ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BUREAU OF PROVINCIAL INFORMATION, 1905.

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Victoria, B. C., 22nd February, 1906.

The Honourable F. J. Fulton,
Provincial Secretary,
Victoria, B. C.

Sir,—I have the honour to present my report as Secretary of the Bureau of Provincial Information for the year ending December 31st, 1905.

As predicted in my previous report, the demand for information of the character given by this Bureau is continually on the increase, and the dissemination of bulletins and other informative literature has resulted in a large accession of population during the year.

There is, however, a great scarcity of reliable data as to the Northern Interior. This fact is much to be regretted, as the prospect of a railway traversing that portion of the Province has stimulated inquiries regarding the Cassiar, Omineca and northern Cariboo Districts. Advantage has, however, been taken of every opportunity for gathering information on the subject, and steps are being taken to issue a Bulletin covering it.

The stimulus that present and projected railway construction will give to agricultural immigration emphasises even more than heretofore the necessity for not only geographic but topographic surveys of undeveloped Crown lands. It would much aid intending settlers were field-notes covering the natural characteristics of all land surveyed filed in the Government Offices for the districts affected.

A satisfactory increase has taken place in the population of the Province, and the immigration has, on the whole, been of a most gratifying character. One flattering feature may be noted in this connection, *i. e.*, the large influx from Manitoba of retired farmers who have purchased homes in the vicinity of the coast cities. While not increasing the productive power of the Province, such an increase to population assists materially in enlarging our home markets.

The principal immigration to the Province, however, during the past year took place to the Okanagan District, where many farmers, dissatisfied with the rigorous climate of Manitoba and the North-West, have purchased land and commenced the raising of fruit. Numerous large holdings have been subdivided and placed on the market, and these subdivisions are being rapidly taken up. Besides increasing the fruit production of the Province very largely, a noticeable feature has been the accession to taxable value of land, which by reason of this change from stock-raising to fruit culture has enlarged from a very low valuation to $70 or more per acre.

The great extension that has taken place in lumbering operations has also been the occasion of many inquiries. These were met by the issuance of Bulletin No. 21, of which a large number have been distributed.

The work of this Bureau is largely cumulative in character, and satisfactory results can only be achieved by continuous preparation of statistics. Constant revision is necessary to bring the bulletins up to date, and it is proposed to reduce the size of some of these publications and to issue more frequent editions. An endeavour will be made to keep the latest detailed information regarding each locality on hand, however, and where a bulletin may not contain the specific data required, supplement it with a written communication.

The work of the Bureau of Provincial Information may be summarised as follows :—

During the year the following bulletins and pamphlets were prepared and printed :

	Copies.
No. 9.—Great Undeveloped Areas of British Columbia (5th Ed. revised)	10,000
" 10.—Agriculture in British Columbia (5th Ed. revised)	10,000
" 17.—Game in British Columbia	3,000
" 21.—Timber in British Columbia	10,000
Pamphlet, Bulkley Valley	8,000
Total	41,000

There was also printed an edition of the sketch map of the Province, numbering 18,800 copies.

Of these and previous publications of the Bureau, 44,586 copies have been distributed since the last report, of which 14,500 were sent to the office of the Agent-General in London. The detail of distribution from this office is as follows :—

Bulletin No. 9	7,902
" 10	4,554
" 16	200
" 17	2,000
" 19	4,266
" 21	5,664
Bulkley Valley Pamphlets	5,500
Total	30,086

A large number of miscellaneous reports and pamphlets were also distributed. These included departmental reports and copies of various Acts affecting mines, land and agriculture. Several Boards of Trade, Settlers' Associations and other institutions of a similar character also furnished literature affecting their different localities. These were carefully distributed in answer to inquiries regarding the districts affected. As heretofore, a special map of the North-Western Interior accompanied each copy of Bulletin No. 9. The total number of documents of this character sent out was approximately 5,000.

In this connection I deem it expedient to point out that the Bureau is anxious to place its facilities for dissemination at the disposal of any institution publishing informative literature, this being, of course, limited in most instances to distribution in answer to inquiries.

During the period covered by this report 4,255 letters were received and answered, the total number of mail packages sent out being approximately 10,000. A large proportion of those received asked information regarding agricultural lands, but considerable interest has also been shown in mining and timber. A number of communications requesting information of a technical character were handed to the proper departments for attention.

While a large proportion of the inquiries received originated in the United States and Canada, a marked increase was noticeable in those from other countries. The number of letters from the United Kingdom largely exceeded that of last year, and were, in most instances, requests for information of a character not readily accessible to the office of the Agent-General. That official, also, made many inquiries of a specific nature, which were replied to at once.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R. M. PALMER,

Secretary, Bureau of Information.

VICTORIA, B.C.
Printed by RICHARD WOLFENDEN, V.D., I.S.O., Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.
1906