

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VICTORIA REGION,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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of the Degree of Master of Arts, in the  
Department of Geography

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## PREFACE

The Victoria Region has already been the subject of one regional geographic study<sup>1</sup> and one physical planning report.<sup>2</sup> While these studies have disclosed much of the nature of the existing pattern of settlement, a thorough examination of the manner of its evolution has been precluded by the primary purpose of each. The present excursion into the historical geography of the area in the vicinity of British Columbia's capital city is designed to fill this gap; to examine the manner in which the regional landscape has attained its present form during the history of its settlement.

In considering the nature of the problem posed by a suggestion of this kind two alternative methods were presented. The one, confined to a detailed examination of the precise pattern of physical development, would have precluded one aspect of the second which is thought to be of great importance. This is the aspect of the economic and historical environment within which settlement in the region has evolved. In the absence of any existing, comprehensive treatment of the history of the region what was

1 "A Regional Study of Southeastern Vancouver Island", A.L. Farley, a thesis submitted to the Department of Geology and Geography, The University of British Columbia, August, 1949

2 "The Capital Region Takes Stock", J.W. Wilson, a report to the Capital Region Planning Board of B.C., October, 1954

required, it was felt, was examination not only of the internal process of growth but of those external, influential forces in local settlement also.

On this basis the second alternative, which considered settlement in the Victoria Region in the perspective of its wider geographic relationships, seemed the more advisable. The limitation which it imposes upon the detailed consideration of the evolution of settlement from its inception to the present time, is more than offset by the clarity with which the major considerations of local settlement emerge from this broader treatment.

For the purposes of convenience this paper has been drawn in three sections. The first of these treats with the physical circumstances within which settlement was to evolve, drawing attention to the physiographic isolation which creates a regional homogeneity as it prescribes the limitations and advantages for prospective settlement. The second is concerned with the primary economic, political and social circumstances which have ordered the magnitude and quality of development. The third affords a description of the manner in which settlement has progressed in the Victoria Region as a result of the combination of social and natural circumstances.

The material for this study was available in a large number of widely scattered sources. The geographic study of the region already mentioned together with a

number of published and unpublished reports of various departments of the Provincial and Federal governments form the basis upon which the first section of this paper was written. The Provincial Archives contain in addition to many early histories of British Columbia descriptive, statistical and graphic evidence upon which the second section could be constructed. The third section has been written from information available in the Archives and interpreted through the testament of reliable individual observation. Extensive field work during a period of eighteen months' continuing employment with the Capital Region Planning Board of B.C. has provided the writer with a familiarity with the region which has greatly aided in the process of interpreting the material from these various sources.

The writer wishes to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the many individuals who have assisted by making information for this study available. Most particularly his thanks are due to Mr. Willard Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist, for permitting liberal use of the library facilities, and to Mr. Brahm Wiesman, Director, The Capital Region Planning Board, for his critical appraisal and suggestions in the formulation of the study. To Professors Harold Spence-Sales, Chairman, Physical Planning Committee, McGill University, and F.K. Hare, Chairman, Department of Geography, McGill University,

much of the credit for the suggestion of the topic of this paper and the method of its exposition accrues.

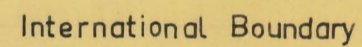
The work itself could not have been undertaken without the assistance of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation whose provision of fellowship funds is gratefully acknowledged.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PHYSICAL SETTING

Between Victoria and the mainland coasts of British Columbia and Washington State lie the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca. These two arms of the Pacific Ocean occupying structural depressions in the cordilleran system, the one a portion of the Pacific Coast downfold and the other transversing the direction of this strike and of uncertain origin, sever the Vancouver range from its neighbours causing it to rise as an island. Following the northwesterly direction of the strike of the range which comprises most of its area, Vancouver Island extends along the diagonal of the rectangle bounded by the forty-eighth and fifty-first degrees of northern latitude and the one hundred and twenty-third and one hundred and twenty-ninth degrees of western longitude. Having an overall length of two hundred and ninety miles, in width it is, on the average, a little more than one-fifth of that distance.

For the most part the Island's terrain, that of a maturely dissected, glaciated Tertiary peneplain, is roughly mountainous presenting a physical environment inhospitable to permanent settlement. But small areas of lowland existing peripherally on the Island littoral possess fertility of soil, combine variety with gentle-



0 10 20 30 40 50  
miles to scale

VANCOUVER

VICTORIA  
REGION

Figure 1



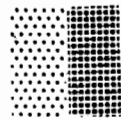
ness in relief and provide conditions of climate which have proved most attractive to settlers. The lowlands of west, and more particularly, east coasts together with the valleys of the larger rivers, the Comox and Cowichan among others, afford these natural qualities in varying degree and comprise the total of permanently habitable land on the Island.

The urban centre of Victoria lies at the south-eastern extremity of Vancouver Island. With a built up area exceeding fourteen square miles, the city extends from a focus upon the twin harbours of Victoria and Esquimalt across a portion of the Island's south-east coast lowland. The plain which it occupies stretches northward in a narrow peninsula confined between the Strait of Georgia on the east and the fiord-like Saanich Inlet on the west. Twenty miles to the north the waters merge breaking the continuity of the lowland. To the west and south of the city the plain is even more restricted in width, hemmed in by the upland which to the northwest describes in an enclosing arc a finite boundary beyond which settlement does not extend.

These physiographic relationships are expressed graphically in the accompanying diagram (Figure 2) from which, by following the continuous five hundred foot contour and the shoreline, limits to the area available to settlement in the region of British Columbia's capital

S. E. VANCOUVER ISLAND

Upland & Lowland



land over 500 ft.  
land over 1000 ft.

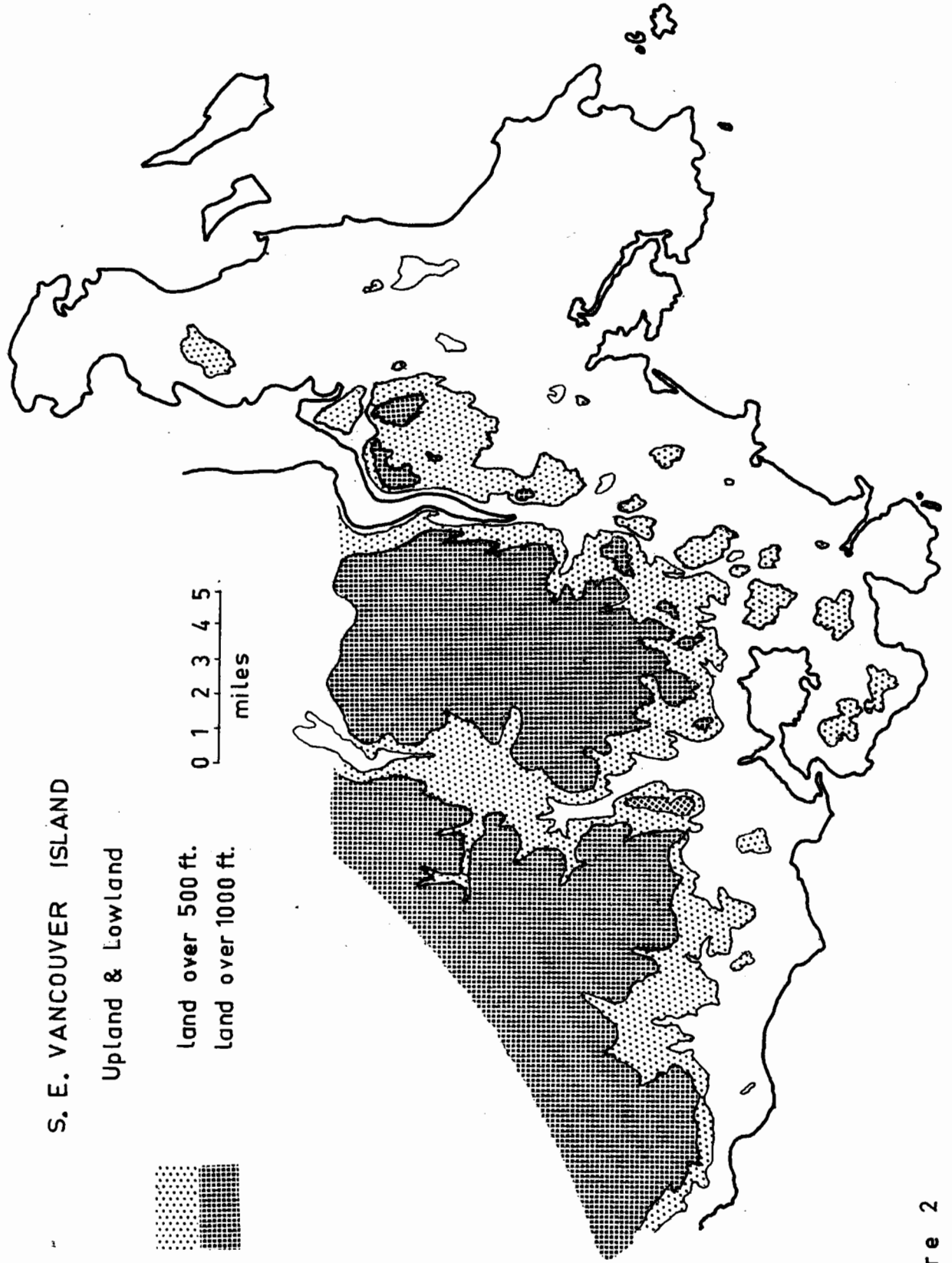
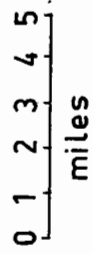


Figure 2

city may be roughly described. More precise statement of the region's physiographic boundaries is contained in the subsequent diagram (Figure 3) which provides better indication of landform in the area. The pictures presented, although similar in many respects, differ considerably in detail. The most evident divergence is the manner in which the southwestern area, that of Sooke, appears quite separated from the eastern portion of the region in the latter diagram - a fact which does not emerge from an examination of the relief map. In view of the importance of the topographic control upon settlement an argument may be entertained for drawing a boundary for the region which would exclude Sooke. However, partly for the reason given by Farley that "from the standpoint of economics, transportation patterns, sequent occupance and land utilization, the western and southwestern portions of the region are closely knit with the remainder"<sup>1</sup>, and partly for the reason that by including Sooke the region would contain "almost all the land on the southern tip of Vancouver Island which is suitable<sup>2</sup> for development" the broader boundary has been selected.

The area so described approximates that of ten

1 A.L. Farley, "A Regional Study of Southeastern Vancouver Island", p. 11

2 J.W. Wilson, "The Capital Region Takes Stock", p. 1

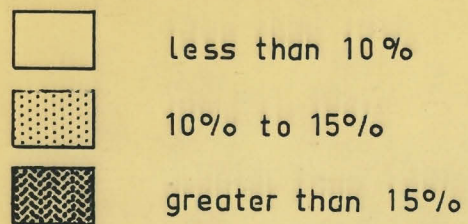
Land Registration Districts amounting to a total of slightly more than two hundred and twenty-four square<sup>1</sup> miles.

This is the area covered by the map of land slopes (Figure 3). From this diagram it will be appreciated that a considerable diversity of topography exists within the region. In particular two areas are included which do not properly belong within the lowland. The first of these, the most westerly portion of the peninsula area, is an upland intermediary in character between the Tertiary surface of the Vancouver range, and the Island plain. The second is the upland which in the west separates the Sooke district from the eastern portion of the region. This highland promontory of the Vancouver range represents the division between the west and east coast lowlands.

To the latter the Sooke Basin belongs, being the most southerly of a number of pockets to which the west coast lowland has been reduced by the process of wave erosion. Originally continuous over the total length of the Island, this plain was formed of a single sedimentary series resting unconformably upon the crystalline mass of the island backbone. In the pre-glacial erosive cycle it was reduced to peneplanation at a level approximately

1 These districts are mapped and their areas shown in Appendix "A".

# SLOPE OF LAND VICTORIA REGION



0 1 2 3 4 5 miles to scale

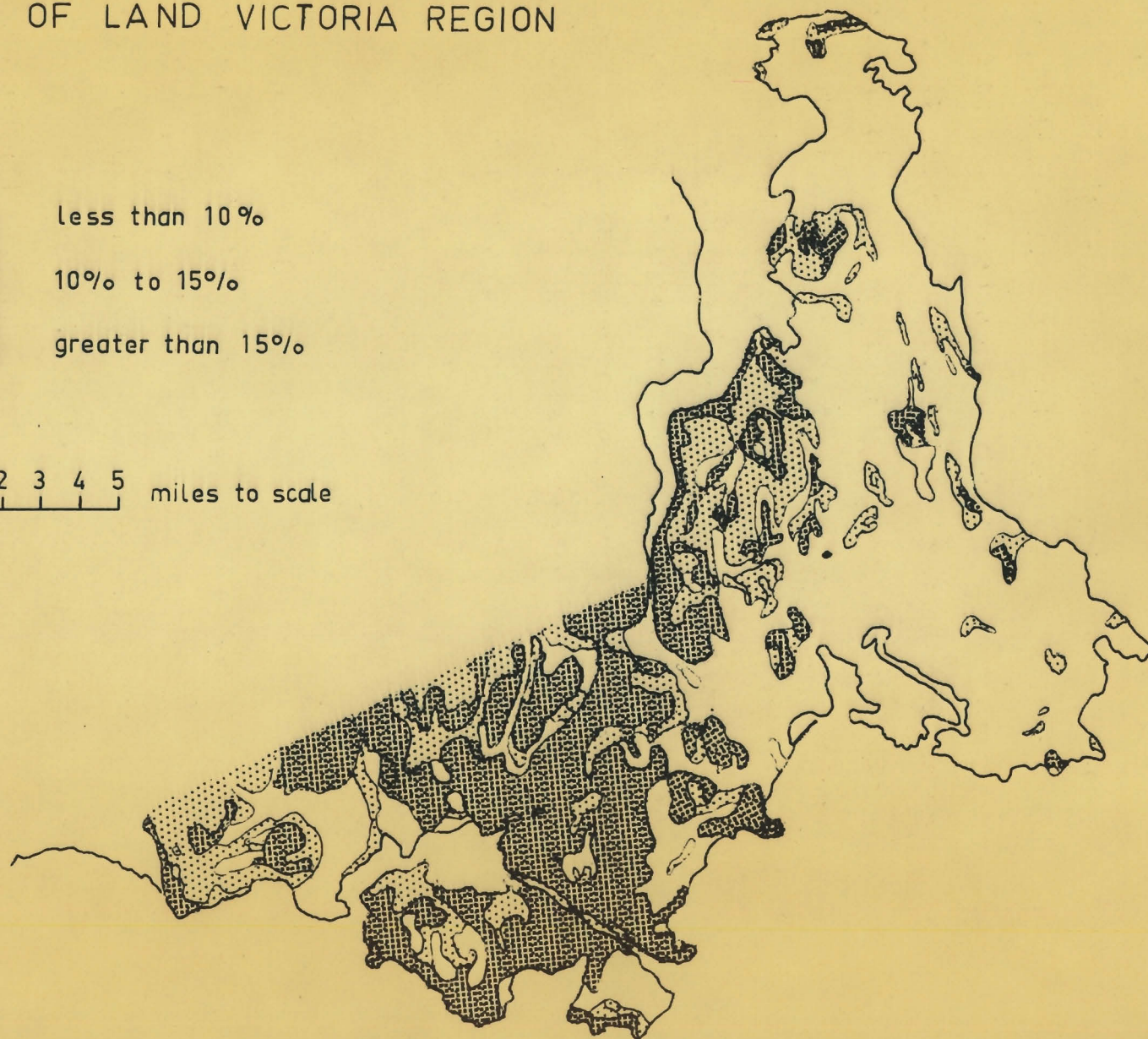


Figure 3

two hundred feet above present sea level, and as mentioned, cut back by the sea until only those portions remained which were protected between headlands of the crystalline rock. The headland of this type which shows clearly on the map of land slopes has, as the Highland district, resisted settlement except in a few widely spaced, topographically favourable locations.

