

FIFTH REPORT
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OF THE PROVINCE OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1895-96.



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*To the Honourable EDGAR DEWDNEY,
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

The undersigned has the honour to present the Fifth Report of the Department of Agriculture of British Columbia.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

J. H. TURNER,
Minister of Agriculture.

*Department of Agriculture,
Victoria, 28th April, 1897*

FIFTH REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1895-96.

To the Honourable J. H. Tugner,
Minister of Agriculture:

SIR,—I have the honour to submit for your approval the Fifth Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, B. C., 1895-96.

Owing to unavoidable circumstances, no report was issued from the Department during the year 1895, and it was, as you are aware, deemed advisable to embody the work of 1895 and 1896 in one volume.

As no provision was made for the collection of statistics such as appeared in the report of 1894, this part of the work was not proceeded with, and none appear in this report, except as incidentally given by correspondents. It is to be regretted, for several reasons, that comprehensive statistics on many matters of vital importance cannot be included, but the expense incident to cover so large a field has been deemed a sufficient bar to their obtainment. As regards the utility of reliable statistics, there can be no question in the minds of those who have given the question their consideration and who are best competent to form an opinion on such subjects. The many inquiries reaching the Department from all quarters and from all classes of inquirers are proof of their value.

The interest in the agricultural and horticultural development of British Columbia has been shown by the number of invitations received to deliver addresses on behalf of British Columbia at several important farmers' conventions, notably, the Pan-American Farmers' Parliament at Atlanta, and the North-West Fruit Association meetings in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Since the last report the work of the Department has included various duties, and visits to all the important sections of the Province. A three days' session of the Farmers' Convention was held at Agassiz in August, 1895, which was attended by many of the leading agriculturists of the Province and the officers of the Experimental Farm, the report of which subsequently appeared in bulletin form, published by the Department of Agriculture. I afterwards accompanied Mr. Fletcher, Dominion Entomologist and Botanist, who was engaged in making a botanical and entomological collection. After that I visited various parts of the Province; from Vancouver I proceeded to Spence's Bridge and through Lower Nicola to Nicola *via* Upper Nicola and Campbell Creek to Kamloops, thence *via* Revelstoke to Nelson, and afterwards to the northern part of Washington.

Upper Nicola.

In Upper Nicola is included all that portion to the northward and including Quilchena. It is principally a pastoral country, but in the valley where water is available, excellent crops of all kinds are produced. At Quilchena, on Nicola Lake, where there is a hotel kept by Mr. E. O'Rourke, very large yields of roots, vegetables and grain are obtained by that gentleman, and in his garden all the fruits usually cultivated attain perfection. A good road runs through the district connecting it with Spence's Bridge and Kamloops, the road through the latter place having been improved of late by avoiding what has been known as Newman's Hill. Another branch of the road follows Campbell Creek Valley and comes out on the Thompson, seven miles above Kamloops.

Mr. Thos. Balman, Stump Lake, reports:—White Russia wheat yields best. Wheat for milling is not a success. Potatoes do well all over this district, especially as to quality.

<i>The Crops Grown.</i>	Mangolds do not do well, but turnips are a good crop, not raised extensively. All other roots and vegetables do well. Timothy is the most successful grass grown.
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Scarcely any fruit is raised. Currants do well, and crab-apples and ordinary varieties of apples do fairly well. Summer frosts do not affect fruit here. It is in the spring when the frosts give trouble.

This district is better adapted for cattle-raising than for any other industry, the markets for produce being too far away. Horse-raising has been very poor. There are five times as many horses raised than can be sold. This part of the district is not adapted

<i>Essentially a stock district.</i>	for sheep-raising. There is a large area of pasture land reaching from Stump Lake to Kamloops, in the Dominion Lands Belt, but not fit for cultivation.
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The top soil in low-lying places is a dark sandy loam, with gravelly sub-soil; hill-sides mostly gravelly; quality good. Most of the land in bottoms grows timothy and clover well, and the benches oats, wheat and barley.

Lower and Central Nicola.

Including all the country between Spence's Bridge and Nicola Lake, Coldwater Valley and Mammet Lake. The land rises gradually from 996 feet, at Spence's Bridge, to 1,920, which is the level of Nicola Lake, according to Mr. Clapperton, and probably a good deal higher, up the Coldwater and at Mammet Lake. Most of the farms are situated in Nicola proper, as the valley of the Nicola River, which the road follows from Spence's Bridge, becomes very circumscribed, and after a time becomes a mere defile. Mr. Gordon has a fine ranch. The fruit trees, which are young, looked very promising, and the only thing which troubled them was the green aphid. The distance between Spence's Bridge and the lower end of Nicola Lake is in the neighbourhood of fifty miles; the road had been washed away in places where it ran close to the river, and many of the newly made portions had been carried high up on the hill-sides, rendering the road well nigh impracticable for heavy teaming.

