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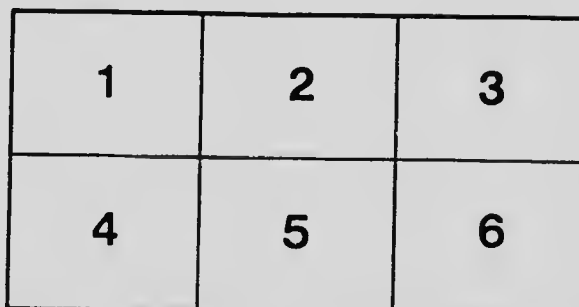
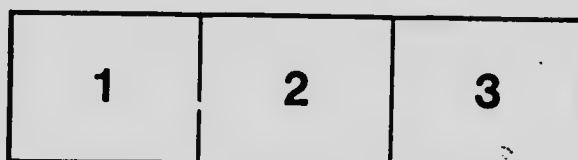
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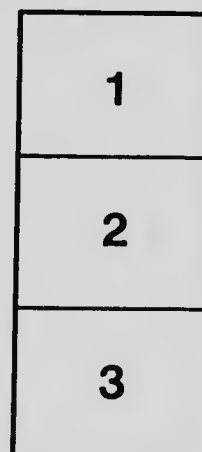
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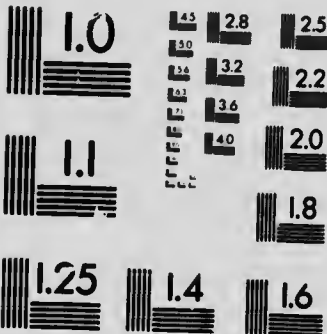
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PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COLUMBIA-KOOTENAY VALLEY

. BULLETIN No. 26

(SECOND EDITION)



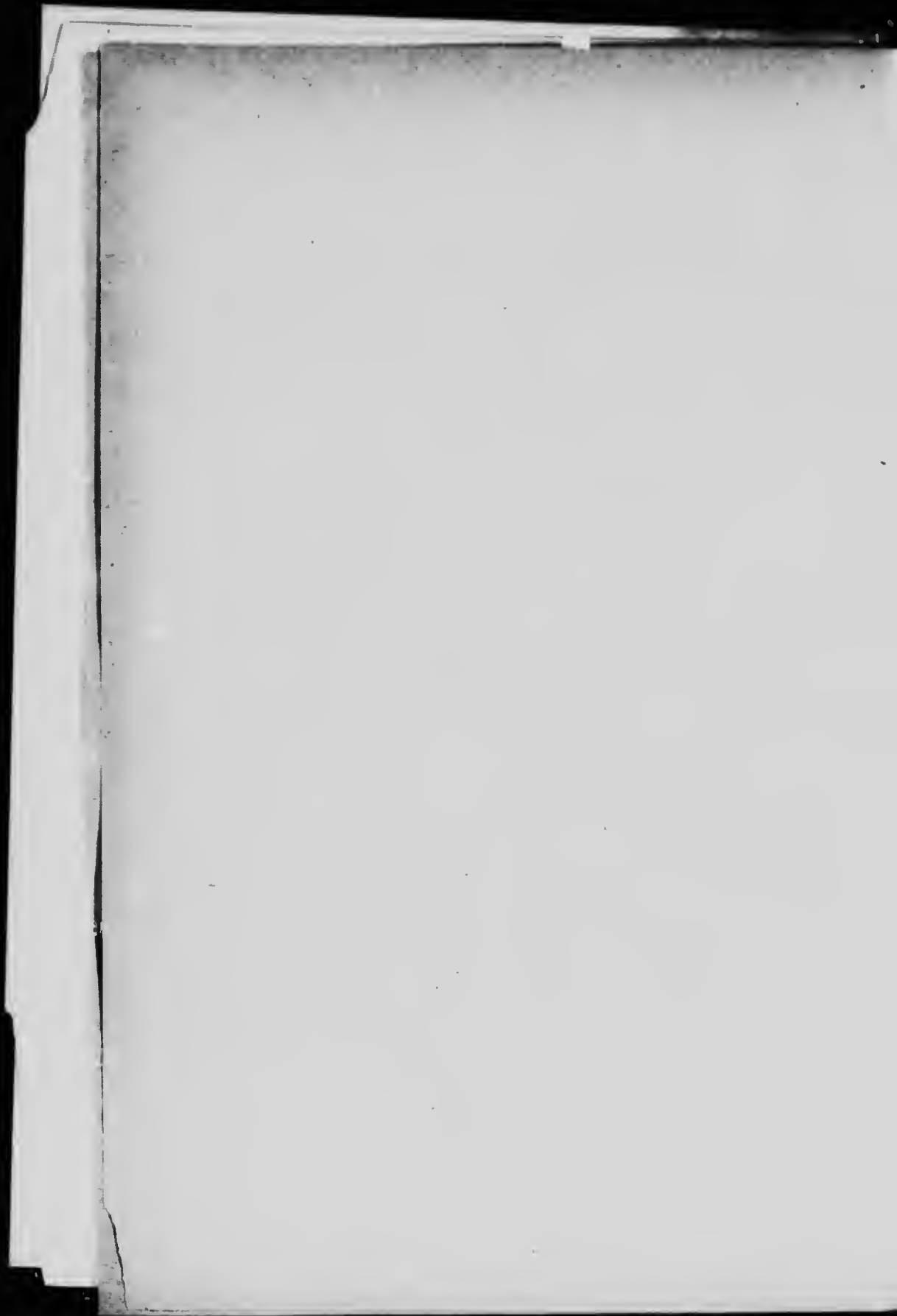
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Panoramic view of the Columbia River Valley looking north from Swanses Peak. (The main Columbia River is to the right and the Salmon River Valley on the left.)