It is within the rest of the region, the lowland proper, that settlement has shown its most consistent development. With the exception of Sooke Basin, as already noted, this lowland is a portion of the more extensive south-east coast lowland of Vancouver Island. The plain, a shoulder of the great synclinal basin which when falling below the level of the sea forms the Strait of Georgia, by its more protected location has not been as severely subject to erosion by wave action as its western counterpart and is therefore both of greater width and more continuous. The exception to its continuity provided by Saanich Inlet is of course most important by isolating the Peninsula area from the rest of the lowland, and imposing a limitation upon the area over which settlement directly contiguous to Victoria may spread.

Although the terms of lowland and plain have been used interchangeably in the description thus far, the former is the more applicable to this region which has



considerable relief if on only small scale beside that of Vancouver Island. The level general to the lowland is surmounted in many places by monadnocks. These rising to heights as great as one thousand feet, though generally considerably less, while failing in their impressiveness by virtue of their juxtaposition to the upland peaks, in comparison with, for example, the Monteregian Hills of the St. Lawrence Plain, stand as natural parkland above the cultivated landscape at their base. Between these spreads a country gently rolling which was created upon the scoured off surface of a first glacial advance. Deposition upon this surface as the ice retreated was in the form of an irregular drift mantle. A second advance of the ice modified this pattern, eroding hollows where it again bared the rock surface, though leaving long esker-like ridges in the protected lee of monadnocks. These, the monadnocks, underwent modification as the ice flowed about them scouring their outline to more rounded forms. At that time the land surface was formed much as it remains today. At the coast there has been alteration; where unconsolidated deposits extend to the sea they have been vigorously retrograded giving rise to a mature shoreline characterized by spits, lagoons and sandy beaches which exists in odd proximity to the youthful one presented where bedrock meets the sea.

As the ice retreated for the last time the landscape it revealed was harsh by comparison with that to be seen today. Amelioration of climate and parallel development of plant reinvasion and soil formation have transformed the region into what is accepted across the nation as one of the most scenically attractive in Canada. The basis of the unique vegetation and of the soils which support it lies in the region's climate.

Both in British Columbia and in Canada the occurrence of a true Mediterranean climatic type is confined to this very small portion of its Pacific coast: to the lowland of the Saanich Peninsula. Whether classified by the Koppen or Thornethwaite systems the predominant characteristic of summer drought is clearly accentuated as a feature of the climate belonging, in the Koppen scheme, within the class Csb, and within that of Thornethwaite, to the  $B_1B's_2a'$ . That the region does in fact have a general precipitational and thermal scheme of Mediterranean type is often not emphasized sufficiently to dispel a widespread popular belief that all climates on the Pacific Coast are of the marine temperate type, characterized by heavy rainfall and little variation in temperature. Naturally all studies of the area make reference to the summer drought, but emphasis upon this aspect of the regional climate is most generally conceded in the attempt to type it within the framework of the



characteristics of the larger marine temperate climatic belt within which it lies. That the emphasis does belong with the aspects that are best described as "Mediterranean" is illustrated by the importance that these have in agricultural land use, the attraction they have provided for large numbers of permanent settlers from the climatically more rigorous places east of the Rocky Mountains, and the influence they have exerted in the promotion of the tourist industry.

That less attention has been paid to the regional climate in its "Mediterranean" aspect is also due in very large part to the fact that this arises less from the commonly important factor of latitudinal location than from local, principally orographic, considerations. These have been described in their causal relationships by Kerr as follows:

"The Pacific anticyclone is the dominant meteorological control in the warm season. It normally covers the entire North Pacific Ocean in July and August, and consequently few frontal disturbances penetrate the southern coast of British Columbia. Northwestern winds blow steadily along the coast and surface water offshore is displaced to the southwest resulting in an upwelling of fairly cold water. Polar Pacific air which is moderately unstable over the open ocean becomes very stable in the lower levels when it crosses the cold water, such a condition precludes precipitation. Only a very strong onshore wind can lift the air over the coastal barrier and cause orographic rain".<sup>1</sup>

1 D.P. Kerr, "The Summer Dry Climates of Georgia Basin, B.C.", p. 26

This is a description of the causation of a true Mediterranean type climate. That it does not completely explain the occurrence of the modified type experienced in the Saanich Peninsula is demonstrated by the fact that the west or windward side of the Island does not have this type of climate. That "at 48°<sup>0</sup>N. Saanich Peninsula represents the furthest poleward advance of a true Mediterranean climate on the earth's surface"<sup>1</sup> is due as Mr. Kerr goes on to explain to the degree of protection afforded by the Vancouver range in reducing the effect of the few frontal disturbances which do penetrate the southern coast of British Columbia to, as far as precipitation is concerned, scattered showers over the peninsula area.

While giving rising in this manner to the very low summer season rainfall, the orographic influence also exerts itself in thinning cloud so that the region has an extremely high proportion of bright sunshine during the summer months. Its meteorological stations are consequently among those recording the highest annual averages in Canada. In this respect Victoria with some two thousand, two hundred and seven hours of bright sunshine annually, has three hundred and seventy-five hours more than Vancouver, four hundred and four more than Montreal, and only forty-eight fewer than Calgary.<sup>2</sup>

1 D.P. Kerr, op. cit. p. 29

2 These figures are given by A.L. Farley, op. cit. p. 34

In winter the conditions described above become changed principally by the migration of the main pressure systems, and the penetration of mid-latitude depressions becomes a more frequent occurrence. There is consequently more justification for the popular belief referred to above in its application to the winter climate. The rain shadow effect of the Vancouver range does persist during the winter months with the result that the Victoria region continues to receive a much lesser total of precipitation than other stations not sharing its sheltered advantage. In terms of frequency, however, this advantage is considerably less striking than would appear from the total quantity. Victoria's annual precipitation as a percentage of Vancouver's amounts only to 46.9%, but in number of days with measurable precipitation the Victoria total is 83.7%, in winter 87.4%, that of Vancouver.<sup>1</sup>

In Table 1 is contained statistical data from four stations within the region which are representative of the climatic type described. The summer dry season is well illustrated by the low level of precipitation in the months of July and August. The table also demonstrates the general temperature characteristics of the regional climate. These reflect the "marine" influence in the

1 Based upon recorded averages at Victoria and Vancouver, Sea Island Stations

TABLE I

CLIMATIC STATISTICS, VICTORIA REGION

Victoria

	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Year</u>
Average temperature	39	41	44	49	53	57	60	60	57	51	45	41	50
Average precipitation	4.25	3.09	2.24	1.22	0.97	0.88	0.46	0.64	1.44	2.82	4.15	4.76	26.92
No. of days with measurable precipitation	18	14	15	10	10	8	6	5	8	13	17	20	144

Sidney

Average temperature	37	39	43	48	54	59	62	62	57	59	43	39	49
Average precipitation	4.44	3.58	2.73	1.57	1.12	1.11	0.71	0.80	1.38	3.02	4.14	5.73	30.33

Patricia Bay (Airport)

Average temperature	36	40	43	48	54	58	61	61	57	50	43	40	49
Average precipitation	4.15	4.09	2.81	1.78	1.40	1.17	0.73	0.94	1.20	3.54	4.91	5.42	32.14
No. of days with measurable precipitation	16	14	12	13	14	8	4	5	8	14	17	16	141

Sooke

Average temperature	38	40	43	47	52	56	60	60	56	50	48	40	49
Average precipitation	7.20	5.18	4.17	2.39	1.46	1.20	0.65	0.75	2.07	5.27	6.44	8.64	45.42

small annual thermal range. Thus for Victoria there is only  $21^{\circ}$  variation between the mean January and July temperatures. It is this characteristic which leads many to emphasize its thermal rather than precipitational features, and Kerr to modify his description of the climate to "Cool Mediterranean Type".

The equable nature of the climate as demonstrated by the very limited annual range of temperature while principally due to the marine influence is accentuated by orographic factors. Mountains which on the west provide protection from frontal disturbances, on the east protect the region against the severe temperatures associated with Continental Polar (CP) air. Summer and winter, therefore, the atmospheric temperature in the Victoria region is predominantly determined by the characteristics of MP air masses. Occasionally through the winter months the continental high pressure system will break through to the coast, cross the Strait of Georgia and envelop the coast lowland of Vancouver Island. On these occasions temperatures drop well below the seasonal averages, the cold, stable air persists for several days of clear weather.

One other aspect of the climate which deserves mention is that of the very high average of wind speed recorded at Victoria. In all except two months, September and October of the year, the average speed is in excess

of ten miles per hour.<sup>1</sup> Although this may be partly ascribed, as Mr. Farley suggests, to "the elevation of the station and its exposed position"<sup>2</sup> it is nevertheless true that strong winds are a feature of the regional climate which detracts from its general quality, albeit they do afford "protection from the hot weather so commonly experienced at interior stations"<sup>3</sup>.

Within the region there exist important local variations to the generalized climatic conditions described above. In part these are strictly microclimatological, and in part transitional between the Mediterranean climatic type and the marine west coast climates prevailing elsewhere. In the first case too little is known for any adequate representation of localized conditions, and, in the second, the precise areal pattern of the transition from east to west is too detailed for inclusion within an outline of this kind. In general the variations, arising from this cause, are precipitatively in descending power, and thermally, in ascending power, from west to east. Idealized isohyets and isotherms therefore run north and south, although in practice their precise paths undergo considerable modification .

1 A.L. Farley, op. cit., p. 38

2 Ibid., p. 39

3 Ibid., p. 25

by landform. This variation within the region is nonetheless of insufficient magnitude to distort the general similarity of climatic conditions which has been given above.

The unique conditions of climate have been reflected in similarly unique characteristics of vegetation within the region in which occurs "the only distribution in Canada<sup>1</sup> of two tree species, namely, the Madrona and the Garry oak". Unfortunately the region has had little detailed, scientific investigation by plant geographers due, no doubt to its paucity in commercially valuable timber.

In general terms the region's vegetation may be classified ecologically as "a grassland forest transition"<sup>2</sup> in which has occurred "an invasion of Douglas fir into the original 'prairies' and oak forests".<sup>3</sup> Within the region both of these main types of vegetational cover are readily discernible in the landscape. The coniferous forest with Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*) dominant occupies a large percentage of the uncleared western lands of the region, as well as the upland slopes, while in the eastern portion of the region, and particularly close to the coast the open oak woodland, where Garry oak (*Quercus Garryana*) often forms pure associations, predominates. The madrona (*Arbutus Menziesii*), which also has a wide distribution in the region, belongs ecologically within the transition

1 W.E.D. Halliday, "A Forest Classification for Canada", p.26

2 C.A. Rowles, Proceedings, 2nd B.C. Natural Resources Conference, p. 17

3 R.H. Spilsbury and D.S. Smith, "Forest Site Types of the Pacific Northwest", p. 15

to the subclimax of the coniferous forest.<sup>1</sup> One other association is of some importance within the region. This is the broadleaf association which, with red alder (*Alnus rubra*) dominant, occupies extensive areas of alluvial and poorly drained soils.

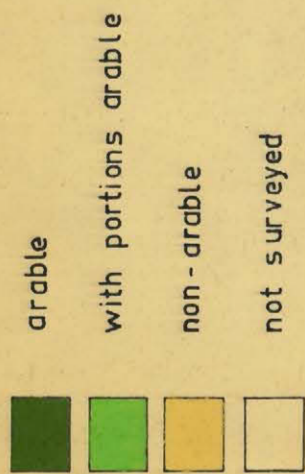
The nature of the vegetative cover has been of importance in the historical development of regional settlement. While the species contained in the coniferous climax proved most useful as a material for construction purposes, the forest itself imposed difficulties for primitive methods of clearing, and the areas which it occupied were consequently the last to be brought into agricultural production. The availability locally of extensive acreages of less densely forested land, was, on the other hand, the advantage which attracted first settlement to the region. The additional advantage of scenic variety provided by the three principal vegetational types augmented by the diversity of species contained in the field and shrub layers of each type has lent to the reputation which in more recent years has attracted both tourist and settler to the region.

The soils which support this vegetation represent firstly, the characteristics of the climate, secondly the variations in their parent materials, and finally, become modified by the vegetation they directly support. Corresponding to the Mediterranean climatic region is a soil

1 See A.E. Halliday, op. cit., p. 26



SOIL CAPABILITY, VICTORIA REGION



0 1 2 3 4 5 miles to scale

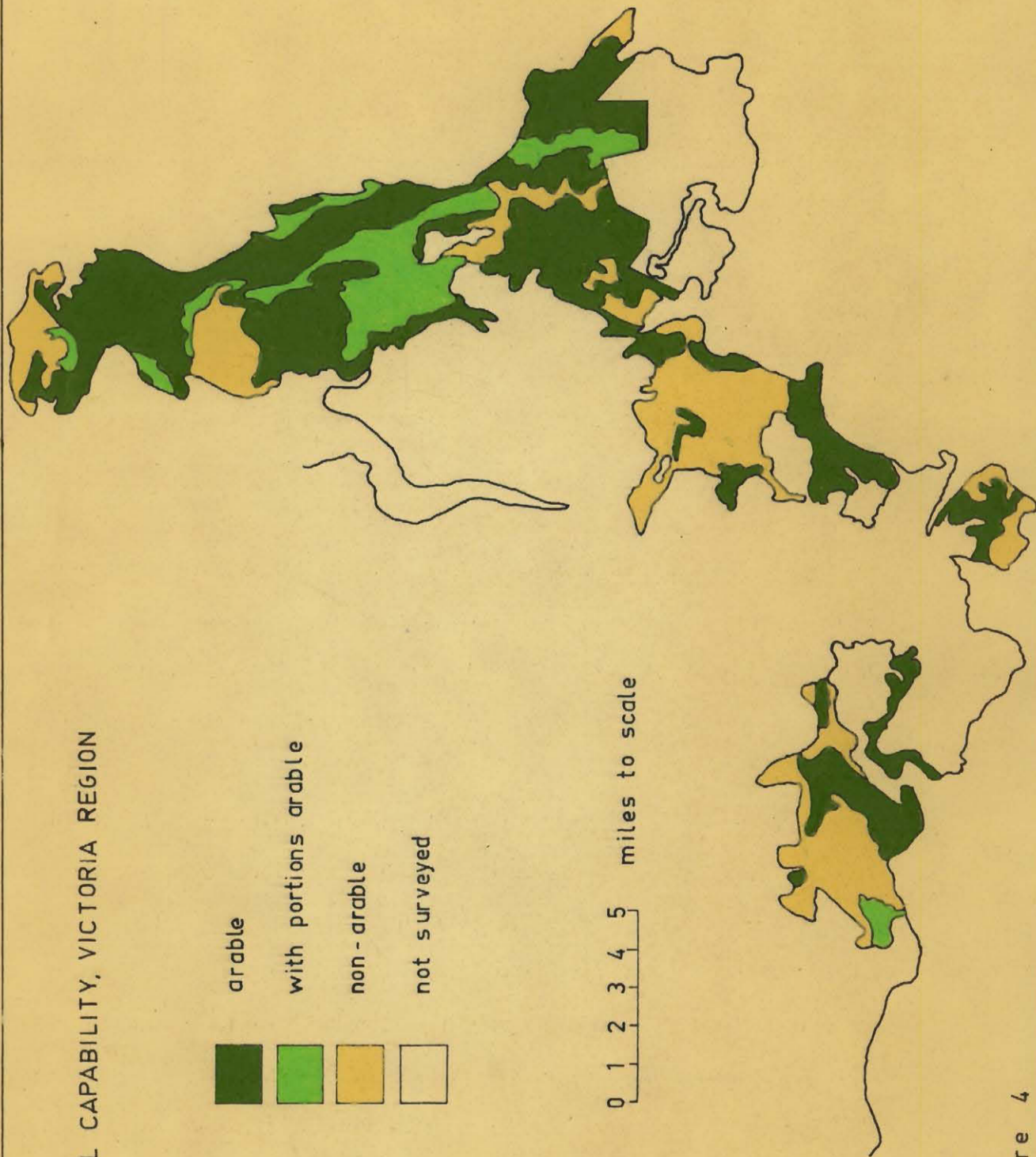


Figure 4

sub-zone, the Prairie sub-zone, within the larger zone, the Brown Podsollic. "The soils of this sub-zone are considered as the products of a grassland forest transition environment as suggested by the "Prairie" soil profile characteristics. They are characterized by dark brown to black surface colours with brown to yellowish sub-soils. They are moderately acid to neutral in reaction (pH 5.1 to 5.9), high in organic matter and generally low in their content of bases"<sup>1</sup>.

