishes to live such a life but has no previous experience of farming.

The Comox farmers are served by two co-operative associations, the Comox Creamery and the Comox Co-operative Association. The Comox Creamery was founded in 1902 for the purpose of manufacturing and selling butter. In 1912 the amount of share capital was \$4,000, divided into \$10 shares, on which a dividend of 5% is paid. An amount of 4 cents per pound is deducted for expenses and the balance paid to the farmer. Any balance remaining of the amount deducted for expenses is divided as a bonus. In 1912, 118,779 pounds of butter were made and sold at an average price to the farmer after deducting the 4 cents) of 33 2-3 cents per lb. As the oil test is used this price is equal to 3 or 4 cents higher on the Babcock test. The highest price to the farmer in 1912 was 39 cents per pound, and the lowest 30 cents per pound.

The Comox Co-operative Association has a store in Courtenay, through which the farmer may sell his produce. The prices given below are furnished by the manager of the association.

Prices to the farmer:—Beef, 12 cents dressed weight; mutton, 7 cents live weight; pork, 11 cents live weight; veal, 9 cents live weight; dressed poultry, 18 to 22 cents live weight; early vegetables, lettuce, 6 to 7 cents per head; peas, 10 cents per lb.; marrowfat beans, 7½ cents per lb.; cucumbers, 10 cents each; carrots, 4 cents per lb. Fruit: apples, \$1.75 to \$2.25 per box; strawberries, 10 to 15 cents per lb.; raspberries, 10 cents per lb. Potatoes, average price about \$20 per ton; eggs, 25 cents to 75 cents per dozen, average price about 36 cents; pigs 6 weeks old, \$5.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF COURTENAY, B. C.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

### RESIDENTIAL ADVANTAGES

Reference has already been made to the fact that the Comox District has many attractions as a residential district, irrespective of the farming or business opportunities, and that it makes a strong appeal not only to the farmer, the business man and the holiday maker, but also to those in search of a pleasant place to make a home. Its temperate climate, beautiful scenery, good roads and opportunities for sport, combined with the ease with which visits may be made to Vancouver or Victoria, offer strong inducements. Sport is obtainable all the year round as the following list shows:

Shooting:—Pheasant, blue grouse, willow grouse, ptarmigan, quail, black tailed deer, black bear, black and grey wolves, panther, wolverine, wapiti (elk), duck, (widgeon, teal, mallard, butterball, squab and bluebill). Brant geese, Canadian geese, full snipe and jack snipe.

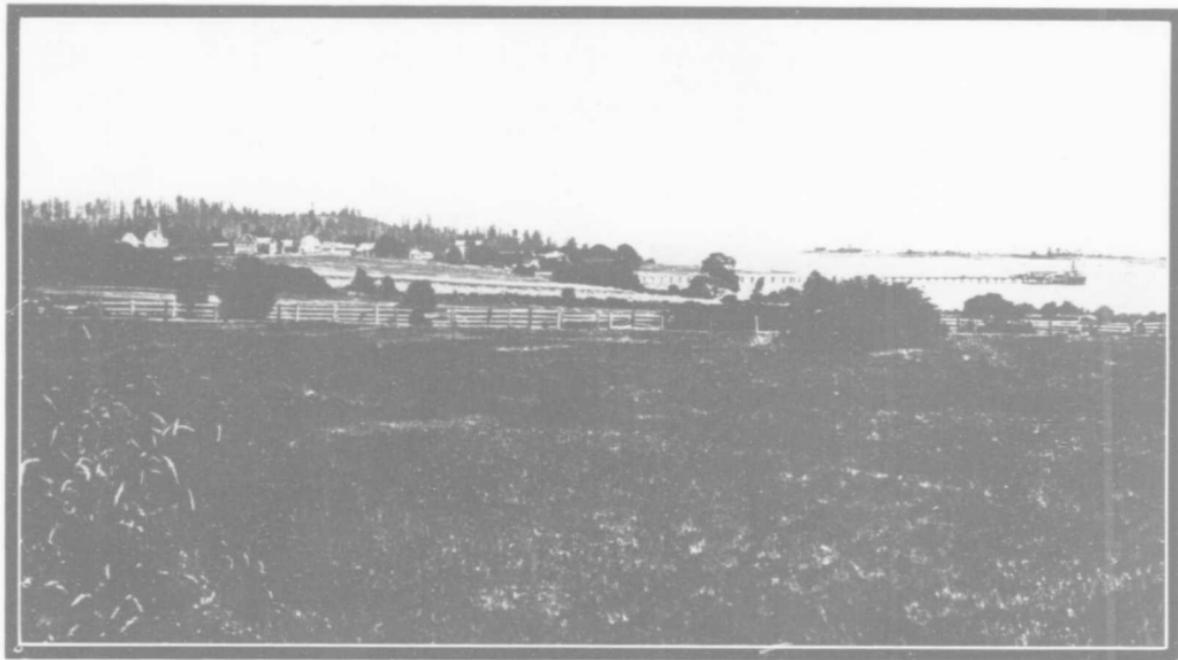
Fishing:—Trout, march to November; mountain trout up the streams and sea trout, both taking the fly. Salmon: The introduction of Atlantic salmon which will take a fly has proved successful. In 1905, 30,000 Atlantic salmon fry were put into the Courtenay River, in 1907 50,000 into Comox Lake, in 1908 30,000 to 40,000 into Comox Lake and in 1909 150,000 into Comox Lake. The result is that salmon may now be taken with the fly in the river from August to November. In Comox Harbor and Bay very good trolling may be had for spring salmon, tye salmon, cohoes and bluebacked salmon.