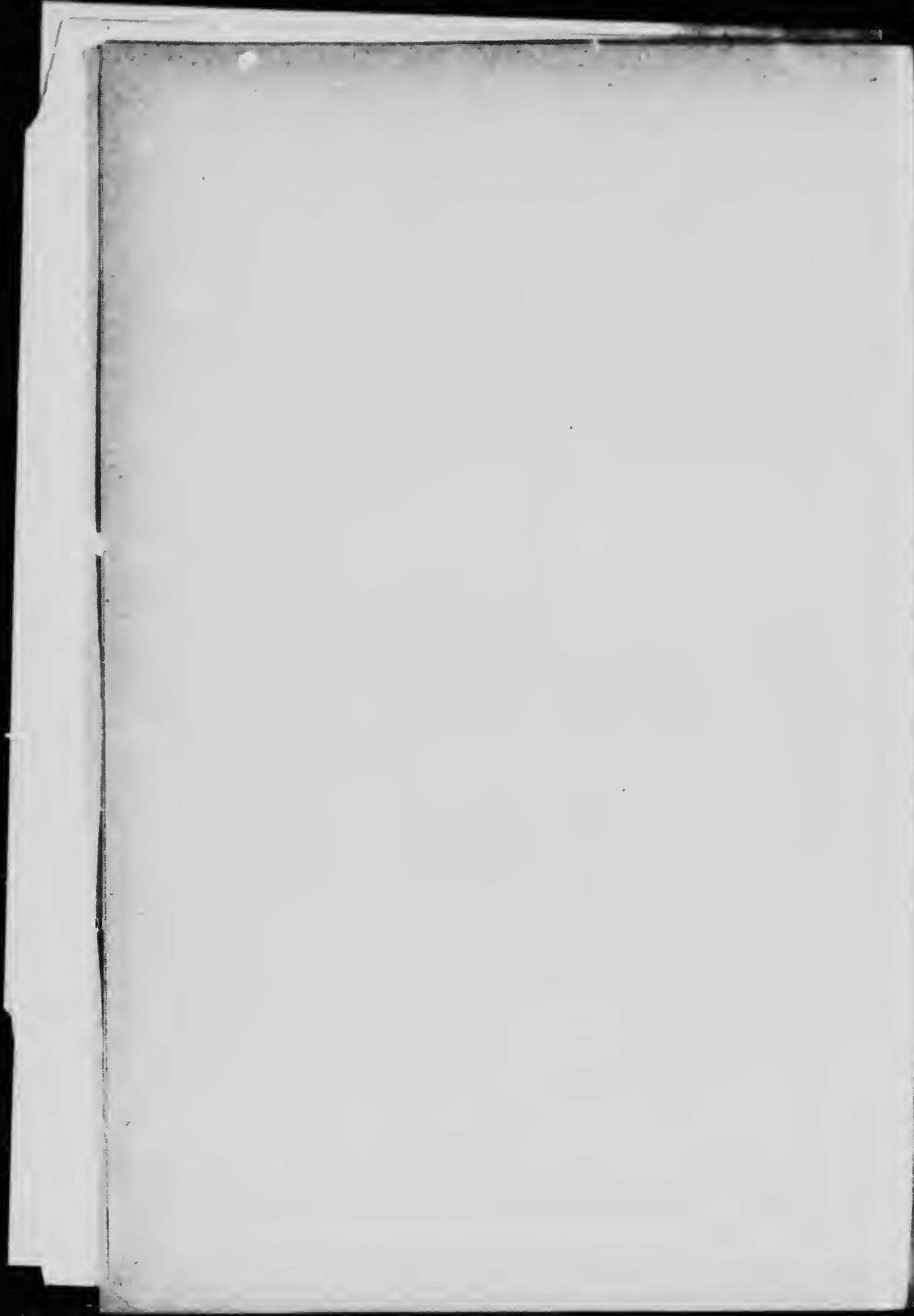
FOREWORD.