Within this very broad similarity of soil condition arising from climatic and vegetational controls, there is a large degree of variation originating from the differing parent materials which have gone to make up the soils. For purposes of capability in agricultural land use these variations are of importance, affecting directly the texture and therefore, moisture holding capacity, as well as the chemical properties of the individual soils.

The accompanying diagram (Figure 4) illustrates the potential of regional soils for agricultural use. The relationship of soil to land use in the Victoria Region is however indirect, and modifying factors, some of which are natural as for example slope and drainage, while others are economic resulting from the close geographic proximity to the Victoria urban centre, require that the map of soil capability be read with flexibility

1 C.A. Rowles, op. cit., pp. 17-18

for the purpose of translation in the terms of land use. The most easily illustrated example of the combination of both economic and natural modifications upon such literal interpretation is provided by the presence of specialized, high value crops upon what for more general purposes would be considered marginally suitable agricultural land. Small fruits avoid the main disadvantage of summer drought by being an early crop, and simultaneously, by the high value of their yield justify expenditures of relatively large capital and operational sums. The very disadvantage which causes the land upon which these crops are raised to be classed as marginal for general agricultural purposes: high porosity, becomes advantageous in terms of the individual requirements of the crop: well drained land, while its high value is sufficient to meet the costs of irrigation when necessary.

The component elements of topography, climate, soil and vegetation comprise a natural landscape which is now intensively adapted by the processes of settlement. Separately they have been largely influential in the manner of this settlement, topography determining limits to its extension, soil prescribing the nature of agricultural use of land, vegetation affording ease for cultivation, and all, in combination with a favourable climate, providing a natural environment peculiarly suited by its visual attractiveness for human habitation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUND

Very little occurred to change the natural appearance of the land before the middle of the last century. Until 1843, when the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post in the region, the only population had been the several tribes of native Indians. These people, primarily dependent for their subsistence upon fishing, made little attempt to adjust the environment to their needs beyond that of providing shelter for themselves. The land except where it served as actual sites for their villages remained in its primitive state, and so remains very much to the present times in those reserves set apart for the Indian population. The influence of these people has therefore been slight in terms of landscape, for upon the land their culture made little impress, and none that was not superseded by that which European settlers later brought to the region.

The founding of Fort Victoria in 1843 was a decisive event in the history of the west. The Oregon territory which, in its expanse from the possessions of Spain in the south to those of Russia in the north, embraced all of Vancouver Island, was the object of competition between the Imperial interests of Great Britain and the territorial aspirations of American homesteaders. The opening of the Oregon Trail in the eighteen thirties had come as a severe

blow to Britain, and to the Hudson's Bay Company, her sole representative in the area at the time. The movement overland of large numbers of American settlers destined for the Willamette Valley threatened both the British claim to the Pacific lands and the Company's monopoly control over them. The agreement of British and American governments concluded in 1818 and renewed for an indefinite period in 1827 to joint occupation of the Oregon territory was rapidly becoming superseded by the presence of large numbers of American settlers upon the coast. The realization that occupancy was to become the sine qua non of territorial rights in the area was not long in making itself apparent to the Hudson's Bay Company, whose principal post in the Pacific at this time, Fort Vancouver, located at the mouth of the Columbia River, seemed unlikely in view of the changing conditions to be retained within British territory at such time as the dispute between Great Britain and the United States should be settled. Thus:

"...encouragement by the United States government to immigrants to settle in the Oregon Territory and the agitation existing for a settlement of the disputed boundary claims compelled the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company to contemplate the possibility of the territory along the Columbia River passing from the control of Great Britain. It was therefore incumbent that they seek a location for a new headquarters for their affairs west of the Rocky Mountains."<sup>1</sup>

1 B.A. McKelvie, "Early History of British Columbia, p. 30

It was James Douglas who was chosen to lead the party to explore for an alternative site for the Company's operations, and it was he who selected the site upon which the city of Victoria was to arise. The establishment was made at Victoria just three years in advance of the conclusion of the agreement between Britain and the United States that determined the international boundary on the line of the forty-ninth degree of northern latitude for the mainland west, as it was already east, of the Rocky Mountains. Largely due to the fortuitous fact of the existence of Fort Victoria, the boundary off the mainland coast followed a more devious path so as to include the whole area of Vancouver Island within British territory.

The time of the founding of first settlement has also been most important in the subsequent development of the Victoria Region itself. For it was a time at which geographic relationships were beginning to undergo considerable change. Already trans-continental routes of communication had been established, but as yet these lacked in importance by comparison with those of the sea. That Victoria came into being when the sea route was the only practical route connecting Pacific and Atlantic, has enabled it to grow and to sustain its growth despite disadvantageous changes in its economic relationship to the

rest of the continent and of the world which have been brought about by the advance of overland communications.

In view of the fact that at the time the coastal sea route was the prime expression of the commercial geography of the Pacific coast, the reason for Douglas' selection of a site on Vancouver Island appears more apparent than it would viewed from the circumstances of the present time. The harbour at Victoria was naturally good, and in addition, located within easy access of the open ocean - an advantage not shared by mainland points. More particularly Douglas states his reasons for his selection in the following manner:

"I made choice of a site for the proposed new establishment in the Port of Camosack<sup>1</sup> which appears to be decidedly the most advantageous situation for the proposed establishment within the Straits of Juan de Fuca. As a harbour it is equally safe and accessible, and abundance of timber grows on it for home consumption and exportation. There being no fresh water stream of sufficient power, flour or saw mills may be erected in the canal<sup>2</sup> of Camosack at a point where the channel is restricted to a breadth of forty-seven feet by two ridges of granite projecting from either bank into the canal, through which the tide rushes out and in with a degree of force and velocity capable of driving the most powerful machinery if guided and applied by mechanical skill....At Camosack there is a range of plains nearly six square miles containing a great extent of valuable tillage and pasture-land equally well adapted for

1 Camosack was the name of the Indian village at the site chosen. For a short while it served in the adapted form of "Camosun" as the name for the Hudson's Bay Company Fort

2 The reference is to Portage Inlet



the plough or for feeding stock.

It was this advantage and distinguishing feature of Camosack which no other part of the coast possesses, combined with the water privilege on the canal, the security of the harbour and abundance of timber around it, which led me to choose a site for the establishment at that place, in preference to all others on the island"<sup>1</sup>

The decision made, the Fort was established and settlement of Vancouver Island commenced. However, the settlement which began in 1843 in the Victoria Region was not of the same type as that which, in driving the Company northward to its new headquarters, was spreading over the mainland to the south. Not only the probable loss of political control, but the loss of economic control had resulted in the change of location of the Company's principal installation, for the fur trade depended upon a commercial monopoly in the area of its operation and independent settlement invariably interfered with its exercise. It was, therefore, a limited settlement that the stockades of the newly constructed fort contained, and one totally ordered by the requirements of the Company.

For six years there was little impetus from individuals outside of the employ of the Company to settle on Vancouver Island and destroy this monopoly. During that period the political instability incurred by British and American rivalry in the Oregon territory precluded private

1 James Douglas, quoted in B.A. McKelvie, op. cit., pp. 32-3



interest in land on Vancouver Island. However, as soon as the agreement had been concluded between the two governments, and Britain's sovereignty over the Island established, the British colonial office was approached for approval of a number of schemes for the colonization of her newly acquired lands.

As mentioned, the prospect of independent settlement was completely inimical to the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company which, confronted with the possibility of control passing from its hands, advanced a colonization scheme of its own by which it would maintain at least an administrative control. It was the Company's proposal which eventually met with the approval of the Colonial Office. By Royal Grant, in January, 1849, the Colony of Vancouver Island was proclaimed, and all lands on the Island transferred to the Company for a nominal rental. The terms of the grant, which was for ten years, provided for a Civil Governor to represent the Crown and required that:

"the said Governor and Company shall establish upon the said island a settlement or settlements of resident colonists, emigrants from our Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or from our other dominions, and shall dispose of all lands hereby granted to them at a reasonable price except so much thereof as may be required for public purposes".<sup>1</sup>

1 Crown Grant of 1849, quoted in Howay and Scholfield, "British Columbia", Vol. 1, Appendix XlII, pp. 676-80

In this manner the period of the Hudson's Bay Company's exclusive control of settlement in the Victoria Region was concluded, and provisions set by which settlement could expand in the same rapid manner as was happening in the American territory to the south. However, James Douglas as Chief Factor for the Company and principal administrator of Colonial affairs was able to protect the Company's interests in the region. The manners in which this was effected were twofold.

Firstly the price at which it was determined to offer land for sale, £1.0.0. per acre, while not necessarily unreasonable, in accordance with the terms of the grant, was certainly not competitive with that obtaining to the south, where in the American possessions land was available for the taking. The proposition was made even less attractive to prospective colonists by the imposition of a number of conditions upon purchases at this price. These required that the minimum purchase be of twenty acres, and stipulated that for all purchases of areas larger than the minimum the purchaser must provide in addition to his own passage for that of five single men or three married couples for every one hundred acres he owned.

The second manner in which the Company was able to make settlement on Vancouver Island unattractive to

prospective colonists was, not directly through its land policies, but by virtue of its commercial monopoly. The goods necessary to the existence of every person in the newly founded settlement apart from those which could be produced by his own agency were available only through the Company's stores. Wrinch attests that the Company adopted a definite policy towards the sale of goods within the Colony, establishing three price levels, one for its own officers, a second for its servants and a third for colonists. These corresponded to mark ups of 33 1/3%,<sup>1</sup> 50%-100%, and 300% in the respective cases.

These policies combined placed a great economic power at the disposal of the Company with which it could regulate the course that development was to take. In addition it shortly gained through the person of its Chief Factor, James Douglas, an equally decisive political control. The first appointee to the position of Civil Governor, Richard Blanshard, was forced to resign after two years' tenure of office because the Company's policies, having effectively precluded any independent settlement, made his private position difficult to maintain in the absence of expected fees from settlers, and his public one completely ineffectual. The obvious choice for a successor to his office was Douglas, and it was he who

1 L.A. Wrinch, "Land Policy of the Colony of Vancouver Island, 1849 - 1866", p. 34

received the appointment soon after Blanshard's retirement of August 1851.

Within two and one-half years of the proclamation of the Colony, the Company had in these manners re-established its control over regional settlement and it was not until August 1856 when Douglas received a request from Downing Street that he replace the nominated council with which he had been ruling by an elected assembly, that the supremacy of Douglas' control was in question.

Not unnaturally the most evident result of the Company's administration was to impede settlement. Blanshard, shortly before his retirement, had expressed the opinion that at Victoria "there is no probability of a population ever gathering beyond a few of their (the Company's) servants"<sup>1</sup>, and two years later Douglas bore out his prophesy: "The freeholders and colonists are nearly all, without exception, actual or former servants of the Company, and every private enterprise has been carried on with capital acquired in the service"<sup>2</sup>. Viewed in the light of these statements the records of land sales are misleading as a guide to land development during the early

1 Blanshard to Grey, V.I., 28th April, 1851

2 Douglas to Barclay, Fort Victoria, 12th July, 1853

years of the Colony, and apparently intentionally so. Begg points out that the charter was to lapse after the first five years "provided settlement did not increase" and adds that "to meet this difficulty several of the leading officers of the Company.....purchased wild lands as convenient to the Fort as possible, paying at the rate of one pound per acre".<sup>1</sup> The result of this action was to impede settlement further by making it necessary for any bona fide agricultural practices independent of the Company to be located at some distance from the main settlement. So it was that the very earliest independent settlement took place in the outlying and, from the point of view of soil, poorly suited districts of Metchosin and Sooke.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast with the limited amount of land which was developed privately, the Company developments were extensive.<sup>3</sup> A large number of persons were imported to the Colony by the Company, and its subsidiary, the Puget Sound Agricultural Association, to farm the acreages which

1 Alexander Begg, "History of B.C.", p. 201

2 In this respect Begg states no settlements originated because colonists "could not obtain suitable place near the Fort, on account of the Company's reserves and the lands set apart for the Puget Sound Agricultural Association", op. cit., p. 198

3 The precise number is uncertain as the only record is contained in the statements of immigrants transported to the Colony which Wrinch states as amounting to 551½ fares (children one-half fare), during the period 1848-54, op. cit. p. 64

had been assumed or purchased by these two bodies. Both the Company and the Agricultural Association had bought land at the regular price of £1.0.0. per acre. In addition the Company had assumed a large acreage of the most valuable land, that nearest the Fort, as its Fur Trade Reserve. According to Wrinch this amounted to three thousand eighty-four acres including the townsite, and the land under tillage, plus approximately four thousand additional acres occupied as cattle range. As early as 1846 an observer remarked "the signs of cultivation in every direction - enclosed pasture lands, fields of wheat, potatoes and turnips", and from these first agricultural beginnings in the vicinity of the Fort the Company rapidly expanded its operations to the more distant Uplands and North Dairy farm locations.

These earliest developments have now been largely absorbed and lost in the successive growth of the region. However, they have not disappeared without trace, nor have the once large landholdings of the Company failed to remain an influence in the landscape. The Uplands residential district, while lacking some of the amenity that may be expected from planned subdivision at the present day on account of its premature subdivision, is nevertheless an asset which Victoria owes to the con-

1 Captain Henry Keller, in Walter N. Sage, "Sir James Douglas and Vancouver Island", p. 150

sidered policy of the Company in later years. The city's principal park, the one hundred and seventy acres surrounding Beacon Hill, is the public reserve of a hundred years ago which remains the only sizeable area of open space within the urban area today.

The influence of the settlement sponsored by the Hudson's Bay Company has, however, been more general than the limit of these particulars. The surveys conducted by Joseph Despard Pemberton, Engineer to the Company and Colonial Surveyor, fixed upon the land a pattern which in many of its respects has remained in the landscape to the present time. The rectangular subdivision of the Saanich Peninsula into blocks of one hundred acres and the less regular pattern in the Victoria Land Registration District resulting from the hurry to record a sufficiency of sales have had a pronounced effect upon the road pattern within the region, although their scheme has been destroyed in places by the irregularities of topography. More permanent still has been the "Townplan" which, designed when the town counted a population of little more than three hundred prescribes today the route of the streets of a city of one hundred and five thousand.

The slow growth of settlement which resulted from the Company's policies caused rising indignation both in the mother country and amongst the few colonists who had come to Vancouver Island, over the manner in which the

terms of the grant were being ignored. There was little doubt that the movement to open up the Pacific Coast to settlement which had originally created the occasion for Victoria's founding, would not die away, and that the Hudson's Bay Company had, at best, a few years in which to retain its prominence. The first evidence of a change of conditions came in the form of the request, already referred to, that Douglas summon in place of the nominated council with which he had ruled Colonial affairs an elected Assembly. In the same year, 1856, the legislation regarding land sales had had to be revised, so apparent was it becoming that no colonial settlement was to result from that in force. The new terms provided for reductions in the price of land which contained areas of rock and swamp, and allowed the price to be paid in installments. It is said that the effect of these provisions was to create an increase in land sales, but there is no record of their effect upon settlement beyond the known fact that it was approximately at this time that the pioneers in Saanich began to take up land.