John Clapperton, Nicola, reports:—All grains grown in Nicola Division, and good varieties, if kept free from wild oats and other noxious weeds. A continuous drought last summer left all cereals under the average. Flour can be purchased as cheaply as can be grown, on account of the cost of irrigation and labour. Roots all grow well; did not suffer from frosts but affected by drought. Apples, plums, etc., better than last year; small fruits always all right. No dairying is carried on to any extent at Nicola; every one has milk and butter for their own use in summer, and many buy for winter use. Cattle-raising is the only industry that pays. The range stock are getting well graded with the best breeds. Beef cattle are in demand at going rates; sales cash; horses simply unsalable. The district is suitable for sheep-raising in some places, but the industry is limited. Swine are kept in numbers by two or three farmers; everyone keeps a few for his own use. Poultry kept for home consumption only. This is not a timber country. Very few locations on Provincial lands are now to be had in Nicola. As to railway lands I cannot speak, but from where the railway runs am of the opinion that it is only fit for pasturage. Nearly every improved farm at Nicola is for sale if price suits the vendor, but cannot say as to value, as no land has as yet changed hands.

H. D. Green-Armitage, Lower Nicola, reports:—All grain except beans and Indian corn are grown. Weather this year favourable. Wheat-raising not a profitable industry except for home use; more profitable to feed to stock than to sell. All roots and vegetables do well; there are no markets. The grasses grown are common red, alsike, mammoth and sainfoin clover, timothy, red top and orchard grass. Apples and small fruits are grown. The season has been a good one, and not affected by frosts or weather. The available number of cows not at present sufficient for a creamery, but that would soon be remedied if the demand for milk existed. The pasturage is suitable. Neither creameries nor cheese factories have been established. The chief industry in this valley is the raising of cattle. Sheep-raising can be carried on here, but doubtful of its being profitable on a large scale. The horse industry stagnant at present, over production, and are sold for what they will bring. Swine-raising, except in one instance, not carried on with any system; prices low; demand for bacon is constantly for the foreign cured article.

North Bend.

North Bend may fairly be considered the dividing line between what is known as the upper country or dry belt and the lower country, as it partakes somewhat of the character of both. It is situated in the canyons of the Fraser, and it may therefore be readily surmised that the area of agricultural land is limited in the vicinity; in fact, there are only patches, generally near the river, but such as they are, very fertile and well suited to fruit-growing, roots and vegetables.

Mr. John Lyons reports:—Farming by irrigation is productive in general, and if the farmer is alive to his work need not have a mortgage on his farm. The soil being a light sandy loam, most of the ploughing is done in the spring.

Mr. Herbert Cancellor, Government Officer, reports:—Together with the statistical returns of agriculture, I have the honour to submit to you a few remarks upon the portion of Yale District from which the same were gathered. Very few of the settlers between Lytton and Popcum (nearly all of whom are on the opposite side of the Fraser River from the railway) rely solely upon agriculture for a living; for although the number of acres owned or claimed are somewhat large on the returns, it is mostly very heavily timbered or heavy brush land, and requires great labour or expense to clear. When the Cariboo Road was in use, good livings could be made on a few acres by raising hay or grain; but now, without other means, such as mining, trading and railway work, it would be hard to make a living. There is little or no range to speak of, so dairying, except in a very small way, cannot be carried on. Partly for this reason and the trouble with salmon in the fall, hog-raising is not a success. It would be somewhat hard to recommend any particular line of agriculture to pursue; perhaps fruit or chickens would be the most profitable.

Many of the settlers are now turning their attention to fruit-raising, and many young orchards have been planted and are just beginning to bear fruit. All kinds seem to do well, especially plums, of which there was a big yield this year (1895); but owing to their plentifulness, the market at the Coast was over-supplied and it was hard to find sale for them, and much of the fruit was never gathered. It seems a pity that there should not be an easy method of drying fruit, as there is a large demand for evaporated fruit in the upper country amongst miners and farmers where fruit cannot be raised, or, better still, perhaps a fruit-canning or drying factory, say at Agassiz. Doubtless something of the sort will be started in a short time, for the whole of this part of the district grows excellent fruit. It would then be easy for settlers living on the far side of the river to bring their fruit to market by boat or canoe, whereas now the cost of shipping and labour attached to it is very great.

The summer was an exceptionally dry one, so hay crops, except in bottom lands, were somewhat light. For the same reason, turnips were a light crop.

Grain is only raised for chicken, horse and hog feed, and mostly threshed by hand.