This bulletin has been prepared by Mr. Wm. J. Bonavin, the Secretary of the Department, in response to numerous inquiries received from intending settlers regarding the eastern section of this Province. The data on climate, etc., contained herein have been compiled from official sources, and grateful acknowledgments for assistance are made to the Superintendent of the Dominion Experimental Farm at Invermere.

D. WARNOCK,

Deputy Minister.

*Department of Agriculture,
Victoria, B.C., March, 1920.*



THE COLUMBIA-KOOTENAY VALLEY.



THE Columbia-Kootenay Valley includes the most extensive area of agricultural and pastoral land in the Kootenay District. It lies between the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Selkirks, which form its western boundary, and extends from the Big Bend of the Columbia River, at its junction with the Canoe River in latitude 52 degrees north, to the International Boundary at Tobacco Plains, distance of about 280 miles.

The northern portion of the valley is narrow, but widens at Golden, where the Kicking Horse River joins the Columbia, and from there to its southern extremity maintains a width varying from six to twelve miles. The valley is drained by the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers, the former flowing northward from its source (Windermere and Columbia Lakes), while the latter flows southward, the two streams almost uniting at Canal Flats, where only a narrow strip of level land separates them. These two main arteries are fed by many smaller rivers and creeks flowing into them from east and west, and providing ample water for irrigation and power purposes. These creeks have their sources in glacier-fed basins, which lie in the heart of the mountains at an altitude of 5,000 to 8,000 feet. The bottom lands of the Columbia River Valley are quite flat, and in consequence subject to flood in the early spring and summer. The soil of these flats is alluvial and produces a luxuriant growth of wild hay, vetch, and peavine—good provender for cattle. The reclamation of these flats by dyking, in conjunction with a similar project on the Kootenay River near Creston, would add many thousands of acres of exceptionally fertile land to the agricultural area of the district.

From the flats the land rises in a series of benches, which finally merge into the foot-hills and mountains. Many of these benches present the appearance of rolling prairie, while others are covered with a fine growth of timber, free from underbrush as a well-kept park. Then benches, foot-hills, and mountain-slopes are covered with grasses, which provide good pasturage for cattle, horses, and sheep.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

The area of the valley proper is roughly about 1,000,000 acres, and at a best estimate from 20 to 30 per cent. of this is available for crops of hay, grain, vegetables, and the hardier fruits, while nearly all the rest is good pasture. Practically all the benches require irrigation to produce the best results, and it remains to be proved if dry-farming can be practised with success. It has been satisfactorily demonstrated that with irrigation all the ordinary field crops—hay, cereals, roots, vegetables, and fruits—can be grown in quantity. Two and three crops of alfalfa in a season are usual, while timothy and other fodder-crops yield large returns.

The area under cultivation, however, is inconsiderable, and, with few exceptions, little has been done in the way of systematic farming, and the population is small and scattered. Many settlers derive the bulk of their income from herds of cattle and horses, which require little care.

The section of the valley for twenty miles north and twenty miles south of Golden is included in the Dominion Railway Belt and is under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, Ottawa, which regulates the homesteading, pre-emption, and purchase of lands within the Belt. South of the Railway Belt a very considerable part of the land is owned by the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands Company, Limited. Other large areas are held under timber licence and the most available agricultural portions have been alienated from the Crown by rough purchase and pre-emption. There is therefore very little cultivable land of immediate value remaining in control of the Provincial Government, so that the new settler must,

as a rule, buy from the land compaules or the individual owner. The lands in near proximity to the railroad are well suited to either dairy-farming or market-gardening, poultry, and bees; whilst the outlying districts are more suited for range cattle, sheep, and horses.