However, the rivalry between Company and colonist was brought to a sudden decision. In 1858 gold was discovered on the Fraser River. Victoria, as the only sizeable settlement in the vicinity, was transformed overnight from a small post of British traders into the equipping centre for a mining boom. This was the start of a movement that was to open up the whole of the



British Columbia coast:

"The finding of gold on one river served to incite search on others, and in due course opened up the whole country to immigration and its consequent activities. The mines needed many workers; the fur traders employed few. Mining operations required capital to an extent much greater than the peltry business, and with the influx of capital there was given the motive power for further explorations and development."<sup>1</sup>

There being no overland routes for the miners, financiers and speculators to follow it was by sea, up the coast from the south that they came, stopping in Victoria to provision or to set up temporary headquarters for the servicing of the embryonic mining industry. In the four months from March to June 1858 twenty thousand people came to the town. The urban settlement, already extended beyond its original confines of the Fort stockades spread rapidly, as "shops, stores and shanties to the number of two hundred and twenty-five arose in six weeks".<sup>2</sup>

While there was an immediate appreciation in the value of urban land as a result of this influx - in the fourteen months from October 1857 to December 1858, the Company sold land from its reserves to a total value of £21,397<sup>3</sup> as against total sales of only £1,085 before that

1 T.A. Rickard, "Historic Backgrounds of B.C.", pp. 313-14

2 Matthew Macfie, "Vancouver Island and B.C.", p. 65

3 L.A. Wrinch, op. cit. p. 244

date, at going prices for town lots, 120 feet by 64 feet;  
of £20.16.8. and five acre suburban parcels for £25.0.0.<sup>1</sup> -  
there was very little interest in rural land. Even the  
invasion of the town took a backward step as the finds of  
placer gold were discovered to be disappointing so that  
the population of Victoria fell to 1,500. New discoveries  
of gold, in the district of Quesnel brought this emigration  
to a halt and re-established the population at a level  
between four thousand and five thousand.

As the flurry of speculation subsided and the community became more stable attention turned to questions of government. Whatever hopes the Company may have entertained for continuing its influence in Colonial affairs beyond the expiration of the original grant were completely outdated by the unforeseen circumstance that had increased the population by many hundreds of per cent. Douglas had resigned from the service upon the creation of the Colony of British Columbia and assumed the joint governorship of both colonies. For the Company it remained only to present an accounting of its colonial transactions. There was considerable controversy between the new citizenry and the Company over the claims which the latter presented upon the lands. Those that had been purchased were beyond dispute, but the considerable acreages which the Company claimed as its own as the fur trade reserve were the object

1 L.A. Wrinch, op. cit., p. 243

of heated litigation for many years. The justice of the claims of either side are not of concern to the present purpose, but the outcome of the controversy has been to some effect in the regional development. Although deprived of the great extent of its reserve, the Company was permitted to retain that portion which had been improved. This comprised the Uplands and North Dairy Farms, amounting to one thousand one hundred and forty-four acres and seven hundred and twenty-four acres respectively. With respect to the claims which it had placed upon the townsite it was less favoured. These reverted to the Colony, although for the considerable portion which had been sold the Company was permitted to retain the price. In the same year in which the indenture fixed this agreement upon the disposition of lands within the Colony, 1862, the city of Victoria became organized as an autonomous municipal unit.

The stabilization of the urban community which was the aftermath of the rush upon the gold fields created new interest in rural land. Prospectors returning from the mainland took advantage of newly revised land policies to establish farms for themselves. So rapid was the rate at which land was taken up at the new price of 4s. 2d. per acre that the surveyor was unable to keep pace and pre-emption became, of necessity, incorporated within the new land sale legislation.

The mining boom of the late fifties and early sixties had not been confined to the mainland. In the western part of the region Sooke had "by the discovery of coal and copper, but especially gold.....changed from a scene of rural quiet into a hive of busy industry".<sup>1</sup> The main activity had been located about eight miles directly inland from the coast, up stream at the confluence of the Sooke and Leech Rivers. It was a short lived enterprise attracting a population of almost five thousand. But the effect of mining had been spectacular throughout the region. The trading post had grown into the incorporated town and the long postponed agricultural development of the rural region commenced.

Although the rapid rise of the settlement at Victoria and the creation of a new colony on the mainland had drawn attention to Britain's possessions in the Pacific, the region was still remote from other settled areas, separated by the physical barrier of the western cordillera from the settlements of the eastern continent, and far removed by sea from its mother country. Under these conditions the growth of population in the two colonies was not phenomenal, and their slight populations scarcely warranted the duplication of administrative functions caused by their separate status. The movement for amalgamation which resulted, while backed by the desire for removing

1 Matthew Macfie, op. cit., p.156

the heavy tax burden, was logical also in terms of the economic ties which bound the two. It was finally effected in 1866. The formation of this new colony has proved most eventful for the Victoria Region. As it was, two years elapsed in which New Westminster was the capital city of the new colony, and had the union been longer postponed New Westminster would logically have retained its position. As it was Victoria was able to capture the status, and to assure itself of the political supremacy, which latterly, as British Columbia has grown as a Province of Canada, has proved to be one of the most important economic functions in the expansion of the Victoria region.

A little less than five years from the union of the two Colonies British Columbia entered the Dominion of Canada. Membership in the federation, finally concluded on July 20, 1871, had been precariously attained. In Victoria and more generally throughout the Colony there was little sentiment which could support the political logic of such a move. The population comprised, in addition to those natively born British Columbians, primarily British and American born, whose ties with the country of their birth remaining strong, were reflected in two main rival groups to the proposal of joining Canada, the one favouring the continued Colonial status, and the other advocating membership in the American federation. The word Canadian was itself foreign, used by the press with

the connotation of a xenophobia traditionally British, nevertheless the tenuous case for confederation upon the grounds of sentiment lost out to the practical case which promised trans continental communication routes as its principal point of bargaining. It was, however, fourteen years from British Columbia's admission to the federation before these practical advantages were realized in the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway's first train at Port Moody.

During that period the process of slow, steady growth which since the decline of the gold rush excitement had characterized the development of the Victoria Region, was continued. The regional population ten years after Confederation amounted to eight thousand seventy-five, but in the succeeding decade, which saw the construction of the railroad, it advanced rapidly as, with easier routes<sup>1</sup> of travel, immigration nearly trebled that figure.

Victoria was experiencing another boom the size of which was determined by her being "the centre of the social,<sup>2</sup> political and mercantile life of the British Pacific". The economic importance of Victoria still rested primarily with her function as a port. Through the port the bulk of British Columbia's exported produce was dist-

1 Table XXII contains a statement of the regional population throughout Victoria's history based primarily upon the reports of the Census of Canada

2 Victoria Daily Times, January 1, 1890

1

ributed to its overseas markets, and at Victoria was received the foreign imports for the whole of British Columbia. In value this commerce amounted to some four million dollars worth of goods in the year 1890.

There were many other industries which had grown up in the region and contributed to its expansion. Important of these was sealing. The pelagic sealing industry based in Victoria's Inner Harbour which had first developed in the sixties was by the early nineties employing upward of one thousand men, and contributing some half million dollars annually to the value of regional production. At a later date, and connected directly with both the port and sealing industry, the shipbuilding industry had begun to emerge as of considerable importance, while manufacturing, established early to provide the needs of this remote community had undergone expansion both as the regional community had grown, but, in addition, as the population on the mainland had increased.

In modern terms, therefore, Victoria at this period possessed a very wide economic base. It handled the products of the province's resource based industries, it had, in pelagic sealing and saw milling a directly productive role in this portion of the provincial economy, it was the centre of governmental and financial administration, and it was the centre of an embryonic consumer goods manufacturing industry. It

1 In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890 Victoria exported goods to a total value of \$3,143,178 compared with values of \$1,934,544, \$485,735 and \$221,744 for Nanaimo, Vancouver and New Westminster, respectively

was for reason of this range of its economic activities that the region experienced such a phenomenal rate of growth in the period following that tangible achievement of Confederation: the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

Paradoxically, it was this physical link with the rest of Canada initially responsible for spurring Victoria's development, which was eventually to act as a drag upon it. In this respect the existence of the railroad brought about a change in the pattern of economic geographic relations on the Pacific Coast. For Victoria it accentuated its insularity, prescribing Vancouver Island as the limit of the resource hinterland for the city's industries. It accentuated the diseconomy of the distribution of goods from a point which now stood geographically behind rather than at the front of the province. The railway too, embodying the revolution of transportation facilities which provided a new basis for industrial location, bespoke the eventual decline of consumer good manufacturing in the Victoria region.

The pre-eminent position which the Victoria region had attained by the early nineties of the last century, was therefore not to last very long. A general economic decline during the middle nineties, brought to an abrupt halt the expansions which had been gaining impetus in the



second half of the eighth decade. Shortly before the twentieth century dawned a new wave of prosperity accelerated development again, but for Victoria it was a milder prosperity, belonging to a different epoch. The rapid rise of the city of Vancouver on the mainland signalled the end of Victoria's industrial and commercial ascendancy in the province, and the loss of her profitable sealing industry by international agreement was the first of a number of successive losses to be sustained by the city, the inevitability of which remained hidden by the prosperity attending new discoveries of gold and promised in the plans for cutting of a canal through the isthmus of Panama.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BACKGROUND

Two years before the turn of the century the state of the region's economy was revived by the discovery of gold in the Klondike. The new mining boom again stimulated commerce and financial speculation in the town, and as North America began to emerge from the cyclical depression of the nineties the more general boom which was to see British Columbia develop at its most rapid rate, merged with that which had visited the region locally to offer Victoria an unprecedented prosperity.

With the experience of the previous decade, and the assurance of her "social, political and mercantile" supremacy in the province, Victoria looked to another period of expansion. The boom materialized, but it became quickly evident that, large as it was, it would not fulfill the expectations of its prophets. Its failure was most evident in the slow progress made by the port in competition with its mainland rivals. The statement in Table II of the revenues of the ports of Victoria and Vancouver shows clearly the decline of Victoria's mercantile supremacy in these early years of the century.

Obvious as this trend was, hope for its reversal was afforded by the proposal for the construction of a

TABLE II

REVENUE OF THE PORTS OF VICTORIA AND VANCOUVER 1899-1910  
(IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

	VICTORIA	VANCOUVER
1899	2,697	1,675
1900	2,999	3,797
1901	9,771	7,028
1902	4,422	7,759
1903	4,340	9,529
1904	4,069	10,362
1905	5,028	11,479
1906	4,301	15,538
1907	8,228 <sup>x</sup>	13,840 <sup>x</sup>
1908	6,195	20,373
1909	5,431	17,750
1910	6,376	24,643

x estimated on the basis of information for nine months operation

canal in Panama which was already attracting representatives of the major shipping companies to the region. Among these, Sir Owen Phillips, of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, is quoted as saying upon visiting the town:

"There is no doubt that a great impetus to trade will follow the opening of the Panama Canal, and it is in view of this that the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company is looking to this trade. The Port of Victoria is undoubtedly the best located among the ports of the North Pacific. It is most easy of access from the ocean... The situation is excellent, and to my mind the future of Victoria as a seaport depends upon the railroads".<sup>1</sup>

His last statement was the most significant, being perhaps an understatement of what was beginning to be recognized at the back of the Victorian consciousness: that the competition the port was experiencing from the mainland was not the result of a short term business rivalry, but the expression of some basic geographic facts.

Originally it had been intended that Victoria would be the western terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway. For a variety of reasons, not least of which were the engineering and financial difficulties involved in bridging Seymour Narrows, the line was never carried over to the Island. Consequently Victoria, deprived of the rail connection which could lessen the insular disadvantage of its location, stood very poorly in relation

1 Quoted in "The Daily Colonist" January 13, 1912

to its mainland competitors.

The nature of the marine trade of the province was primarily the flow of raw and semi-processed materials from the continent, and of manufactured goods and certain exotic raw materials to mainland markets. The transshipment necessary to have these pass by way of Victoria was evidently not economic, and even the port's natural advantage - its easy accessibility to open water - was relatively diminished by an increasing number of aids to navigation. There was, in fact, very little basis for the retention of mercantile supremacy at Victoria as has indeed been demonstrated by its subsequent principal development at Vancouver.

Part of the process of readjustment to changed geographic relationships, the trend discernible in the activity of the port was present in other aspects of the region's economy. Two tables (Tables III and IV) illustrate this trend as it has reflected in industrial employment.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 These tables are based upon information relating to the population resident in Victoria City only. Comparable information was not available for the three suburban municipalities, and the tables therefore relate to a varying proportion of the total urban population of the region. In 1951 this proportion amounted to a little more than 50%. With one or two exceptions which are noticed in the following text, there is no evidence to suggest that a wide disparity exists in the industrial distribution of the labour force in the four municipal units which comprise the urban area of Greater Victoria, and upon this basis the tables are presented as representative of the industrial occupations of the total urban population.

The first of the tables records the distribution by specified industries of the city's labour force as a percentage of the Provincial Labour force in the same industries. In the second table the figures for Victoria city appear as percentages of the proportion which the city might be supposed to possess in each industry if its total labour force were distributed in the same manner as that of the province generally. This latter method of presentation gives a guide to the specialized functions which the town enjoys within the larger economic community. Thus a figure of one hundred or more represents a specialization in any specific industry greater than is general in the province, and a figure less indicates the reverse. In both cases the total labour force has been reduced by the number employed in primary industries because these, being of rural character, are not relevant.

Apart from the continued decline of the Port which is demonstrated by the figures relating to employment in the industrial class of "water transportation", these tables illustrate the decline of Victoria as a manufacturing town. At the beginning of the period the proportion of the urban labour force employed in manufacturing was only slightly lower in the Victoria region than in the province as a whole, while in the most recent year this proportion amounts to no more than fifty-five per cent. The significance of this decline is heightened if consideration is

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF PROVINCIAL LABOUR FORCE RESIDENTS OF VICTORIA  
CITY, TOTAL AND BY SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES

1911 - 1951

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
TOTAL LABOUR FORCE	10.0	9.9	7.2	6.9	5.5
Manufacturing Indstrs.	9.2	6.8	6.0	4.9	3.1
Foods and Beverages	9.4	9.8	6.0	3.7	3.2
Clothing	16.4	14.2	9.0	6.8	4.3
Wood Products	6.4	4.2	4.2	3.7	2.3
Iron and Steel	9.3	7.8	-	4.6	1.6
Shipbuilding	8.9	6.8	-	12.6	15.8
Construction	10.7	8.6	6.3	7.4	4.5
Trade	11.5	11.0	8.2	7.1	5.5
Finance	-	10.3	7.7	7.3	6.7
Transportation	9.0	8.7	6.6	5.0	4.0
Water Transportation	38.0	18.7	11.8	8.8	8.1
Government					
Provincial	} - 8.2	} -14.7	} -14.8	22.4	22.2
Federal				9.7	11.4
Municipal				10.5	8.5

TABLE IV

VICTORIA CITY, PERCENTAGE OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIES IN PROPORTION TO PROVINCIAL LABOUR FORCE IN THE SAME INDUSTRIES

1911 - 1951

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1951</u>
Manufacturing	91.4	69.1	83.4	70.5	55.6
Foods and Beverages	93.2	98.0	82.8	53.9	58.4
Clothing	165.5	170.5	94.4	57.5	77.5
Wood Products	64.6	42.0	58.6	53.1	41.2
Iron and Steel	93.0	77.6	-	16.9	29.3
Shipbuilding	88.0	68.4	-	147.4	283.3
Construction	106.5	86.2	83.4	100.9	80.6
Trade	115.0	110.4	113.0	102.9	98.8
Finance	-	102.7	105.5	105.0	121.6
Transportation	89.7	87.3	90.8	72.6	73.0
Water Transportation	380.0	187.2	163.0	126.7	147.6
Government					
Provincial	)-82.0	)-147.0	)205.0	323.2	400.0
Federal				140.4	206.1
Municipal				152.3	195.4



given to the course which employment has taken in the individual manufacturing industries. Of these only shipbuilding has shown a relative increase throughout the period,<sup>1</sup> and among the others the wood products industry is the only one to have declined by less than twenty-five per cent over the forty year period.

