

very extensive investments for development, but commendable progress is now being made and the indications point to a most prosperous future for that whole country. The introduction of smelters to treat the ores is a very important move for the mining interests.

Comparatively little is heard of the agriculture of British Columbia, and many people will be surprised to learn that there is anything done in that line in the province. It is true that, as a whole, it can scarcely be called an agricultural country. Too much of the surface consists of mountains to make it a popular farming region. Still, there are many valleys admirably suited to cultivation, and the delta of the Fraser river is as fine farming land as could be desired. All the usual crops are grown in great abundance. These lands are only about four or five miles south of the city of Vancouver, so there is no trouble about getting to a good market. The capacity of these lands for the production of ordinary vegetables, grain, hay and fruit, seems almost unlimited. The alluvial soil along the Fraser and its tributaries, the Sumas and Pitt rivers, is cultivated, and there are a number of prosperous farm settlements on both sides of the rivers. It is estimated that there are a thousand square miles of choice agricultural land in the southern part of the province, and hundreds of thousands of acres in the Fraser, Spalumcheen, Salmon, Kootenay, Okanagan and Columbia districts, that may be utilized for cultivation and grazing purposes. In some places irrigation will be necessary to render the soil fertile, but the larger portion will yield abundant crops without artificial watering. The bench lands in the higher altitudes are unsurpassed for grazing. Along the south arm of the Fraser and in the valleys of the interior, apples, pears, plums, peaches, cherries, strawberries, gooseberries and other small fruits are grown, and in quality and quantity are unexcelled. A large portion of the land in the valleys that constitute the farming areas is prairie or very scantily timbered. These are not great treeless tracts, but small openings convenient to both wood and water. Of course, the choicest locations are the first taken, and subsequently settlers push back on the less eligible lands and make farms there. The construction of the proposed railroad lines through the southern part of the province will open communication to sections now considered too remote for successful settlement, and will furnish an attractive field for tillers of the soil. A tract of forty or fifty thousand acres of fine farm-

ing land on Stave river, thirty miles east of Vancouver and eight miles north of the railroad, has recently come into public notice. It is lightly timbered and the soil is very productive. There will always be a ready market for all the agricultural products that can be raised. The demand for fruit from the northwest provinces will make orcharding an especially profitable business in British Columbia.

Except a strip of country twenty miles on either side of the railway, which was granted the dominion for the railroad, the public lands belong to the provincial government. Both those of the province and of the dominion may be obtained by settlers on much the same terms as in the United States. Land may be bought from the government for \$2 50 an acre, or for a less amount in consideration of residence upon it. But a small per cent. of the total area is yet settled or taken for timber or minerals. There are many good locations unimproved.

The climate of the country west of the Cascade mountains is much milder than that of sections in the same latitude in the interior. The government signal station at New Westminster, only twelve miles from Vancouver, shows a mean annual temperature of forty-eight degrees, the average for January being thirty-four and July sixty-three degrees above zero. The mean annual rainfall is fifty-eight inches, the winter having twenty-three and the summer five inches, and spring and fall about equal amounts. Not much snow falls in the winter time, it being more of a wet season than a cold one. The fields do not lose their green, and flowers frequently bloom all winter. No disastrous storms occur. It is the same mild and equable climate that characterizes the whole Pacific coast, and it is delightful and healthful.

The position which Vancouver occupies, being the gateway through which western exports and imports for the whole dominion must pass, and commanding the patronage of a naturally rich province that is fast being developed, gives it extraordinary advantages. To say that it is profiting by these advantages is but to indicate that the people are intelligent and enterprising, and able to utilize the benefits that lie around them. More outside capital is now being invested in Vancouver than ever before. All kinds of business are experiencing more activity than ever before. Even in view of the almost phenomenal growth that has already occurred in that city, it is entirely safe to say the advancement this year will far exceed its past record.