CLIMATE.

The climate is healthful and enjoyable at all seasons, although the temperature shows a wide variation. Blizzards and cyclones are unknown, and bright, sunny weather, winter and summer, is the rule. The summers are dry, with occasional hot days, the mean temperature being about 60° and the maximum 95° Fahr. The heat being dry is not oppressive; it is modified by light winds passing over the glaciers and snow-caps of the mountains, and the nights are always cool. The attached table will give a good idea of the range of temperature and the precipitation.

From May 1st until the end of September the general climatic conditions are delightful, although occasional frosts in May, June, and September prove detrimental to some of the tender annuals. The winters are long and subject to Chinooks; there is lots of sunshine during the winter months and little wind when the temperature is low. Sleighing usually lasts from two to three months. Owing to the height of the flanking mountain ranges, varying from 5,000 to 8,000 feet, the western slope catches the sun long before its rays warm the eastern slope, and as a consequence vegetables and small fruits ripen earlier on the west side; but, in compensation, the eastern benches are bathed in sunlight long after those on the west are in shadow. This phenomenon is more marked in the narrower portions of the valley, but is not anywhere detrimental to vegetation, as equal maturity is attained on either side.

OFFICIAL RECORDS FROM STATIONS IN THE EAST KOOTENAY DISTRICT, YEARS 1918 AND 1919.

Year.	Station.	TEMPERATURE.		PRECIPITATION.	
		Highest.	Lowest.	Rainfall.	Snowfall.
		Deg. F.	Deg. F.	Inches.	Inches.
1918	Cranbrook	99.0	-28.0	10.84	30.75
1919	"	98.0	-34.0	7.62	68.50
1918	Fernie	93.0	-29.0	26.77	85.50
1919	"	93.0	-32.0	20.69	97.10
1918	Invermere (Experimental Station)	94.0	-32.0	9.37	32.25
1919	"	94.0	-34.0	6.75	33.20
1918	Michel	94.0	-30.0	18.76	90.55
1919	"	95.0	-31.0	13.75	66.50
1918	Newgate	99.5	-33.0	9.73	25.25
1919	"	101.0	-29.0	6.51	47.74
1918	Wilmer	95.0	-23.0	9.43	42.50
1919	"	95.0	-28.0	7.69	33.75
1918	Golden	90.0	-26.0	12.45	83.00
1919	"	95.0	-32.0	4.58	77.50
1918	Revelstoke	95.0	-15.0	26.85	214.50
1919	"	96.0	-22.0	16.29	174.00

NOTE.—10 inches of snow=1 inch of rain.

CHARACTER OF SOIL.

The soils are generally of a light description somewhat deficient in humus. They are volcanic and morainic in origin and very productive. Some of the bottom land is water-logged and of an alkali nature.

The lower benches are a light soil, with gravel or sand subsoil, and though apparently of a desert-like appearance, when irrigated produce heavy crops of all leguminous plants, and when brought under a good rotation give good yields of all farm crops.



Sheep Creek as it reaches the Kootenay River south of Canal Flats.

The higher benches are of a heavier and deeper nature, containing more humus. The subsoil is usually hard-pan or gravel. This land produces heavy crops with less irrigation.

LIVE-STOCK POSSIBILITIES.

The conditions throughout the Columbia Valley are particularly well adapted for horses, cattle, and sheep. The large open ranges provide an abundance of summer grazing and the cultivated portions provide good hay for winter feeding.

Dairy cattle give good returns. In some districts they have free range throughout the summer months, whilst in other parts they are kept in pasture. The wide range country and the climatic conditions are particularly suited to the raising of beef stock.

Conditions throughout the valley are also very favourable for the production of honey and the rearing of poultry and turkeys.

CROPS AND YIELDS.

Alfalfa, clover, grasses, peas, and potatoes are some of the most successful crops grown under the conditions prevailing in the Columbia Valley. Alfalfa will produce two and sometimes three good crops in the year, will stand the winter conditions, and has clearly proved its suitability as a permanent crop on new land.