These two are, of course, the principal manufacturing industries of the region and exist for the obvious advantages - on the one hand the Port and the Esquimalt Naval Base, and on the other the raw material resource.<sup>2</sup> By comparison every other phase of manufacturing activity has failed to develop in the Victoria Region to the same extent as has occurred in other parts of the province. Again this is a result of the region's insularity which in the modern period of settlement has proscribed the development of many industries that were established under the differing conditions which prevailed in the late nineteenth century.

One other aspect of the economic basis for urban development in the twentieth century emerges from the tables. This is the increasing importance of Victoria as a centre of governmental administration. In fact the

- 1 In the case of shipbuilding the figure for Greater Victoria is not adequately represented by that for the city on account of concentration of this industry in Esquimalt Municipality, and a consequent concentration of the labour force employed in this industry in the same municipality.
- 2 In Table V shipbuilding and the wood products industries are shown to account for 7.5% of a total of 15% of the regional labour force employed in manufacture in 1951.

decision gained over New Westminster in the first years of amalgamation of the two Colonies has proved as beneficial in the continued growth of the Victoria Region as has its leading manufacturing industry.

The percentage distribution of the labour force by industry demonstrates much the same trend when it appears out of relation to the provincial figures as is the case in Table V. However, in this table the relative importance of the various industrial classes within the region is stressed. For the year 1951 in which it was possible to obtain comparable information for the region as a whole, the regional distribution is shown also. In most cases it varies very little from that of the city, the only noticeable exception being the one already referred to of the slightly specialized nature of the occupations of the residents of Esquimalt, which increases from 18.2% for the city to 25.6% for the region as a whole the proportion of the labour force in government employment.

The consideration which has been given to employment as the basis for estimating the economic nature of regional settlement has presupposed, in a manner not far removed from that of economic determinism, an economic necessity as the prime reason for settlement. However true the generalization may be, and particularly in modern times, that man lives where he can find most profitable work, it is also true that the mechanics of

TABLE V

VICTORIA CITY, PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LABOUR FORCE  
BY SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES 1911-1951, AND VICTORIA REGION 1951

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1951</u> <u>City</u>	<u>Region</u>
MANUFACTURING	20.7	13.7	10.2	19.7	14.9	14.0
Foods and beverages	3.8	2.6	1.9	2.3	2.1	1.8
Clothing	2.6	2.0	1.3	1.0	0.5	0.2
Wood Products	6.1	3.8	1.5	5.9	5.2	4.7
Iron and Steel	1.9	1.9	1.4	3.5	0.7	1.2
Shipbuilding	0.4	1.1	0.6	3.7	2.4	2.8
CONSTRUCTION	16.6	7.6	6.6	8.6	6.5	7.2
TRADE	16.9	16.2	12.2	17.6	18.2	17.2
FINANCE	-	3.1	1.7	3.4	4.6	4.3
TRANSPORTATION	17.2	12.1	10.6	8.1	7.9	7.4
Water transportation	10.2	5.4	4.9	3.5	2.0	-
GOVERNMENT						
Provincial	)	)	)	3.7	5.0	(
Federal	)	)	)	2.7	2.5	(
Municipal	)	)	)	2.2	2.1	(
PRIMARY	3.2	4.0	4.5	4.5	1.8	2.6

industrial location are not blind to the consideration of employee preferences. The extent to which opportunities for work have arisen in the region as a direct result of the population's preference for living there and the extent to which the economic disadvantages of the region's insularity have been discounted by its natural advantages may not be measured precisely, all that is apparent is that the logic of economics seems to be a more forceful influence than individual sentiment.

That the latter is an influence, there can be no doubt. It is demonstrated very easily in the example of that group of the population which is removed from the economic necessity of earning a living: the retired population. The number of retired persons in the region is estimated at some 11,000.<sup>1</sup> To this number there may be added not a few more whose predominant means of livelihood is provided from pensions or investments, but who having in addition a business or farm income, are classed together with the labour force. During the present century this section of the population has assumed increasing importance within the region as is demonstrated in Table VI, which records the percentage of the population falling in the age group sixty-five and over. For comparison the trend towards an older average age of the regional population is presented with the figures for the province as a

1 "Capital Region Takes Stock", Appendix B, p. 55

whole, and shows quite clearly the predominance of older persons in the region. In this respect the regional proportion would assume greater significance compared with the Canadian average which amounts to only 7.9%.<sup>1</sup>

There is one further way in which the natural qualities of the region have expressed themselves in regional development in the twentieth century, and this is in regard to the tourist industry. A study of this industry and the effect which it has had upon the urban morphology is in the process of preparation at the present time.<sup>2</sup> Its conclusions will fill a gap that must be necessarily left in the present account as to the extent in which tourism has contributed to the growth of the town. It is therefore obvious in considering the basis for the growth of the regional population these trends, which have their origin in the natural advantage of the region, must be included with those of economic opportunity.

Combined, it has been these various influences which have contributed to regional development during the first half of this second century in the history of the Victoria Region; an increasingly important function of governmental administration, a limited manufacturing industry confined to the processing of forest resources and the repair and construction of ships, the continued,

1 G.D. Taylor, "Characteristics of the Population of British Columbia", 9th Annual B.C. Natural Resources Conference

2 By M.E. Robinson, a doctoral dissertation to be presented to Northwestern University

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE  
AND OVER

	<u>VICTORIA CITY</u>	<u>VICTORIA REGION</u>	<u>B.C</u>
1901	3.4	-	2.5
1921	4.8	-	5.5
1931	8.8	-	5.5
1941	12.1	-	8.3
1951	17.8	15.9	10.8

TABLE VII

REGIONAL POPULATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND  
PERCENTAGE INCREASE BY DECADES VICTORIA REGION AND  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

REGIONAL POPULATION		PERCENT INCREASE OVER PRECEDING PERIOD	
		<u>REGION</u>	<u>B.C</u>
1901	29,984	32%	82%
1911	43,605	46%	220%
1921	52,878	21%	34%
1931	65,133	23%	32%
1941	81,227	25%	18%
1951	115,844	43%	43%

but relatively declined, operations of the Port and the increasing importance of the tourist industry and of retired persons. Together with that portion of the population which provides local services, these people and the dependents of both groups comprise the regional population whose varying magnitude and nature of demand have created throughout the period the differing characteristics of settlement.

The population resident in the region has grown continuously since the beginning of the century. Unfortunately periodic revision of census divisions has made tracing this growth a difficult process, and the task of applying it within the region to a number of constant sub-areas impossible. Because of the complicated nature of the details of the table it is presented here (Table VII) only in summary form together with the percentage growth from decade to decade. The full table (Table XXII) is contained in Appendix B, and in the subsequent chapter understanding will be lent to the divisions in which it is constituted from the description of the areal attributes of regional settlement.

Placed beside the relative figures for the province the percentage increase of the regional population during the first four decades appears low, while in the last two it is more averagely representative of the total provincial growth. This generalization is quite

the reverse of that true in the eighteenth century when, for the two periods of which there is record, the regional population increased at a rate far more rapid than the province generally.<sup>1</sup>

This reversal was, of course, the direct reflection of the changing pattern of economic activity resulting from re-organized geographic relations and revolutionized industry as mentioned above. To what extent the trend displayed in the two most recent decades may be expected to continue is uncertain although increasing urbanization, particularly about the two main metropolitan centres of Vancouver and Victoria, suggests that the rate will be maintained at or near the provincial average. The anomalous advance recorded in the decade during which Canada was experiencing the worst condition of her economy in the century, was due in large measure to the protection the region had relatively in its numbers of self supporting persons, and to the easier natural conditions for living which attracted immigrants to the region from other parts of the country.

Immigration is, of course, the primary cause of growth of the magnitude that has been experienced in the region. The natural rate of increase throughout the period would amount to no more than a ten per cent addition to the population in an average decade as may be seen from

1 The increase from 1871-1881 was Victoria Region, 72.4%, B.C., 36.4%, from 1881-1891, 142.9% and 98.5% respectively



Table VIII<sup>1</sup> which records the rate of increase for specified years. It is therefore apparent that immigration has played always a greater part, and in the periods of most rapid advance the overwhelming part in regional population growth.

The origin of its people is not unnaturally a factor which is of importance to the manner of settlement. From the graph (Figure 5)<sup>2</sup> it becomes apparent that from a fairly heterogeneous composition at the beginning of the century, the population has assumed a high degree of homogeneity. There has been a very rapid increase in the percentage of Canadian born, from 46.4% in 1901 to 64.0% in 1951, a lessening of the percentage of British born, from a maximum of 38.2% in 1921 to 26.1% in 1951, and most pronouncedly a decline to insignificance of the two formerly important non-British born, the American and Chinese. At the present time therefore more than ninety per cent of the population is of British birth, and a higher percentage of these than represented by the 64.0% of Canadian birth may be classed culturally as Canadian.

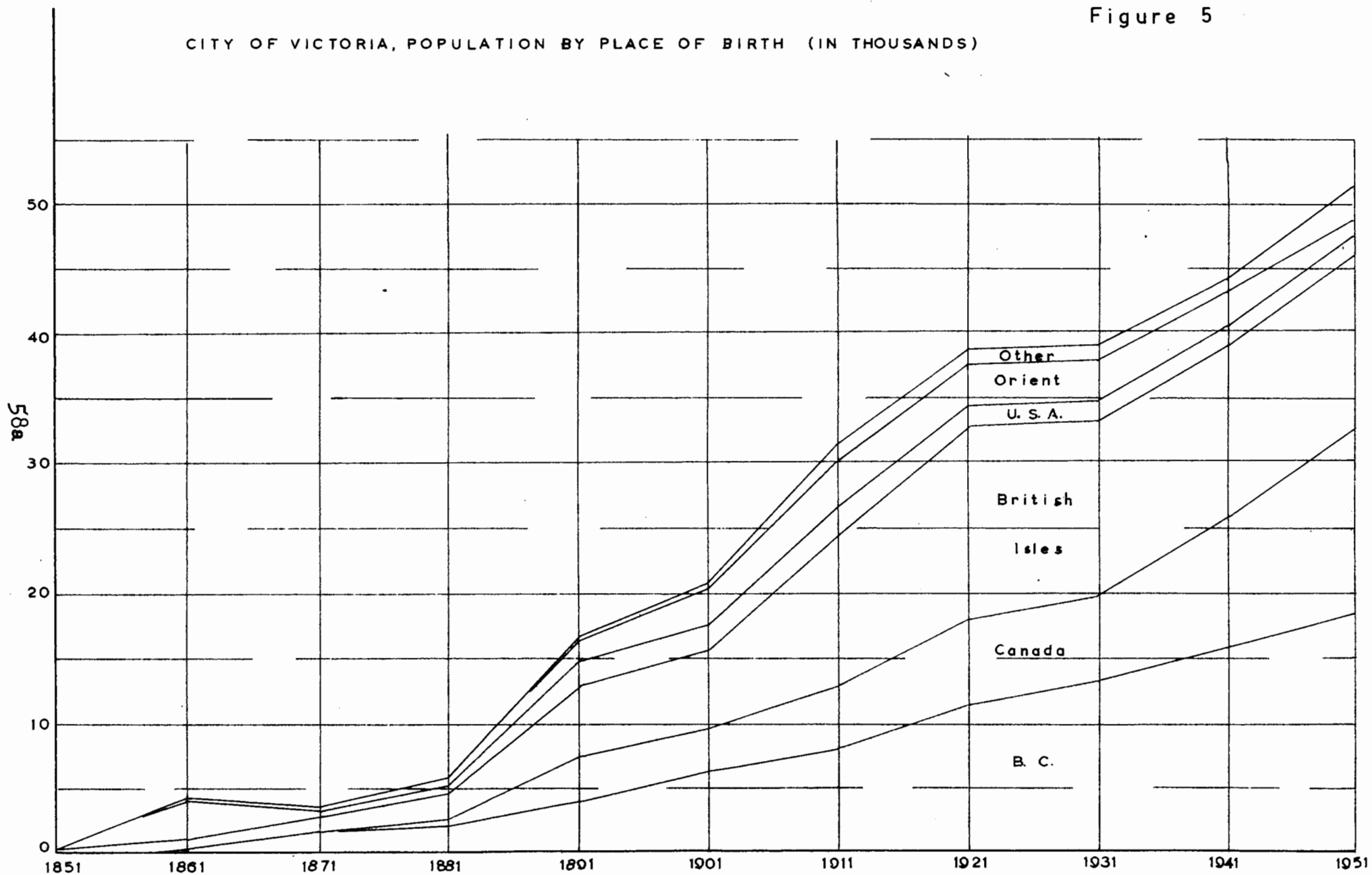
In the migration of people to the region undoubtedly one of the most important movements has been that of persons from the three prairie provinces. Attracted by the

1 There being no figures available for Victoria, the table records those for the province

2 Again the only data available is for the city of Victoria proper, but there is less reason to assume in this case than with that of employment that it does not satisfactorily represent the region as a whole

Figure 5

CITY OF VICTORIA, POPULATION BY PLACE OF BIRTH (IN THOUSANDS)



congenial climatic conditions their numbers have increased tenfold over the period since the beginning of the century, representing an increase from 2.8% to 17.1% of the total population.

Immigration although a constant source of population growth has contributed most greatly to regional development during the two periods of its most rapid advance. In the first of these booms, which may be seen as a successor to those of the sixties and eighties of the previous century, it lent a predominantly British characteristic to the nature of settlement, reinforcing in urban and rural areas alike the social legacy of the region's colonial origins. The British personality of the Victoria Region has however been replaced in this most recent decade by one predominantly Canadian which has resulted from a predominance of Canadian born settlers bringing to the landscape the material marks of their Canadian culture.

## CHAPTER IV

### NINETEENTH CENTURY SETTLEMENT

From the discussion of the preceding pages it has become clear that overall development of the Victoria Region has proceeded by a number of well defined stages. The booms of the sixties and eighties of the last century, that of the early nineteen hundreds, and the most recent one which has followed the second world war, have provided the principal impetus for settlement within the region. The intervening periods while characterized by continuing growth have not so much altered as reinforced the patterns which the major periods created in the regional landscape. While this generalization applies most particularly to the town it is also true of the countryside, the development of which has always been incidental rather than basic to the main urban function of the region.

The site for the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort and for the town which grew from it was laid out upon the northern shore of James Bay. The Bay at that time, as may be seen from the diagram (Figure 6) extended in an easterly direction past its present limit, occupying the area upon which the Empress Hotel stands today. From the waters of the Bay the land rose abruptly to the north and south, but in an easterly direction continued for some

little distance without attaining any great elevation. Upon the north shore, which, as stated was the focus of the original settlement the lower elevations about Rock Bay, situated approximately three-quarters of a mile north of James Bay, imposed a physical barrier to the extension of the urban area in that direction. As the trading community, re-assured by its ability to discipline the Indian population, moved from behind the protection afforded by the stockades of the Fort, and extended its settlement over the plain the limitations of these physical features were realized in the plans which the Colonial Surveyor ordained for the future form of the town.

The "Town Plan" was laid out on a rectangle the base of which was on the waterfront between James and Rock Bays, and which extended inland to the east to the line upon which Cook Street is located. Within this form was described a regular gridwork of streets running north to south and east to west, and enclosing blocks comprised of lots for the most part sixty by one hundred and twenty feet in size. This subdivision, even to the detail of the individual lots, has persevered in remarkably intact form until the present when it comprises the downtown area of the modern city.

