

Victoria, B. C.

October 8th, 1910.

To:

The Hon. Richard McBride L.I.B., K. C., Premier
and Members of the Executive Council.

Sir:-

I beg to report re the Provincial Park on Vancouver Island as follows:-

Owing to the great increase in population and industrial enterprises all over the world, many countries have considered it necessary, within the last decade, to set aside as reserves large or small tracts of country, in order that the present and future generations may have these enclosures as recreation grounds and view the grandours and beauties of nature in an unaltered form, and at the same time to act as game preserves, and thereby prevent the total extinction of different species of animals.

Countries that have not as yet actually formed these reserves in name, have, on the other hand, made such stringent regulations concerning industrial enterprises within the boundaries of their natural scenery, that one may call these 'district reserves'. Taking Switzerland as an example this confederation is practically one large reserve for the use of tourists.

A large tract of land set apart, as a reserve, or otherwise protected, is by no means a dead loss to the country from a commercial standpoint, so long as it contains scenery worthy of the name, as it not only attracts people from the surrounding country, but thousands and thousands of tourists flock into it annually, thereby providing occupation to a large number and besides leaving a large amount of money in the country.

In 1876 Dr. E. Stenel reckons the total receipts

coming into Switzerland from foreign visitors at something like \$24,000,000 annually. To give an idea how this amount has increased :-

In 1880 there were about 1002 inns built for visitors, containing 58,137 beds, of an estimated capital value of 320,000,000 francs. In 1894, the number had risen to 1693 with 88,634 beds, with a capital ~~xxxx~~ value of 519,000,000 francs. In 1899 the number of inns had increased to 1896, with 104,876 beds with a capital value of 550,000,000, francs.

Almost every little mountain village now calls itself a health resort or open air cure.

Not to mention that large tracts of country that were isolated before on account of bad communications, have been opened up by railways and splendid roads, which would except for the tourist have never been feasible, on account of the great cost.

The influx of foreign visitors into Switzerland has become such an important factor to the country that in 1903 the Government took over four out of the five main lines of railway within the Confederation, at the enormous cost of 1,000,000,000 francs, in order to better regulate the enormous summer and winter traffic caused by the influx of tourists on these lines, and at the same time to standardize and make more complete the systems of rebates on fares, and of advertising employed by the railways. Now all over Europe, in every little post office and railway station one finds large placards pointing out the beauties and advantages of Switzerland as a health resort and beauty spot. The railways now issue return fares at remarkably low prices.

The essential features of a reserve, or Park, are that it contains scenery of great beauty, is easily accessible, and has a good climate. Accommodation will follow as a natural course of event.

I think I am right in saying that the Provincial Park on Vancouver Island meets all these requirements.

POSITION AND SCENERY.

As one travels north-west through Vancouver Island the country becomes more and more rugged and mountainous, and from where the Alberni Canal cuts into the heart of the Island and for about one hundred miles north west, the central portion of the Island consists of a series of mountains covered by glaciers and eternal snow and deeply intersected by valleys running in all directions.

It is within this region that the Park is situated in the shape of a right angled triangle, with its north westerly apex some few miles to the south of the fiftieth parallel, and about twenty six miles from the east coast of the Island. It then follows the boundary line of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway grant for about forty four miles in a south easterly direction and from there turns due west until met by a perpendicular dropped from the northwestern apex. This enclosed area contains between two hundred and seventy and three hundred square miles of mountains, glaciers, rivers and lakes.

This district is divided by nature into three portions, by the deep ^{and} narrow valley of the Campbell River, with its tributary the Elk River. The main valley containing Buttle Lake, enters the Park on its north eastern boundary line about twenty five miles from the south eastern angle, and continues in a southerly direction, as a broad sheet of water for about fifteen miles, where it splits up into smaller valleys, gradually rising and losing themselves in the mountains to the south.

Buttle Lake is 18½ miles long and one mile in width and is one of the prettiest spots imaginable, the shores and hill sides being covered with timber, which gradually gives place to rugged and steeply pointed masses

of rock towering in many places from four to five thousand feet above the lake, and covered, on their northern faces by perpetual snow.

To the east of the lake the Albert Edward Range and Alexandria Range dominate the country.

These mountains rise from the lake in steep bluffs ~~and~~ interspersed with ravines, down which flow small creeks, in many places having vertical falls of many hundred feet. These two ranges form a natural boundary to the north east. Towards the south of Butties Lake they fall considerably until they meet the valleys and foothills, which again form the northern boundary of the range known as the Mine Peaks. This range, with its glaciers, two and three hundred feet thick, lies a few miles without the Park boundaries.

To the west of Butties Lake, and bounded on the north by the Elk River, the mountains are steeper and more rugged and split by one or two very deep valleys which however soon lose themselves in this complexity of mountain peaks. This western division contains the highest peaks within the Park and perhaps on the whole island. Where the Elk River cuts into them, off toward the north the precipices are often from two to three ~~xxxxxx~~ thousand feet in height. Towards the centre of this district there is a magnificent range (unnamed) with three peaks towering above the surrounding country and shutting out the view to the south, even from the summit of Crown Mountain.