Red clover seeded alone or with grasses produces heavy crops in exposed parts where the Chinooks take away the snow; alfalfa, however, proves more persistent than clover.

Cereals of all kinds produce heavy yields of good grain. Peas do exceptionally well and are so far free from the attacks of weevil; the growing of peas for seed should prove a profitable undertaking.

Potatoes grown in the Columbia Valley cannot be surpassed in yield or texture; other hardy vegetables do remarkably well.

Only a few of the early varieties of corn, such as Early Malcolm, can be relied upon to produce cobs for table. Corn for silage and for feeding green has been taken up with a certain measure of success.

Tomatoes do well, but are liable to be cut by frost early in September, when only a part of the crop has ripened.

Bush-fruits do well. The hardier varieties of apples, plums, and cherries can be grown only in favourable localities on northern slopes, where the land is usually covered with snow during the cold spells.

NORTH OF GOLDEN.

North of Golden the valley is narrow and as a rule heavily timbered. There are small, isolated patches of land that might be brought under cultivation, but the extent of this is inconsiderable, no extensive area that could be classed as agricultural land being found. The land surrounding Golden and for fifty miles south is particularly well adapted to hay, grain, and stock-raising, and there are a few good farms close to the town on which good general crops are grown. This portion of the valley averages about five to six miles in width. The bottom lands, being marshy and the soil rich alluvial, produce great crops of wild hay, while the benches vary from a sandy red clay to a heavy red clay, with a fair proportion of deep, rich black loam.

Golden, situated on the Columbia River on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, is 168 miles west of Calgary, and has also bi-weekly service to Fort Steele via Lake Windermere subdivision of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The altitude is 2,580 feet and population about 1,000. Mixed farming and dairying are well established, and this is the main commercial point for the northern and central portions of the valley. There is a local Government Agent, public and high schools, a general hospital, and the usual facilities of a modern community.

SOUTH OF BRISCO.

South of Brisco there is a marked change in the character of the country. The valley broadens and is more open, with lighter soil, covered with bunch-grass and sage-brush, and irrigation becomes necessary, but water for that purpose is easily applied from the numerous mountain streams flowing into the Columbia.

The valley from Brisco southward to Canal Flats, being from six to ten miles wide, is favorably affected by the warm Chinook winds, and the temperature is further moderated by the presence of several lakes, the largest being Windermere and Columbia Lakes, which are respectively nine and fourteen miles in length, with an average width of one mile and a half. It is beautifully timbered with fir, spruce, poplar, and birch, with open prairie spaces, park-like in appearance.

Considerably more than half the cultivable land of this part of the valley lies on the west side of the Columbia River and Lakes, and the soil, as a rule, is rather heavier than on the east side. It varies from a deep, heavy, grey clay loam to a trifle shallower red clay loam, with a clay or gravelly subsoil. The timber is heavier and more dense on this side, except upon the lower levels, where it is lighter and more scattered. There are many mountain streams, and in the lateral valleys formed by them are large areas of fertile land. Some of the largest of these creeks are the Spillimacheen, Bugaboo, Salmon, No. 2, No. 3, Horse Thief, Toby, Dutch, and Findlay. Much of the bottom lands on these creeks is very rich clay loam, which, with the gently sloping benches, are well adapted to mixed farming and dairying. In the lowlands, however, there is always the danger of summer frost.



View across the Columbia River at Windermere.

WINDERMERE DISTRICT.

Windermere District has more cultivated land than any similar area in the valley, and its fruitful fields and orchards present an object-lesson which should encourage further development. There are thousands and thousands of acres lying idle, or affording pasturage to small, scattered bands of cattle, which only require a little exertion to make them productive and profitable. The soil here, as in other parts of the valley, varies slightly in its character and composition, but it is all of a nature which the application of irrigation will render highly fertile. On the west side of the valley are several good ranches, none of which has reached what might be called a high state of cultivation, but enough has been done to prove the fruitfulness of the soil. On these west-side ranches irrigation is practised, and its

advantages are manifest; better crops of grain, hay, and vegetables could not be wished for anywhere. Poultry is raised extensively and does remarkably well. Bush and small fruits have been tried on all these places, and on sheltered northern slopes, where the snow lies through the winter, the hardier varieties of apples, plums, and cherries give satisfactory returns. The conditions are particularly favourable for all hush-fruits and berries.