In addition to its early extension on the north side of James Bay colonial settlement spread across the

water to the southern shore. Here many of the Company officers had their residences, and here too, facing upon the harbour, the first legislative buildings were erected. The whole of this area, later the James Bay residential district, bounded by the water on three sides and the newly reserved park on the other, had a plan described for its subdivision similar to the one already drawn for the town. This district by virtue of the amenity afforded by the water and the park assumed greater value for residence than that to the north, and for this first period of the town's growth was the pre-eminent residential district. Combined, the two areas were of sufficient size to contain all but a small part of the development which was to occur before nineteen hundred.

Little building took place before the mining fever seized the community in the early sixties. Then the lots began to be sold, and residential and commercial buildings erected. The water frontage between the two bays assumed a great value for commercial and industrial functions while residences and institutional buildings occupied the lots further inland. Much of the building of this period was of a temporary nature, and except for one or two of the commercial buildings, almost entirely of wooden construction.

The general pattern which was established at this time in the relationships of land uses was re-inforced

when the next boom, that of the nineties, caused the second major physical expansion of the community. The existing industrial water frontage was found to be adequate, and the expansion necessary in area was achieved by a greater development in depth which replaced much of the low value building of the sixties with buildings of more permanent nature, for the most part of brick and stone construction, at a greater density.

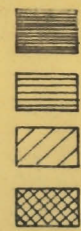
Development of the residential districts had been very sparse until this time, and there were sufficient numbers of lots in the initial stages of the new boom to contain the demand for housing. However, as the boom continued to swell population expansion on the margins of the urban area began to occur. To the east this was primarily of a ribbon nature with Fort Street the artery for its main course, but on the west in Esquimalt district the beginnings of a new residential area were taking form. To this area settlement had spread past the barrier of the harbour and of the Reserve of the Songhees Tribe, which faced the town from the western side of the harbour in the direction of the naval base at Esquimalt. The existing city boundaries no longer contained a considerable proportion of the town's residential development, and it was in this period, in the year 1891 that they were revised to the form to which have since adhered.

By the end of this second, major stage of the town's growth the foundation laid by the preceding generation had been confirmed in the attainment of a definite shape and organization within the community. The main aspects of this organization are illustrated in the diagram (Figure 6) which describes the functional relationships within the community at Victoria as they obtained at the beginning of the last decade of the last century.

The commercial importance of Government Street is shown here to be well established, as is that of Johnson Street at the foot of which was the bridge by which the line of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway entered the town. A second bridge, at Point Ellice, carried the road which led to the newly established community at Victoria west and on to the naval base, which since 1859 had been established at the western end of the diamond shaped peninsula in Esquimalt district. To this road joined another leading to the garrison, the position of which at Work Point is also shown on the diagram. In a westerly direction also was the wagon road to the Metchosin and Sooke districts, while radiating in a northerly direction, Carey, Blenkinsop and Cedar Hill Roads, and Quadra Street, gave access to the Saanich peninsula. Following the course of the first of these, and a little to the east, the railway line which was to connect Victoria and Sidney was in the process of construction. One other principal route led from the town to the Gordon Head area. This was Fort



# VICTORIA CITY & DISTRICT, 1892



Commercial  
Industrial  
Residential  
Garrison



Major Roads



Railways



Limit of Built Up Area



Limit of Residential Subdivision

scale of miles

0

1

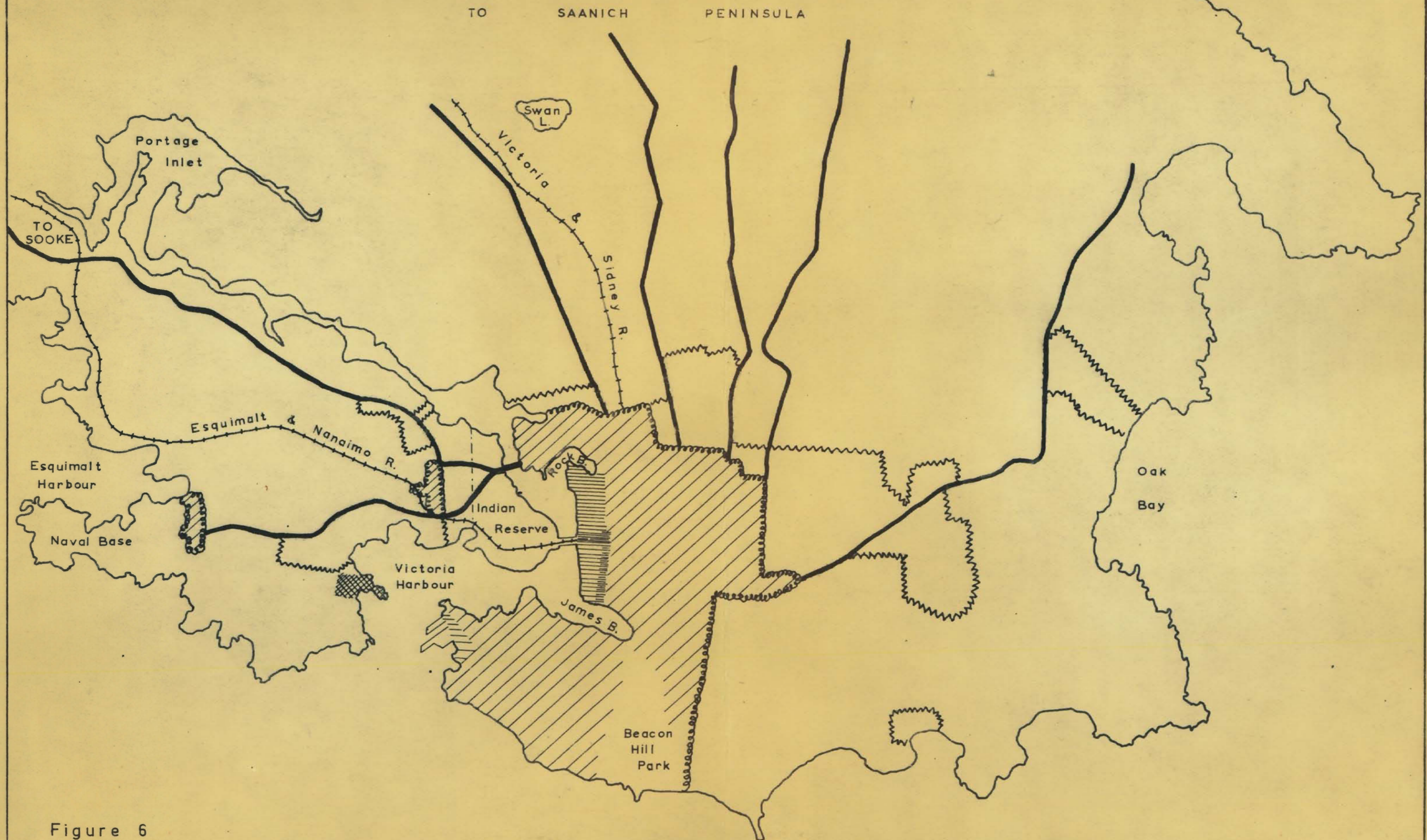


Figure 6



Street which originally linked the Uplands Farm property of the Hudson's Bay Company to the town.

In addition to showing the limit to the main built up area the diagram also indicates the extent of land which was subdivided at the time into lots for residential use. The excess of such land available for building has been a constant influence for a loose development of the urban area. It has arisen principally because of the type of holdings which within a radius of several miles of the town were established during the early days of the Hudson's Bay Company's administration. It will be recalled that of necessity large areas had been sold to officers of the Company in Victoria district. As time progressed the initially wild state of these was converted to a more profitable, agricultural use, in many cases as the estates to which these officers might retire. This type of agricultural occupance, styled on the British tradition of the gentleman farmer was of basically different kind than that prevalent in the outlying districts, where farming was a means of livelihood, and provided little resistance to urban pressures for subdivision. At this stage when public means of transportation were not available and private means restricted to a number of persons on the higher levels of the social scale, the trend away from nucleation in urban settlement was not widespread, but from the beginnings which are noticeable at this time the subdivision of country estates was to develop as

one of the principal characteristics of later urban growth.

While differing in social character the agricultural development in the Victoria district<sup>1</sup> in respect to use of land varied very little from other, rural parts of the region. By 1881 when the first reports of the regional agriculture were included in the census of Canada slightly more than ten thousand acres were classed as improved farmland within the district. This development, as that of the other parts of the region, is assumed in the absence of any evidence to the contrary to have been the direct result of an increased market for farm products provided by the expanded town. Until this expansion in the sixties there had been, as mentioned, only very limited agricultural use made of the land, but during that period as disillusioned miners and fortune seekers returned from the mainland large acreages were taken up under the liberalized conditions provided by new legislation governing land sale.

The manner in which the landscape developed at this time may be inferred from the census records of the period. For the year 1881, which is the earliest available, these reveal a surprising uniformity in the average size of farm holdings as demonstrated in Table IX. However within the standard of two hundred acres more or

1 The Victoria Land Registry District. The area of the incorporated city is not included.

TABLE IX

AVERAGE SIZE OF REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS 1881

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NO. OF HOLDINGS</u>	<u>OCCUPIED ACREAGE</u>	<u>AVERAGE SIZE</u>
Victoria	61	12,297	201
Esquimalt & Metchosin	46	8,997	196
Saanich North & South	80	16,346	205
Lake, Highland, Sooke & Goldstream	70	15,487	221

TABLE X

CONDITION OF REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS 1881

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NO. OF HOLDINGS</u>	<u>IMPROVED ACREAGE</u>	<u>AV. IMP. ACREAGE/ HOLDING</u>
Victoria	61	9,186	151
Esquimalt & Metchosin	46	3,191	69
Saanich North & South	80	5,349	67
Lake, Highland, Sooke & Goldstream	70	1,723	25

less which comprised the average size of farm of the period there was a great diversity in the manner in which the land was employed in the various districts as may be seen from Table X of improved acreages. This diversity in the improved acreage seems to have been the result of several factors. The proximity of the Victoria district to the main urban community naturally prescribed a more intensive use of agricultural land in that district, but it is also clear that a fine adjustment of agricultural land use to the potentialities of the land in the varying districts had been attained. This is quite explicit in the reports of the Provincial Department of Agriculture which issued ten years later dealt with basically the same set of conditions described in the 1881 census. These reports, compiled locally within each district, form an historical document of importance in the development of rural settlement in the Victoria Region and are reproduced here in only slightly abridged form. In each case the districts covered by the reports are land registration districts and the descriptions afforded particularly valuable if considered in relation to the maps of slope and soil (Figures 3 and 4).

SOOKE: "It is well adapted for all ordinary crops, but the limited area of open land renders the production of grain in large quantities out of the question. Considerable quantities of fruit and root crops are however raised, and all of really good quality. Dairying is carried on to a

limited extent a fair quantity of butter being manufactured. Poultry raising is also entered into and found to be profitable. A considerable number of sheep are in the district, for which there are good runs on the open hillsides, the fleeces averaging about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lbs."

METCHOSIN: "Part of this district is open country dotted over with beautiful oaks; there are many alder bottoms near the margins of the lakes and streams, and a good deal of heavily timbered land; some rocky hills also run through the district, which are partly open and on which there is good feed for sheep. The soil is varied; on the oak land it is generally a black loam with a gravel subsoil, in the alder bottoms and swamps a heavy clayey loam, and on the ridges it is generally a heavy red soil....A great deal of fruit and root crops are produced, and a considerable quantity of grain. There is not much dairying done; a fair number of sheep and swine are produced and a comparatively large quantity of poultry".

SOUTH SAANICH: "The country is generally wooded, with some hills of no great elevation. It is well watered throughout by streams and springs. The soil is good, most of it black loam, on which fruits of all kinds flourish, and of which a considerable quantity is produced. The greater part of the lower lands are devoted to growing grain and hay, both of which give good crops. Dairying is carried on quite extensively with the best of results, a considerable quantity of poultry and pigs is also produced".

NORTH SAANICH: "Much of the country is open oak land; there is also a great deal covered with small trees and brush which is easily cleared; and lastly there is some heavily timbered land, principally on the ridges. The soil is principally a black loam of great richness, which produces all the

hardy and semi-tropical fruits to great perfection.....The Saanich hay is considered the best that is put on the Victoria market. Dairying, and the sheep and swine industries are prosecuted to some extent".

ESQUIMALT AND HIGHLAND: "There is a good deal of open oak land in Esquimalt district, and a fair proportion of rocky hills; in Highland the latter predominates. There are a number of lakes, streams and swamps about which there are patches of land covered with small brush, and alder, maple etc., the soil of which is of excellent quality and produces well. The hillsides are clothed with heavy timber, and the tops partially open, forming fair range for stock. The whole of these districts is well adapted to fruit raising and the culture of root crops. Grain also does well, but the circumscribed area of land cleared naturally limits the production of cereals, but a large quantity of the two first mentioned is produced. Butter is not produced in any quantity, and it is much the same case with poultry. A good many sheep and pigs are raised, the country being particularly well adapted for the former".

VICTORIA AND LAKE: "A great deal of the country within a radius of five miles of the town is open oak land interspersed with belts of fir, alder, maple, etc. The soil is a rich black loam, except on pine land, where it is generally a heavy red loam, which grows good crops of peas and red clover, and makes excellent land for apples and plums. The principal industries are fruit, root, vegetable and milk producing, all of which find a ready sale in Victoria City. Grain and hay of superior quality are also raised in fairly large quantities. The cultivation of small fruits is largely entered into, especially strawberries and raspberries, for both of which the district is well adapted. The production of butter is, of course, limited owing to the milk being all sold in town. Some sheep, pigs, and a good deal of poultry is produced".<sup>1</sup>

- 1 With the exception of Sooke all accounts of these districts are taken from the second Annual Report Provincial Department of Agriculture. The account for Sooke is from the first Report.

In the subsequent year the district reports showed a change of bias from descriptive to statistical material. Unfortunately the statistical coverage afforded was not thoroughly standardized except with regard to the numbers of livestock. The regional totals of these are reproduced in Table XI which also shows the percentage distribution by districts. Except in a few particular respects, as for example, the large percentage of all of the last three categories in the North Saanich District, and the high percentage of the regional sheep population in the Metchosin area, there is little suggested by this table other than that agriculture throughout the region was of a mixed nature. This is borne out if the figures are reduced to average number per farm holding, the effect of which is only to reduce the relative importance of the Victoria district as is apparent from Table XII in which these figures are listed.

The agricultural development which occurred during the sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century therefore seems to be best described as "what used to be known as farming before production was specialized into fruit growing, poultry farming, dairying on a large scale, and the other diversities which have been introduced into modern agricultural science"<sup>1</sup>. No doubt this type of mixed

1 The description is by an unnamed contemporary quoted in The Daily Colonist, August 11, 1927



TABLE XI

FARM LIVESTOCK IN THE VICTORIA REGION AND PERCENTAGE  
DISTRIBUTION BY DISTRICTS 1881

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>CATTLE</u>	<u>SHEEP</u>	<u>SWINE</u>	<u>POULTRY</u>
Region (total number)	2,559	3,000	2,049	17,390
Sooke	11.7%	11.3%	9.8%	3.9%
Metchosin	13.7	33.4	8.5	16.8
Esquimalt & Highland	11.0	11.0	4.4	7.2
Victoria	21.0	12.2	12.8	20.4
Lake	11.9	4.2	6.1	7.5
South Saanich	17.5	5.9	13.0	14.2
North Saanich	13.2	22.0	45.4	30.0

TABLE XII

AVERAGE NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK PER FARM, BY DISTRICTS 1881

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>CATTLE</u>	<u>SHEEP</u>	<u>SWINE</u>	<u>POULTRY</u>
Sooke	6	6	3	12
Metchosin	9	26	4	75
Esquimalt & Highland	11	13	3	48
Victoria	9	6	5	61
Lake	7	3	3	30
South Saanich	9	3	5	49
North Saanich	8	16	22	127

agriculture was equally well adapted to the supply of the region's urban community as it was to the land it occupied. Being basically extensive and undemanding in its use of land it realized few of the limitations which have subsequently become important to the agricultural development of the region. It is particularly interesting to note the complete absence of any complaint of lack of water, which at the present time is the principal restriction upon suburban and rural development alike. No doubt this was the result of lower population densities and the higher percentage of uncleared land, which in the first instance placed little demand upon ground reservoirs, and in the second maintained them at a higher level.