Wolf Creek Valley, half way down the Lake appears to have its source somewhere near the peaks.

At the southwestern extremity of Butties Lake Myra River enters the Lake after falling over a series of cascades approaching something like four hundred feet in height.

The northern group of mountains, culminating in

~~the~~ Crown Mountain are bounded to the South by Elk Valley and to the East by Mt. Flanagan and Myra, which rise around the Upper Campbell Lake.

The view from Crown Mountain well repays a long journey in itself. To the northwest is a glorious view of the Victoria Peaks, dominating the surrounding country. One of these, King George Peak, rises for perhaps three thousand feet, with sheer walls to all sides and the whole leaning over towards the north at an alarming angle.

To the north, near at hand, and fed by the snow fields of Crown Mountain, there is a deep emerald green lake entirely shut in on three sides by the horseshoe formation of Crown Mountain. This lake is the source of the Adams River, which winds away to the north through a deeply indented forest landscape until it disappears behind a long range of mountains in the middle distance. In the far distance, crowning this range, one sees the snow covered mountains of the mainland between Knight and Bute Inlets.

To the east, through a gap between the Myra and Flanagan Mountains, a long valley opens out, containing the lower Campbell Lake and the seaboard around Cape Mudge.

To the south the eye meets a never ending series of peaks and glaciers stretching to the horizon and too innumerable to describe or specify.

The southern face of Crown Mountain drops down in a series of precipices into the deep and narrow valley formed by the north Fork of the Elk River which has its origin in this range.

The northern face is less steep, but covered with perpetual snow fields.

The reserve is an ideal spot for people desirous of mountaineering as once within the Park they have the choice of an unlimited number of peaks upon which to

exercise their skill.

CLIMATE

The climate, from a tourists' standpoint must be nearly ideal, as the valleys are cool even in summer with a morning and evening breeze blowing along the lake.

In winter the Park should form an ideal spot for people desirous of taking skiing and snow shoeing, as any number of fine trips could be taken. There is ample snow all through the winter and owing to the Park's height above the sea the weather is fairly constant.

The lakes and rivers are well stocked with fish and there are quite a large number of Elk in certain portions of the Park.

ACCESSIBILITY

The easiest mode of access at present is by the Campbell River route - first by wagon road to McIvor Lake and then through a short slough connecting it with Campbell River.

At low water this slough is difficult for boats, from this point a wagon road would be required up to Buttles Lake as at present there are quite a number of rapids and log jams between the lower and upper Campbell Lakes. People wishing to enter the Park from the north, which they can do by keeping to the north of Mt. Flanagan and entering the Park between the latter and Mt. Myra from which point Crown Mountain is accessible; then by keeping down the north Fork of the Elk River they could at its junction with the Elk either turn west and travel through the western mountains coming out at Wolf Creek or by turning East from the Campbell River within a few miles of Buttles Lake.

The second alternative is by the Trail which runs above direct to Buttles Lake, from a point two miles ~~below~~ the Lower Campbell Lake.

Third by putting a road in from Buttles Lake from Campbell River townsite. This latter road would at the same time open up a large tract of country, heavily timbered and perhaps to a large extent fertile along the valley of the Campbell River which is broad all along here.

There is no doubt that within a very short time hotels will spring up on both the upper and lower Campbell Lakes, as the fishing is excellent.

From the south the Park may be harder to get at as the entrance from Great Central Lake via the nine Peaks Divide and Lake Margaret presents considerable difficulties owing to the Pass being some 4,500 feet above the Great Central Lake and a large number of Snow slides coming down into the valley beyond. But there is a chance that by continuing the road for about 8 miles from the mouth of Great Central Lake an easy access might be found up the Ash River Divide passing Deep Lake and coming out about three miles from the top of Buttles Lake.

If this is feasible, people desirous of doing some walking could leave the road at Great Central Lake and continue over Nine Peaks Pass and down the Price River to Buttles Lake. On the way they would see some of the finest scenery possible.

By putting in good roads and hotels or allowing only competent people to build good hotels at suitable intervals within the Park and fixing the charges for transportation along the roads, there is no doubt but that the Provincial Park will become one of the great attractions of the Pacific Coast.

In conclusion I beg to state that as I consider the acquisition of this Park such an important one, and as it will be such an important asset, available alike from Western Mainland points as from Vancouver Island, when the necessary means of entering the Park are provided, I would strongly recommend that a sufficient sum be placed in the Estimates for the coming Year ^{as to} so have the necessary work done.

I beg to append herewith copies of the supplementary reports of Mr. W. J. H. Holmes; C. F. Haslam and A. Lionel Hudson on the standing timber within the Park limits, as well as official recount of the whole exploration trip.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Price Ellison

Chief Commissioner of Lands