Within the Windermere District there are four centres which are supported by mining and agricultural interests. These are: Atholmer, situated at the northern end of Windermere Lake, at the point where the Columbia River emerges. To the north-west of Atholmer is Wilmer, on Wilmer Creek, a Provincial Government office being situated at this point. Immediately adjoining Atholmer and situated on Lake Windermere is the town of Invermere. It has a Dominion Government Experimental Station, a general hospital, a chartered bank, a good tourist hotel, and golf-course, and the head office of the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands, Limited, owners of 50,000 acres of irrigated land. The townsite of Windermere lies on the eastern side of Windermere Lake.

All these townsites have telephonic communication with each other and with Golden; they are supplied with schools, stores, and churches, and form the centres for such public associations as the Windermere District Board of Trade, the Agricultural Association, Farmers' Institute, Stock-breeders' Association, etc. Annual fairs are held at one or other of these centres.

There are also mining interests in the neighbourhood; the only mine at present being largely worked is the Paradise Mine, sixteen miles west of Invermere, which can be reached by a good mountain road along Toby Canyon.

The Dominion Experimental Station for the Upper Columbia Valley is situated at Invermere and was started in 1912, and annual reports have been published for the past six years and furnish reliable data of the results of farming operations and meteorological records in the district. These can be obtained from the Superintendent of the Station or from the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa.

SOUTH OF WINDERMERE.

South from Windermere Lake to Canal Flats the contour of the valley and the soil are similar to that already described. There are several ranches showing good results from cultivation, but most of the land is idle.

CANAL FLATS.

Canal Flats, as the name indicates, are low-lying and only require drainage to make them the best of hay land. South to Canal Flats, where the Columbia Valley merges into the Kootenay Valley, are large areas of splendid land "fit for anything farmers need to grow." This district is well suited for any farm crops and for small fruits, and would give fine crops of clover, alfalfa, sainfoin, grains, and roots of all descriptions. There are beautiful stretches of this fine land all along the valley to the International Boundary.

CRANBROOK DISTRICT.

In this part of the valley there are many rivers and creeks with unlimited water-power flowing into the Kootenay River. On the west bank there are the following: Skookumchuck, Cherry Creek, St. Mary River, and Gold Creek. Flowing into the east bank of the river there are Sheep Creek, Wildhorse Creek, Bull River, and Elk River.

It is in the district surrounding Cranbrook that the largest area suitable for agriculture in this part of the valley is to be found, the elevations running up to 3,000 feet.

At St. Mary Prairie is a fine stretch of country, containing many thousand acres, well adapted to mixed farming and cattle-raising; there being also a certain amount

of pasture amongst the wooded areas. Orchards have been planted at St. Eugene Mission, Wase, and Baynes Lake. Whilst dry-farming is practised to a limited extent, there is no doubt that this method of cultivation would be profitable if extended, as owing to the light rainfall in the larger part of this area irrigation is necessary for the best results.

In this part of the valley winter lasts from November to the end of March; cold snaps with low temperatures occur during the winter, the snowfall being light. The chief rainfall is from April to June and September to October.

Cranbrook, situated at an elevation of 3,014 feet, is a divisional point on the Canadian Pacific Railway (Crowsnest branch) and the chief distributing centre for the South-east Kootenay District. There is good mixed farming and stock-raising carried on in the neighbourhood, and mineral-deposits, such as silver, lead, gold, copper, and gypsum, are abundant. The population is about 3,000. A Government Agent is located here. There are good hotels; a live Board of Trade; an Agricultural Association, which organizes an excellent annual exhibition; a Rod and Gun Club to preserve and encourage the splendid hunting and fishing to be found in the district; and the usual attributes of an up-to-date community.



The St. Mary River, near Cranbrook.

The Elk River rises in the Rockies and flows through a long narrow valley almost due south to its junction with the Kootenay River. The famous Crowsnest coal-mines are in the Elk River basin, and there is also quite an area of land suitable for agriculture, especially in the lower portion of the valley, at such points as Natal, Elk Prairie, Elko, and Baynes District.

There is much valuable timber in this valley, whilst there is also feed for stock over a large part of the year on the open and burnt-over lands.

The following are the chief towns in the district:—

Elko, situated on the Elk River south-east of Cranbrook, on the Great Northern and Kootenay Central Railways. Stock-raising and mixed farming are the chief industries, with mining for iron, coal, and copper. There is abundant water-power available.