That agriculture was not the only use of rural land even at this time is demonstrated by the proportions in which farm and non-farm households were distributed throughout the region. Table XIII provides a statement of this proportion in the various districts. The outlying districts at this time show a very heavy percentage of farming, as opposed to non-farming residences, while the inner districts show a preponderance of non-farm operating households. The effect of what, in modern times, might be called suburban development should not, however, be over-estimated. In terms of the land available the presence in the districts of Victoria and Esquimalt and

TABLE XIII

FARM HOUSEHOLDS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS VICTORIA  
RURAL REGION 1881

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>FARM HOUSEHOLDS Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Victoria <sup>1</sup>	147	61	41.5
Esquimalt & Metchosin	160	46	28.8
Saanich North & South	91	80	88.0
Sooke, Lake Highland & Goldstream	74	70	94.5
	<u>472</u>	<u>257</u>	<u>54.4</u>

TABLE XIV

FARM HOUSEHOLDS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS, VICTORIA  
RURAL REGION 1891

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>FARM HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Victoria <sup>1</sup>	149	12	84.5
Esquimalt & Metchosin	219	127	55.3
Saanich North & South	119	116	97.4
Sooke, Lake, Highland & Goldstream	774	393	50.8
RURAL REGION	<u>1,261</u>	<u>756</u>	<u>60.0</u>

1 Excluding Victoria City

Metchosin of two hundred non-farm residences is not of particular consequence, particularly when from this number there could be subtracted those contained in the basically urban community in Esquimalt.

The stability which had been achieved in the agricultural occupance of the region during the twenty-five year period commencing in 1860, was seriously disrupted when, towards the end of the eighties, the next major surge of expansion was experienced within the region. Although this initially affected the town to a greater extent than the rural area, the expansion was not, unlike that of the sixties, primarily the result of commercial opportunities, rather it was the effect of improved transportation facilities which made the region more easily accessible to the rest of the world. Rural settlement, therefore, received a direct share of the increase in regional population, and on this account its development was markedly different from that which had gone before. Table XIV shows the number of households registered in the rural districts by the census of 1891. By referring to the table on page 76 it may be appreciated that the increase for the decade amounted to 168% in respect to total households, and 194% in respect to those listed as farm. In the same period the amount of land occupied increased by only 33% and the improved acreage by 36%. It is apparent from the discrepancy between the increase of population and the increase

in cultivated area that the basis of agricultural occupance underwent a fundamental change during the period. The nature of this transition is explained in part by the comparison afforded in Table XV of the distribution by size of farm holdings at the beginning and end of the period.

It is quite apparent that the bulk of the increase to the farm population was accounted for in the two smallest categories of land holdings, and that this trend was general throughout the region, not confined to the more proximate districts to town although these did receive a large proportion of the increase. In view of this change it may be asked with what justification the Reports from the Provincial Department of Agriculture, released sometime after this was effected may serve, as was required of them above, to describe the conditions which prevailed before the trend was established. It seems in effect that the Reports of the Census and the Reports of the Provincial Agricultural Department are completely contradictory; the former showing 756 farm operations occupying some 70,500 acres of which approximately 26,500 were improved, while the latter showing only 270 farm operations occupying 49,777 acres of which 16,664 were classed as improved. There are two possible conclusions which may be drawn from a discrepancy of this nature. One, that the census

figures are misleading, possibly by including a large number of not properly agricultural holdings. Such could result from the adoption of some arbitrary definition of what constitutes a farm as, for example, a definition based upon area without regard to use. The other possibility is that the Provincial Reports did not accept as properly farming operations the new types of holding which were apparently becoming so common. In support of the latter argument it may be pointed out that the most constant reference in the Provincial Reports is to "ranching" which suggests the exclusion of all but extensive agricultural operations from consideration. By reference to the table of farm sizes, (Table XV) it appears quite clear that the trend to small farms did not replace as much as augment the pre-existing large farm units in the landscape, and it seems certain therefore that little inaccuracy is incurred by using the Provincial Reports of the early nineties to describe the region in the seventies and eighties.

That the description afforded by analysis of the census information is more complete for the year 1891 than that by the Provincial Reports there can, in fact, be no doubt. For it was at this time that the region realized a new potential agriculturally; this was the potential towards specialized production, a specialization primarily in fruit growing, which in 1892 led directly to the

TABLE XV

FARM HOLDINGS, DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE - 1881 AND 1891

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>0 - 10</u>		<u>11 - 50</u>		<u>51 - 100</u>		<u>101 - 200</u>		<u>200+ Acres</u>	
	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>
Victoria <sup>1</sup>	1	53	6	38	25	15	15	10	14	10
Esquimalt & Metchosin	5	55	4	16	5	11	14	18	18	21
Saanich	4	21	4	12	26	31	19	23	27	29
Sooke, Lake, Highland, Goldstream	2	161	6	123	25	30	23	50	14	29
	12	290	20	189	81	87	71	101	73	89

TABLE XVI

TOTAL AND FARM HOUSEHOLDS, PERCENTAGE INCREASE - 1881 AND 1891

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>			<u>FARM HOUSE</u>		
	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>%</u>
Victoria <sup>1</sup>	147	149	2	61	126	106
Esquimalt & Metchosin	160	219	37	46	127	176
Saanich North & South	91	119	31	80	116	45
Sooke & Goldstream	)	699)		)	329)	
	) 74	) 946		) 70	) 462	
Lake & Highland	)	75)		)	64)	

1 Excluding Victoria City

establishment of the Horticultural Board by the Provincial Government. The discovery of the physical suitability of the region for horticultural use was not new, but what hastened the expansion of its practice was no doubt that combination of circumstances which had expanded the local urban market for horticultural products and at the same time brought to the region a number of immigrants whose preference for rural rather than urban living heightened the necessity for finding an economic manner in which the land could be made to yield to the needs of a more numerous population dependent upon it.

Speaking of the results which this discovery had, a contemporary remarks, "Thus a great change has come over the whole landscape in recent years. In 1892 the short line of railway connecting Victoria with the extreme end of the peninsula was built, and Sidney began to loom on the horizon. The new transportation facilities gave impetus to further settlement, and many new farms were bought and much more populous communities arose.....Acres were put under glass and hothouse varieties of every species began to make for themselves national repute....Small farms were<sup>1</sup> the vogue".

While this new manner of agricultural development affected the whole of the region the degree of its influence showed considerable variation from one district to another.

1 Quoted in The Daily Colonist, August 11, 1927



This is demonstrated by the comparison of total and farm households in the rural districts for the year 1881 with that for the year 1891. The percentage increase over the decade was distributed in the manner shown in Table XVI. Considering first the increase in farm households, the Victoria, Esquimalt and Metchosin districts all more than doubled but fell short of trebling their farm populations in the period. In fact the rate of increase in these three districts was probably more consistent than the two figures of 106% and 176% would indicate, due to the reduced size of Victoria district which had resulted from the expansion of the city's boundaries. In the more out-lying Saanich districts the increase was not as rapid, while in the intermediary located Lake district the impossibility of exact measurement does not prevent the conclusion being drawn that the rate of increase was at least as fast as in the Saanich districts.<sup>1</sup> The general assumption which arises from these facts is that the development of the new horticultural occupations was spatially organized most intensely peripherally about

- 1 The lack of direct comparability is due to the manner in which the census information was recorded. In 1881 one figure was given for all four districts, Lake, Highland, Sooke and Goldstream, while in 1891 two figures are available for these districts (grouped as shown in the table). Difficulty in interpretation arises because of the very differing natural qualities of these districts which in many ways makes them unsuitable areas for statistical treatment. If, however, the information is considered in the light of the natural character and geographic location of the component districts the correct interpretation is not impossible to achieve.

the town. The phenomenal increase at Sooke provides an exception to this generalization which is hard to explain in terms other than that the district seems to have had a special attraction for settlers at this period. What this attraction was is not at all apparent either from existing records or from observation at the present time.

In turning attention from the exclusively agricultural aspects of the settlement of the rural parts of the region to the total consideration, it is again with regard to Sooke that difficulty in interpretation arises. The remaining districts show no appreciable increase in population in the period 1881 to 1891 other than that which occurred directly as a result of the new vogue for small farms, and in Victoria district the expansion of the city's boundaries had sharply decreased, from 86 to 23, the number of families resident who were not engaged in farming. But in the case of Sooke non-farming as well as farming occupations were responsible for the increase. As mentioned in an earlier chapter the position of Sooke within the region is somewhat tenuous both on the basis of physiography and the manner of economic development. Its proximity to the upland edge caused it to become involved in the prospecting activities which attended the discoveries of potential mineral wealth in the crystalline rocks of the Island range, and the predominance of coniferous forest in its vegetative cover resulted in its early development as a centre of the

logging and sawmilling industries. These primary, extractive industries are essentially foreign to the general nature of the economy of the Victoria Region. The closest manner in which the main regional community approaches these activities is in the processing of forest resources, but there is a fundamental difference between the extractive and processing aspects of the forest industry, and this difference has demonstrated itself in a divergence of settlement between the two areas.

Whether it was a new mining speculation or some other natural resource development which attracted settlement during the late eighties to the Sooke district is not certain. Evidently a large community evolved there at that time of which 50% owed its existence to farming. Of the nature of the remainder there is no record, beyond the indication in the census of a degree of imperanence,<sup>1</sup> which seems to have been borne out in the subsequent failure of the Sooke area to attract settlement at the same rate as the rest of the region. The agricultural expansion of the Sooke region at this time seems to have been a misconceived adaptation of the qualities of its land.

The emergence of this new trend in regional settlement patterns has had far reaching results. It forms the

1 The suggestion of imperanence is afforded by the census of housing which lists 329 of 699 occupied dwellings as "vessels or shanties"

basis for the present use of rural land, and was directly responsible for improving transportation facilities within the region. Until the time when agricultural settlement assumed this density the development of the rural parts of the region had been hampered by the poor conditions for travel to the area of its market - the town - but with increasing densities road and rail communications were able to be improved and the frictions of distance minimized. Of the nucleated settlements which had developed at Keating, Saanichton and Sidney in the peninsula in this early stage of the region's growth, Sidney as the terminus of the new railroad was to develop as the major centre in the modern period of regional settlement. Advancement of this development was delayed for several years by the intervention of unfavourable economic conditions, but the basis had been set, and when the slump dissolved in the favourable conditions which prevailed at the turn of the century, the period of modern settlement was attained in the rural, as in the urban, portions of the region.

## CHAPTER V

### TWENTIETH CENTURY SETTLEMENT

The new century saw the beginning of another major period of regional growth. While in the rural areas the expansion tended to intensify the pattern of land occupancy already created, it brought to the urban area a number of fundamental changes both in its internal functional structure and in the manner of its residential development.

By the 1890's commercial and industrial uses had developed intensively the areas which had assumed these functions during the early growth of the town. The expanding business community, indulging upon a period of new building activity, once again accepted Rock Bay as the northern limit for commercial development and extended the downtown area back from the water front rather than in lateral fashion. The buildings of the period rose along the main east-west streets, predominantly from Johnson Street at the north to the shoreline of James Bay to the south. The portion of James Bay to the east of Government Street was filled and the Empress Hotel built upon the reclaimed area. On the opposite side of the Bay the Legislative Buildings, completed in 1898, provided with the hotel the main architectural elements

of the vista which may today be seen from the harbour.

In other respects the new building boom had created the modern city. Douglas Street, built upon both sides with the multi-story buildings of the period, replaced Government Street at the town's principal retail thoroughfare at this time. Together with the pre-existing construction that which was built in the first ten years of the century has been adequate to contain the majority of commercial uses until the present time. Subsequent construction in the downtown area has, with the exception of Yates Street along which the automobile servicing and moving picture entertainment industries have established, occupied no large, consolidated area. In the most recent decade which again has seen a rapid increase in urban population, no significant quantity of new building has occurred; the result of wartime and post-war shortages of building materials.

While the main commercial development of the town was achieved by this, comparatively early stage of its history, its industrial development has progressed more slowly, but in a manner largely prescribed at this same period. Speculation upon the effect of the opening of the Panama Canal caused the Federal Government to undertake extensive improvements to the Victoria Harbour in the latter years of the first decade of the century. The main improvement was by dredging operation which

gave the harbour sufficient depth to berth the larger ocean going vessels which hitherto had either to anchor offshore or put into the harbour at Esquimalt. The effect of this measure in increasing the value of water front property for industrial purposes resulted in the gradual extension of industry about the harbour shoreline.

On the eastern side of the harbour the spread of industry from its established location between the two Bays around Rock Bay to Point Ellice on the north, and from the deep sea docks at Ogden Point to the government buildings was a gradual but consistent process in the years which followed. On the western side the Songhee tribe had occupied the shore throughout the nineteenth century. However, continued use of this land as an Indian reserve at its now enhanced value would have been most uneconomic and consequently the reserve was removed to a more western location in Esquimalt District and the vacated land area constituted an industrial reserve. In this area the Canadian National Railway established the terminal for its freight car ferry service, and with the movement into town of goods by this route a warehousing development occurred.

The residential expansion of the urban area which since 1890 had proceeded upon a reciprocal basis with that of the public transportation system, continued in a ribbon manner following in an easterly direction the street rail-

way line to Oak Bay, and to the west the line which in 1898 connected the city with the Esquimalt navy base. In all of three available directions it over-rode the city limits so recently redrawn and created anew the problem of reconstituting the area of municipal authority.

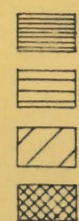
The solution found in this period created as many municipal units as directions in which development had spread. To the west the Township of Esquimalt was incorporated occupying all the area of the peninsula contained by the sea and the waters of the Gorge, to the east the area as far as the sea and, in northerly direction, to the limits of the Hudson's Bay Company's holdings was incorporated as the District of Oak Bay. The development which occurred north of the city's boundaries did not find as readily defined boundaries as either of these, and the solution here was less happy, in creating one large municipal unit, Saanich Municipality, of all that area of Victoria, Lake and South Saanich districts not included within the area already organized. So popular was the movement for local government at the time that the North Saanich district decided in favour of incorporation also, but after a four year spell of autonomous rule decided to replace its administration in the lap of a benevolent province.

The prosperity which had seized the town at the beginning of the century had brought many changes. These, described above, are represented illustratively in the



differences between the diagrams Figure 7 which details the development of the town to the year 1914, and Figure 6, where the stage of previous development is similarly drawn. Once again the area of land in residential subdivision beyond the main built up area is reproduced. The margin between the two boundaries is in the case of the more recent year far greater than in the one preceding. Needless to say much of the area in speculative subdivision was not immediately built, and a surprisingly large proportion remains undeveloped at the present time. However, as population continued to grow many of these lots have become built, but with the predominant effect of a sustained sparsity in the residential development of the town. The liberal admixture of buildings of differing age which resulted from the wide area available for their accommodation has prevented the attainment of unity in spatial organization or the emergence of any definite neighbourhood quality in residential development in the twentieth century. That the form within which the town was to expand was fixed, in the majority of cases inflexibly, by the pattern of land subdivision existing in 1912 has inhibited the evolution of a sound urban environment and resulted in the flight of residence to an illusionary rural surrounding.

