

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

CROWN LAND SURVEYS

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER,

1894.



VICTORIA, B. C. :

Printed by RICHARD WOLFENDEN, Printer to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.
1895.

SURVEY OF TOBA INLET, POWELL LAKE, AND KINGCOME INLET.

BY A. F. COTTON, P. L. S.

NEW WESTMINSTER, B. C., January 7th, 1895.

*T. Kains, Esq., Surveyor-General,
Victoria.*

SIR,—In compliance with instructions, dated July 12th, 1894, I proceeded to Toba Inlet and examined the land along the river with the following result:—

This valley at the mouth is about two miles wide, and retains this width for a distance of three miles, when the mountains begin to close in on one another until the width is reduced to one and one-quarter miles. It holds this width for a distance of eleven or twelve miles to the First Forks, where a stream comes in from the south-east. The valley then becomes a little wider; the mountains on the north side take a bend to the north. At the distance of nineteen or twenty miles the valley is very narrow, the mountains again closing in.

The river during the summer freshets is a swift stream, but free from rapids or falls; it winds its way through the valley from side to side.

The banks are timbered with cedar, alder, fir, maple, cottonwood, and spruce, with a dense growth of underbrush. The banks are higher than the land a short distance back, being made so by the continual deposit from the river.

This ridge varies in width from five to twenty-five chains, when the land becomes low and swampy, with very little timber of any kind standing. Numerous ponds, small lakes, and blind sloughs of great depth exist.

These are formed by the snow water from the mountains on either side, it being unable to find an outlet, the banks being higher.

The only piece of land fit for settlement is at the First Forks, and at a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles from the mouth. This consists of about two thousand acres of first-class land, the soil being a rich alluvial deposit, with a clay sub-soil. The timber is cedar, spruce, alder, hemlock, maple, and fir; the underbrush is very dense.

Anyone ascending the river and camping along the shores would think it a tract of good farming land, but a few chains away from the river the scene changes to one of desolation, it being a large swamp, with small brush in some places.

I attach a rough pencil map of the valley as far as I examined it. At the mouth of the river there is an Indian Reserve of over two thousand acres, a good portion of which is open grass land on which are a few head of cattle.

I then engaged more men and began the survey of Powell Lake.

This is a beautiful sheet of water, about forty miles long and from one to three miles wide. The shores are for the most part very rocky and bluff; there is no extent of agricultural land in the valley. The water is very clear and of a great depth, and is literally alive with trout, both large and small. The woods abound with deer, thus making it a hunter's paradise. It is easy of access, as there is a good trail from the salt water, distant one and one-quarter miles, with a rise of about four hundred feet in that distance. The outlet of the lake is a rough stream, but one that will eventually have to be improved to admit the millions of feet of timber (cedar and fir) being taken out. It is only a matter of a year or two before this will have to be done either by the Government or private parties. The proximity to the Vancouver and other mills is a great consideration; the distance is only sixty miles. The danger of bush fires is increasing year by year. This year the fires were in the immediate vicinity, the bush between the lake and the salt water was burnt. The Indians told me it

was started from a camp-fire built by some people going north and not taking the precaution to extinguish it. This was while I was making the survey. The smoke was very dense; some days I could not see ten chains ahead.

If this stream was improved and a moderate toll charged it would very soon pay for the improvements, as there are millions of feet of splendid timber waiting for an outlet. I would respectfully suggest that a survey be made with a view of estimating the cost of the necessary improvements. In making the survey of this lake I connected all the timber limits that have been taken up. After completing this I proceeded to Loughborough Inlet and surveyed eight lots, all of which are, I think, taken up by this time, as parties there were waiting for a survey before going on with improvements.

Loughborough Inlet is one of the short indentations along the coast, being only eighteen miles long. The west shore is all steep hill side and unfit for farming. The east shore is much more favourable; it rises with a short and easy slope to a bench, then another slope to another bench, thus affording a very good chance of ascending the hills.

The soil is a good clay, with very little or no stone. The timber on the lower slope and bench is principally hemlock and balsam; on the upper one, fir and cedar.

At the head of the Inlet two streams empty into it, one from the north into McBride's Bay, one from the west into Fraser Bay. At the mouth of the north stream is a piece of grass land which I laid out into two lots. This land is low and wet, and at high tides it is flooded. The valley of this stream is very narrow and subject to overflow every freshet. The soil is a good loam, but too low.