Fernie, a busy town of about 6,000 population, situated on the Elk River. It is served by the Canadian Pacific and Great Northern Railways, and is 700 miles east of Vancouver and nearly 200 miles (by rail) south of Golden. Coal-mining is the chief industry, but some mixed farming and stock-raising is carried on farther up the valley. The altitude is 3,300 feet.

Crops.—Winter temperatures run sufficiently low to make the growing of most varieties of apples more or less unsatisfactory, and only certain hardy varieties which

should do best in this district are recommended by the Department; small fruits, however, should obtain a certain measure of success.

The district is one which will eventually support a considerable population, based on mixed farming and stock-breeding, as its possibilities become demonstrated.

The soils are variable, but, the precipitation being light, they have not been leached of their valuable plant-food, and analyses made at the Central Experimental Farm, confirmed by practical farming experience in the district, show a very satisfactory supply of potash and lime, with variable amounts of phosphoric acid, and, as is usual in Dry Belt soil, a low content of nitrogen, in, however, a very available form. Much of the soil is a fine, deep, rich loamy silt, but there are, of course, all extremes.

General Remarks.—With the development of mining in the Crowsnest and lumbering through the territory wherever railway facilities are sufficient, a local market has been gradually created for practically everything that is produced. The district has not been developed far enough to undertake to look after outside markets in many lines, with the exception of hay and beef. Alfalfa is doing well and the country has all the requirements for a successful dairying and mixed-farming industry.

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS.

The whole of the combined valley is well supplied in its back reaches with a number of varieties of game; more especially may this be said to apply to the upper valley of the Kootenay River, near to its source in the heart of the eastern range of the Rocky Mountains.

There are at least two splendid hot springs situated within the Windermere District which are said to possess high medicinal qualities; these are known as the Sinclair Hot Springs on the Banff-Windermere Automobile-road and the Fairmont Hot Springs on the main road from Golden to the International Boundary.

There is good boating and canoeing on the Columbia River and Windermere and Columbia Lakes.

TRANSPORTATION.

The Lake Windermere branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway, built in 1915, traverses the Columbia-Kootenay Valley from its main line at Golden to the Crowsnest Pass branch.

Splendid roads are constructed throughout the whole valley, affording easy access to all parts.

One very important highway which is under construction must not be overlooked, being that of the Banff-Windermere Motor-road, which is being constructed by the Dominion Government and which forms one of the missing links in the International Highway. When this is completed it will form part of the National Park system, and will form the last part missing in the great circle highway beginning at Calgary, passing through Banff, through the Windermere District to Cranbrook, Elko, Fernie, and through the Crowsnest Pass to Macleod and Lethbridge, and thence north to Calgary.

The following are the chief crops and yields in the East and West Kootenay District for the year 1919, as reported by the Statistical Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Victoria:—

	Acreage.	Average Yields.
Fall wheat	290	24.5 bushels.
Spring wheat	2,100	20.0 "
Oats	2,480	54.0 "
Barley	320	45.0 "
Rye	400	20.0 "
Hay and clover	9,010	2 tons.
Alfalfa	1,010	3 "
Potatoes	2,008	5 "