In 1912 the largest tye caught in the Bay weighed 68 pounds. At the moment of writing the tye have just arrived and fish have been caught weighing 40 to 54 pounds. There is also good fishing for whiting, rock cod, herring and flounders.

Excellent motor boating may be enjoyed and the roads are amongst the best on the Island. The Government Road through Strathcona Park is now being constructed and Comox will be a convenient place from which to view the very fine scenery of its lakes and snowy mountains.

There is a Lawn Tennis Club in Courtenay. There are good hotels and many excellent stores of all descriptions. Three doctors reside in the district.

The Churches are as follows:—At Courtenay, Church of England and Presbyterian. At Comox, Church of England, and Roman Catholic.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF COMOX, B. C.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

### INDUSTRIES

The Town of Courtenay is very favorably situated for industrial undertakings. The river is navigable for vessels of light draught and in the near future will almost certainly be dredged. There is land available for wharves. Such industries as a sash and door mill or a shingle mill should be operated here under admirable conditions. Particulars of the requirements of the district will gladly be given by the Secretary of the Board of Trade.

There are plenty of opportunities for industrial enterprises in this region. Coal and iron ore abound and hydro-electric power is available to an almost unlimited extent. It only awaits tapping. So far the Canadian Collieries are the only people who have attempted to utilize the plentiful water power of the district's rivers. To induce industrial enterprise into the district land owners will give long leases at peppercorn rents or even give a few acres outright, as is done in Eastern Canada, on which to establish industries.

### CANADIAN COLLIERIES (DUNSMUIR) HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER PLANT.

The Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) hydro-electric power plant is situated on the Puntledge River. The station is a modern, well built and lighted and ventilated building into which the pipe intakes are led to two Escher Wyss Pelton turbines. The generators are two Canadian General Electric, of 6,000 horse-power each, and 13,200 watts a. c. When visited one was running and developing about 1,000 horse-power, which was being used to charge the air compressors for drilling at No. 8 Shaft. The transmission line is operated at 13,200 volts and stepped down from sub-stations. The switchboard and all fittings are of an up-to-date design, and the whole plant arrangement exceptionally well planned.

### RECENT SALES IN COMOX DISTRICT

The following are the particulars of some sales which have been made during the past year:

#### Seafrontage—

57 Acres seafrontage, 10 acres cleared, balance timbered; 6-roomed house, chicken house and outbuildings—\$7,500.

#### Chicken Ranch—

20 Acres, 10 acres cleared, 10 acres bush, with 5-roomed house and chicken house and barn; 2 miles from town on main road—\$4,250.

## CLAIMS OF COURTENAY AND COMOX DISTRICT

### Uncleared Land—

20 Acres logged-off land on main road, four miles from town—\$50 per acre.

### Cleared Land—

15 Acres cleared land with small house and fruit trees on good road  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from town—\$225 per acre.

### General Farms—

160 Acres, 5-roomed house and barn; about 25 acres cleared, remainder bush; 6 miles from Courtenay; sold for \$67.50 per acre.

Chicken Ranch sold as a going concern, producing good returns; 10 acres all cleared and fenced; running stream; small orchard; house and barn, modern chicken houses and plant, livestock—\$5,000.

Chicken Ranch—10 acres, 1 acre cleared; house and chicken houses—\$2,000.  
200 Acres on main road, 6 miles from Courtenay; 6 acres cleared, 30 slashed, including 150 acres alder bottom—\$30 an acre.

160 acres, 25 cleared, cabin and barns; 5 miles from Courtenay, on good road; good running stream through property—\$45 an acre.

### Uncleared Land—

160 Acres, small house and barn; 30 acres cleared, remainder bush;  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile seafrontage; 6 miles from town; sold for \$100 per acre.

35 Acres bush land, 2 miles from Comox Wharf; sold for \$60 per acre; good land with several springs.



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