In the valley of the stream running into Fraser Bay is some good, level land, with a small piece of open grass land at the mouth. This land is higher than that at McBride's Bay. I did not survey any land in this valley. Owing to the fact that the month (September) was very wet, I was unable to do as much as I had calculated on doing, and having made arrangements with the SS. Comox to convey me to Kingcome Inlet on the 2nd October, I was obliged to leave some of it undone. During the month of September we had 19 days' rain. About 12 miles up the Inlet, and on the east side, I saw three men working a ledge of quartz, containing, they claimed, sulphates of gold and silver. I forwarded a specimen of same to your Department. A test of this mineral had been made in Vancouver, but the result was not very satisfactory. These men, nothing daunted, are still working the lead. Mr. Gray, who is living on his farm here and carrying on a logging camp, has been instrumental in locating several men on lots, and says he is bound to make it a good settlement. On the 2nd October, I took passage on SS. Comox, and proceeded to Kingcome Inlet, arriving there in the afternoon of the 3rd.

It is a beautiful sail from Alert Bay to Kingcome Inlet—a perfect archipelago, reminding one of the "Thousand Islands" in the St. Lawrence. Anyone going to Kingcome Inlet for the first time, with only the chart for a guide, would look for the river on the east side of the valley. I did this, and found myself in a slough with very little water in it, the tide being low. Mr. Halliday came along and guided me into the river channel, which is close to the mountain on the west side of the valley. I thought the river might have changed its bed since the chart was made, but, upon examination, I could see no trace of the river ever having been there.

The Kingcome River flows in a southerly direction through a valley varying in width from a half to one and a half miles. It is very crooked and rapid. The soil is a rich, sandy loam of great depth, as may be seen in the banks of the river at low water. The timber is principally spruce, hemlock, alder, and some cottonwood. The underbrush is very dense in some places.

At the mouth of the river, there are about 800 acres of grass land, without timber of any kind; about 300 acres, partly timbered with crab-apple and scattering spruce. This is cut by a large slough, which is navigable for canoes and boats when the tide is flooding.

This extends two miles up the river; after that it is all timber land.

The Indian Reserve lies about three miles up from the mouth. In the summer there are about 200 people living here. This is only their fishing station; here they obtain their supply of oolachan oil and salmon. They also gather a great quantity of roots (clover and others) on the grass land. They do not cultivate any of their large reserve. Below the Indian Reserve, the river flows nearly through the centre of the valley; from that up, as far as I went, the land is nearly all on the west side. The land is all level and of a uniform quality, it being a rich, sandy loam.

The river, at the time of my arrival, was very low ; shortly afterwards, a rain set in, lasting three days. This produced a flood, which lasted over a week and then fell. A few days before I returned, we had a four days' rain ; the river rose level with its banks. Previous to this, a quantity of snow had fallen on the mountains ; this was all taken off by the rain, which increased the volume of water to a great extent. The highest water occurs in July and August, when some of the land is flooded. The grass land at the mouth is flooded during the summer freshets ; also by the high tides, which occur every month. Messrs. Halliday and Kirby, who have been there for over a year, say a 3-foot dyke is sufficient to protect it against the highest water they have seen.

The fame of this valley seems to have been pretty well circulated, for, when the steamboat came up for me, there were five men on board, who had heard of it and came up with the intention of locating. Whether they have done so or not, I do not know.

Mr. E. A. Halliday has been living on his farm for 12 months ; he has built a very good house, has seven head of cattle, and a small herd of pigs. His crop of vegetables was excellent. H. Kirby has 20 chains of dyke built, and his house must be finished by this time. Five more settlers were expected up in November. One of my party has applied for a piece of land, and has gone up again to build, so it looks as if quite a settlement would be established in a very short time.

The great drawback to it at present is the difficulty of getting in and out to steamboat communication. Alert Bay is the nearest post-office, a distance of 50 miles, and in the fall and winter it is not certain how long one may be *en route*. No doubt, when a sufficient number of settlers establish themselves there, a monthly mail service will be given them.