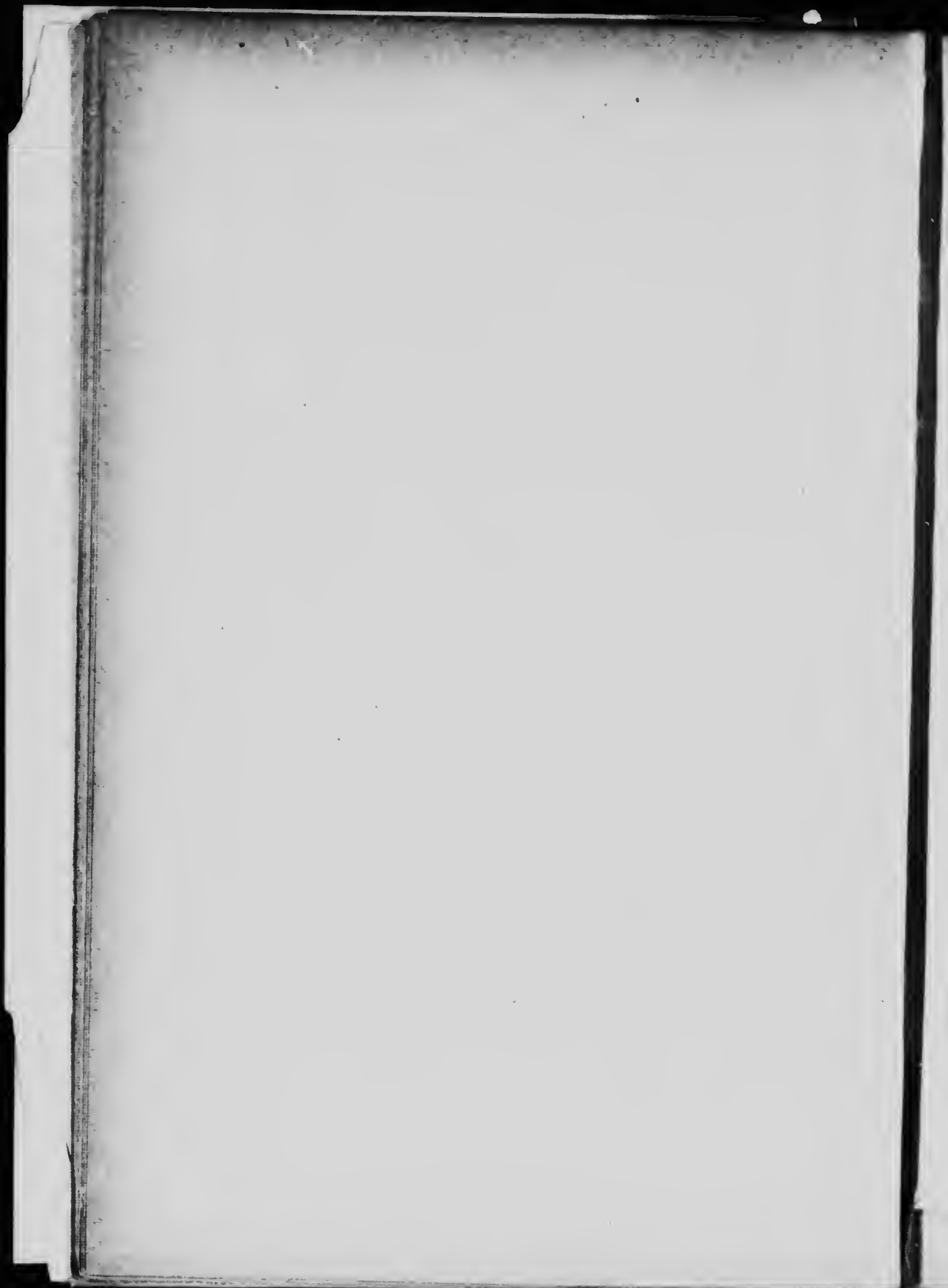
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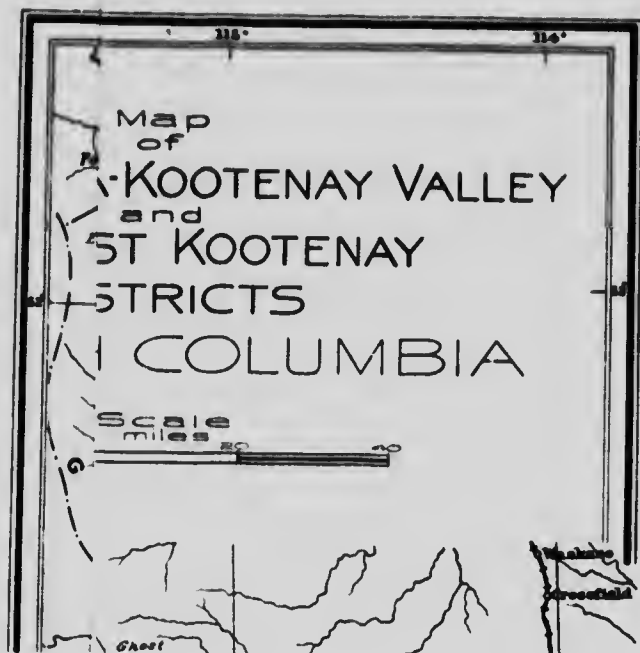
Horses	3,215
Beef cattle	5,800
Dairy cattle	4,020
Sheep	960
Swine	3,200
Poultry	58,600

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Map
of
THE COLUMBIA-KOOTENAY VALLEY
and
THE WEST KOOTENAY
DISTRICTS
BRITISH COLUMBIA

