

CLIMATE AND TOPOGRAPHY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

NOWHERE more than on the Pacific coast of America, is the fact that climatic conditions depend largely upon the topography of the country, made apparent to the casual observer. A brief study of the map of British Columbia will suffice to render the following statement of its climate and topography of the country clearly understood. The province covers a superficial area of three hundred and fifty thousand square miles, extending from the forty-ninth parallel to the sixtieth parallel, a distance of seven hundred and sixty miles; and from the Pacific ocean to the Rocky mountains, an almost uniform distance of five hundred miles, with the exception of an arm of the United States territory of Alaska, which projects southward along the coast, at a nearly uniform width of ten miles, to the fifty-fifth parallel. The coast line is unequalled in the world for the number of its bays and inlets, as well as for the succession of islands which fringe it, offering sheltered and safe navigation on waveless seas between them and the mainland. Such a profusion of safe harbors, and such stretches of inland seas, do not exist elsewhere. Navigation of its coast is robbed of the dangers and discomforts usually attendant upon ocean travel.

The surface is divided, by nature, into four distinct districts: First, the islands; Second, the mountains of the mainland coast; Third, the high interior plateau; Fourth, the mountain ranges that lie along the eastern border. The one great climatic influence is the great river of

warm water, which flows in the Pacific ocean, and is known as the Kuro Siro, or Japan current. It flows northward from the torrid zone, along the coast of Japan, turns eastward and southward along the Aleutian islands, and flows down the Pacific coast of America, exerting its genial influence from Alaska to Mexico. Wherever its warm, moisture-laden winds find their way, there are winter and drouth unknown. From this great river of warm water, an almost constant wind blows landward.

The great island of Vancouver lies parallel with the coast for a distance of three hundred miles, and has a central ridge of mountains reaching a height of three thousand feet. In passing these mountains, the warm air suffers its first chill, and copious showers fall upon the island, the outer coast receiving more than the inner. The wind then sweeps inward, across the Gulf of Georgia, until it strikes the still higher mountains along the mainland coast, where a still greater precipitation of rain is the result. Robbed, now, of the greater portion of their warmth and moisture, they sweep across the high plateau of the interior, shedding upon it but little of their store of life-giving water. Finally, they encounter the Gold and Selkirk mountains, and another precipitation of rain follows, leaving but little to be taken from them by the rugged peaks of the Rockies. The average rainfall on the island, at Victoria, is about twenty-five inches, falling almost exclusively during the six months from October to March. At New Westminster, on the mainland coast, the mean annual rainfall during a period of seven years, was fifty-nine and