

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

CROWN LAND SURVEYS

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER,

1891.



VICTORIA, B. C. :

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REPORT OF J. A. KIRK.

SURVEYS OF HERNANDO, PARTS OF CORTES AND READ ISLANDS.

The Honourable

*The Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works,
Victoria.*

NEW WESTMINSTER, December 29th, 1891.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit the following report on the surveys on Hernando, Cortes, and Read Islands, made by me last summer, in accordance with your instructions :—

These islands lie at the northern extremity of the Straits of Georgia. The Admiralty Chart shows that a line running north-westerly from the northern extremity of Texada Island would pass through Harwood, Savary, Hernando, and Mary Islands, and the peninsula forming the southern extremity of Cortes Island. The islands and peninsula mentioned are composed of boulder, clays, and stratified sands and silts; the shores are generally wide flats strewn with boulders. The banks rise abruptly from twenty to fifty feet or more.

With the exception of a similar strip of land at Cape Mudge, on the south end of Valdes Island, the neighbouring country is uniformly rocky, with deposits of sandy loam interspersed through the valleys.

Respecting Cape Mudge, and the islands and peninsula mentioned, Dr. Dawson, in his report on the geology of this region, says, "They may have originally formed a connected border of low terrace land."

HERNANDO ISLAND.

The fiftieth parallel of north latitude cuts the north shore of this island, on the Admiralty Chart, and the same authority places the one hundred and twenty-fifth degree of west longitude from Greenwich a short distance to the west of its west shore. The incoming tides flowing round the northern and southern extremities of Vancouver meet near the fiftieth parallel, and tide rips formed in consequence make navigation for small craft dangerous to the westward. Eastward, and in the immediate vicinity of the island, there is no danger from this cause. Tides rise twelve to fourteen feet.

There is a narrow strip of exposed rock along the north-eastern shore, about a mile in length.

STAG BAY.

A part of this rocky shore affords good anchorage. At one point tugs can come in to the shore and tie up. This is the only part of the island where landings can be made.

The surface is generally sandy, and reaches an elevation of about one hundred and fifty feet in the interior. There are numerous depressions or basins of loamy soil overlaid with vegetable deposits, which have filled up what were evidently at one time ponds. These spots when drained will make excellent agricultural land. The ridges are in many places composed almost entirely of fine grains of iron and colourless quartz.

Along the north shore it is claimed that in the fine silt deposits a fire-proof paint has been discovered. This layer or strata dips inland and is there probably covered with coarser material. On account of the pale tint of this earth the paint can be made any colour by the mixture with it of suitable pigments. The island has an area of two thousand five hundred acres.

CORTES ISLAND.

The south point of this island is about three and one-half miles north-west of Hernando Island. Its length from north to south is about fourteen miles, and its breadth about eight miles. It is for the most part rocky. The peninsula mentioned forms the only prominent exception. The surface of the peninsula is generally composed of boulder or gravelly clay, with hollows similar to those described on Hernando Island. Its area is about two thousand seven hundred acres. This point is exposed on all sides except to the north and north-east. The forest affords the only protection from winds from other quarters. Unless a considerable portion of the woodland is preserved, particularly along the shore, the agricultural capabilities of this point will be greatly lessened. The remainder of the island is rocky, with a very irregular shore line. On the west shore a narrow inlet widens into Gorge Harbour, forming a land-locked bay about two miles long. In the larger valleys there are deposits of sandy loam. There is a deposit of this kind running northerly from the westerly end of Gorge Harbour, with a strip