The weather during my stay was very fine, considering the time of the year. There was very little rain, and when I left we had had no frost, and the leaves were still on the trees.

From Mr. Halliday's report of the valley, there still remains quite large tract of land to be surveyed. If this is to be done, I would respectfully suggest that the survey be started in the beginning of May, as it would be much easier ascending the river then than later on, when the water is rising.

I had made arrangements for a steamboat to call for me on the 14th November, which it did. I left there at 6 a.m., and arrived in Vancouver in the evening of the 16th.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. F. COTTON, P.L.S.

and twenty miles, has been prepared for office reference, and is found to be very useful in locating at a glance any parcel of land which has been surveyed, the official plan of which is plotted in many cases upon isolated sheets. This map includes all the recent surveys in the valley of the Squamish River, and is drawn upon a scale of one mile to an inch, showing all lands and timber claims in their relative positions, besides the numerous Indian Reserves scattered throughout the country included within the limits of the sheets.

A similar map of the Sayward District, drawn upon the same scale, has also been prepared, showing fifty miles of the coast line of Vancouver Island extending from the fiftieth parallel of north latitude to the mouth of Salmon River, and includes Valdes, Cortez, and Read Islands, with the location of all alienated lands, besides those which have been recently surveyed for settlement purposes. The Department having received numerous requests for information respecting the country covered by this map, it has been considered advisable to reduce the plan to such a scale as would allow it to be lithographed in a single sheet. This work is now in hand, and will shortly be published.

SURVEYS.

The work of laying out the Crown lands has not been so extensively prosecuted as in former years, for the reason that the appropriation devoted to that service has not been so great, and in view of the fact that large areas are now surveyed in different parts of the Province and ready to meet the requirements of intending settlers, a portion of the vote has been disbursed in extending the photo-topographic system of survey inaugurated two years ago. The appended reports of the different surveyors engaged upon Government work during the past season speak for themselves, and will doubtless prove of some interest to those at least who make a practice of reading departmental blue books.

The subdivision of certain Crown lands into small holdings under the provisions of the "Land Amendment Act, 1894," has been performed in two sections of the Province, with the result that considerable difficulty was experienced in making the award to the proper applicant, on account of the number who wished to avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded of commencing farming on a small scale. Mr. Peter Leech subdivided section 42, Lake District, into twelve lots, each of about $6\frac{2}{3}$ acres, all of which, with one exception, have been leased, according to Statute, for a period of five years. Mr. E. B. Hermon similarly laid out the Government Reserves situated in the New Westminster District, which are adjacent to the highway and electric tram-car line connecting the cities of New Westminster and Vancouver. These Reserves were divided into sixty-three small holdings of from five to eight acres each, and up to the present time the majority of them have been applied for and leases issued.

The operations conducted by Mr. Palmer were in continuation of those commenced last year, and consisted in the work of laying out into sections the available land situated upon the islands lying between Vancouver Island and the Mainland of the Province. He noticed a marked influx of settlers upon the territory covered by his last season's operations, and speaks in the highest terms respecting the advantages of this favoured locality. He draws attention to certain lagoons and bays in which the Olympian oyster is to be found of a size much above the average of those found elsewhere, and in such quantities as to warrant some enterprising person in opening up the industry of making regular shipments to the cities throughout the Province.

Representations having been made to this Department that the valley at the head of Toba Inlet contained a large tract of land suitable for settlement, Mr. A. F. Cotton was instructed to thoroughly explore that section of the country, and if he found the reports concerning it to be correct to make such subdivisions, in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act, as the configuration of the valley would permit. His report, herewith appended, does not, however, hold out very strong inducements to the prospective settler, and thoroughly exemplifies how a casual observer may be deceived when viewing a portion of country from a canoe or boat. Having completed this exploration Mr. Cotton made a stadia hair traverse of the greater portion of the shore line of Powell Lake, and in doing so connected together all the timber limits located in that section of the country. The remainder of the season was devoted to subdivision work situated at Loughborough and Kingcome Inlets, where it was stated large areas of land suitable for settlement existed, but which upon examination were found to have been overestimated, similarly to that at the head of Toba Inlet.

As numerous inquiries are constantly being made for lands adjacent to the City of Victoria, it was deemed advisable to subdivide all the unsurveyed portions of the Districts of