# VICTORIA CITY & DISTRICT 1912



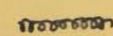
Commercial  
Industrial  
Residential  
Garrison



Legislative Area



Ribbon Development



Limit of Built Up Area



Limit of Residential Subdivision



Municipal Boundaries

miles to scale

0 1

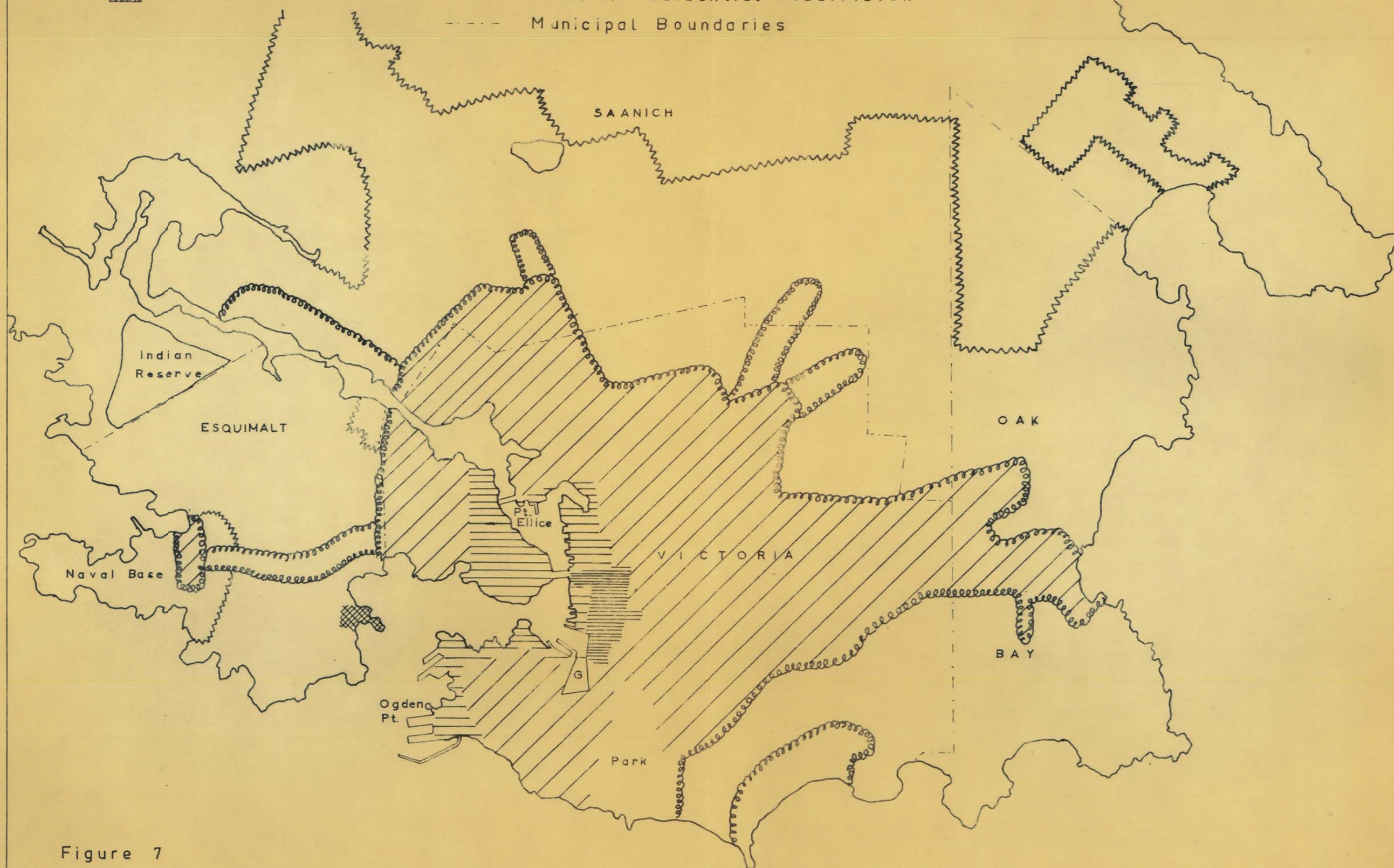


Figure 7



This outward movement of urban population has been abetted by modern improvements in transportation facilities, most particularly by the privately owned automobile which has enabled population in this region, as in others across Canada, to increase the acceptable distance between home and place of work in direct relation to its ability to travel.

The rural region to which these urban uses began to spread, had developed in the early part of the century in the manner foretold by the inauguration of specialized agricultural production in the nineties. The boom at the beginning of the century once more brought a large number of settlers to the rural parts of the region. By 1904 it was remarked that:

"a number of inquiries have been received for fruit farms in the neighbourhood of Victoria. All these communications were from parties in eastern Canada and show the attention which not only the city but suburban property in this district is attracting".<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately this development is not easily demonstrated statistically. The Census of Canada reconstituted its areas for enumeration early in the century, and thereafter recorded information only for units considerably larger than those which had been used previously. For the periods 1911 and 1921 the two electoral districts

1 The Daily Colonist, March 20, 1904

of Saanich and Esquimalt were the smallest units by which information for the rural portion of the region was given. Three tables are reproduced, the first two of which shows occupied and improved acreages, and the third, distribution by size of the farm holdings of the period, in each case comparison<sup>1</sup> is afforded by juxtaposing data from the year 1891

To be admissible as evidence of the trend of regional land use for the period attention must be drawn to the limitations of these tables as outlined in the footnote on the page upon which they appear. They have been reproduced here in order that a few important conclusions may be drawn. The first of these is that agricultural land occupance did take, as a whole, a great advance in the period following the first boom of the century. From 1891 to 1911 the number of farm holdings increased from 756 to 1,380. The second conclusion is that overwhelmingly the preponderance of the increase was absorbed onto relatively small acreages. Two hundred and forty were on less than one acre and should probably be excluded from consideration altogether, as was the case in 1921<sup>2</sup> when the census placed a new definition upon farm, never-

1 See footnote to Tables XVII, XVIII and XIX

2 "For the census of 1921 a farm was defined as a tract of land of one acre or over which produced in the year 1920 crops of any kind to the value of \$50.00 or more. In previous censuses the minimum area was not clearly defined, with the consequence that small plots of less than one acre were included as farms". Introduction to the Volume of Agricultural Reports Census of Canada 1921

TABLE XVII

<u>OCCUPIED FARM LANDS 1891 - 1921</u> <sup>1</sup> (In Acres)			
	<u>1891</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>
Esquimalt Electoral District	32,038	35,176	27,519
Saanich Electoral District	<u>38,489</u>	<u>26,022</u>	<u>16,420</u>
VICTORIA REGION	70,527	71,198	53,939

TABLE XVIII

<u>IMPROVED FARM LANDS 1891 - 1921</u> <sup>1</sup> (In Acres)			
	<u>1891</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>
Esquimalt Electoral District	1,487	6,072	4,225
Saanich Electoral District	<u>4,295</u>	<u>11,152</u>	<u>8,556</u>
VICTORIA REGION	5,782	17,124	12,781

- 1 There is no precise correspondence between the areas of the Esquimalt and Saanich Electoral Districts and those of Land Registration Districts. Saanich Electoral District constitutes the whole of the Saanich Peninsula east of the eastern boundary of Highland and the comparison afforded is with the totals for Victoria, North and South Saanich, Lake and (of necessity) Highland Districts. Highland District being little suited to agriculture should not interfere with a close correspondence between the areas thus constituted. In the case of Esquimalt Electoral District, it is more vast in area than the several land districts with which it is compared, stretching beyond the Victoria Region proper for approximately 50 miles. The possibility of including much agricultural practice not in the Victoria region is however minimized by the poor suitability of the other land in the district. The figures are offered as a guide only, and particularly in the case of Esquimalt Electoral District, should be viewed in only the most general manner.

TABLE XIX

OCCUPIERS OF FARM LANDS 1891 - 1921<sup>1</sup>

			(By Acreage of Holding)				
		<u>Total</u>	<u>-10</u>	<u>11-50</u>	<u>51-100</u>	<u>100-200</u>	<u>201+</u>
Esquimalt E.D.	1891	450	210	125	26	54	35
	1911	354	148	62	33	71	40
	1921	294	106	71	39	45	33
Saanich E.D.	1891	306	80	64	61	47	54
	1911	1,026	700	208	66	34	18
	1921	564	304	184	49	18	9
VICTORIA REG'N	1891	756	290	189	87	101	89
	1911	1,380	848	270	99	104	58
	1921	859	410	255	88	63	52

TABLE XX

MUNICIPALITY OF SAANICH, AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1931, 1941, 1951

Year	No. of Occupiers	Occupying	Improved
1931	903	19,760 acres	10,692 acres
1941	575	17,442	10,396
1951	699	16,509	10,871

1 See footnote p. 94

theless reduced by this number the size of the increase would amount to 50%. The third and most important conclusion is that the overall increase was the result of an absolute decline in the western areas, and a correspondingly larger increase in the area of the Saanich peninsula which in fact amounted to over 200% (150% if parcels smaller than one acre are excluded).

This reversal of the trend which had been established in the period of the nineties is in fact most important giving a modern emphasis to the regional distribution of rural settlement which has increasingly tended towards the north - to the Saanich Peninsula - and away from the western districts. In turning attention to subsequent development the concern is therefore with two districts increasingly divergent.

The first of these, the western area, comprised of the Land Districts of Sooke, Metchosin, and the non-peninsula portion of Esquimalt, has suffered a continuing decline in properly agricultural development since 1891. In the Sooke district the level of settlement was subject to large fluctuations as a direct result of its industrial activity. In 1904 it received,

"a stir from the outside by the establishment of salmon traps in the Straits... Sooke harbour became the headquarters of all the companies engaged in this enterprise, (which) doubled the population in four years"<sup>1</sup>

1 The Daily Colonist, December 13, 1908

and yet by 1922 the population amounted to no more than  
300.<sup>1</sup>

At this time the economy of the district was described in the following manner:

" The only industries at present being carried on in the district are logging, fishing and agriculture. The logging industry has been a steady one since 1850 and will be for many years to come. The fishing industry is mostly in connection with the salmon traps operated by Messrs. J.H. Todd & Sons and the Sooke Harbour Fishing and Packing Company. As touching the agricultural industry nearly all the old large farms have been cut up and subdivided into smaller holdings. Dairying is carried on successfully by many....poultry do exceptionally well, and for fruit growing the district seems ideal....more settlers than ever before are turning their<sup>2</sup> attention to raspberry and loganberry culture".<sup>2</sup>

In fact it is clear that the agricultural development of the Sooke district was not advancing and that the foregoing description was based upon an optimism for the future combined with the outdated experience of the previous century. This is demonstrated in Table XIX by the decline in the number of farm operations between 1891 and 1911. In this respect the Esquimalt Electoral District in 1911 contained only 354 holdings compared with 450 which had existed in 1891.<sup>3</sup> This conclusion is supported in the following

1 "Recent directories credit Sooke with a population of 300". Victoria Times, August 20, 1922

2 Victoria Times, July 7, 1923

3 The decline may be considered to be of greater magnitude than suggested by these figures as the areas compared are not of the same size. The Esquimalt Electoral District of 1911 is larger than the Land Districts of 1891



observation:

" the farms during the last quarter century have been allowed to go to seed, and the landscape has become dotted with empty farmhouses".<sup>1</sup>

Sooke was in fact less suited for agricultural occupance than other districts within the region partly because of the inferior quality of its soils, but more particularly because of its physical separation from the rest of the region. Its history of settlement during the present century has been closely related to that of the logging and fishing industries, and the level of settlement has fluctuated as the market for the products of these industries, of which for one year now only logging remains.<sup>2</sup> The limited amount of agriculture which has survived in the district has been largely due to the seasonal nature of these its fundamental industries.<sup>3</sup>

In the remaining districts of the western portion of the region, in the vicinity of Metchosin, Langford and Colwood, agricultural use of the land has also become limited. While this was in part due to the poor capability of the soil in these districts for any but general farming purposes, it has been increasingly the result of competition of other uses for land. This competition has been

1 Victoria Times, June 18, 1927

2 In 1955 the period for which rights to operate the salmon traps had been bestowed upon the company engaging in this industry expired

3 The income derived from lumbering and salmon packing is in a number of individual cases supplemented in the off-season by part-time farming

provided by the National Defence Services which in recent years have taken over large areas,<sup>1</sup> and by directly urban residential expansion. The group of summer cottages which had been built around the shores of Langford and Glen Lakes in the first years of the century became the nucleus about which permanent residences were later to develop. As early as 1930 this settlement began to assume a residential rather than resort character, but it has been in the period since the last war that the development has proceeded at its most rapid rate.

The development of the other portion of the region, the Saanich Peninsula, has progressed both more rapidly and in much more definite accordance with the predominant trend towards horticultural specialization. That in the booming conditions which prevailed at the beginning of the century this area rather than that to the west, was to realize the greatest effect of this change in agricultural land use is demonstrated in Tables XVII, XVIII and XIX.

Because in this case the new statistical unit, the Saanich Electoral District, corresponds closely in area to the combined areas of the Land Districts with which the comparison with the year 1891 is made, there is little margin for error in direct comparison of the material. As already mentioned it was at this very early stage of the century that the major transition occurred in the rural

1 The extent of land occupied by the Department of National Defence is shown in Figure 10

landscape of the Saanich peninsula. This is illustrated both in the increase in the number of small holdings and in the increase to the improved acreage.

However, as the first world war brought to an end the prosperity of the first decade of the century, the rise of agricultural land use was apparently not only halted but began to decline. The decrease in the number of farms between the census years 1911 and 1921, while partly due to the re-definition of what, for census purposes, comprised a farm, cannot totally be ascribed to this cause, but was the result too of an actual decrease in the use of rural land. This is illustrated in the decline from 11,152 to 8,556 of the improved acreage in this period and supported in the observations of a contemporary:

"The late Dr. S.F. Tolmie recounted in the 1920's that he thought there was less land farmed in Saanich than when he was a boy".<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent agricultural land occupance in the Saanich peninsula has shown an increase as may be seen from Table XX. The information contained in this table is for Saanich Municipality only, and excluding the North Saanich District which is a part of the Saanich Electoral District for which information in the previous census

1 H.C. Holmes, "Some Notes on the Economic Past, Present and Future of Vancouver Island", Presidential address to the B.C. Historical Society, British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVI, 1952, p. 60

periods was recorded, suggests that there was a most intensive use of agricultural land shortly before the economic decline of the thirties again reduced farming operations.

The decline in the occupied area from 19,760 acres in 1931 to 16,509 acres in 1951 is evidence of the encroachment of urban uses into the rural area. While these do not appear in point of view of improved acreage which has been maintained between ten and eleven thousand throughout the period covered by the table, to have reduced quantitatively the area farmed they have qualitatively affected agricultural land use by creating speculative values which cause instability in the operation of farms.

This expansion of urban uses into the Saanich Peninsula has been of two types: the normal extension of the urban margin, and the establishment either individually or in local nucleations of residences completely separated from the main urban area. It is impossible to differentiate between these two types from an analysis of the statistical material in the census because they are both contained within the single unit of Saanich Municipality. Both are in addition to, and in many cases related to primarily urban development bearing only a most indirect relationship to the town.

In the period from the beginning of the century to the outbreak of the first world war two industrial establishments were made which were to bring to the peninsula

area a new form of settlement. On Tod Inlet the cement works which later were to merge with the B.C. Cement Company and remove their operations across the Inlet to Bamberton, originated the nucleated settlement which exists today at Brentwood. While on the eastern side of the peninsula the establishment on James Island of the plant which is today the Explosives Division of Canadian Industries Limited occasioned further settlement about the established nuclei of Keating, Saanichton and Sidney.

To these centres there was shortly to come the exodus of population from the main urban area. At Brentwood, Cordova Bay and Deep Cove residential settlement from this source was preceded by the development of a community of summer cottages, which, as had happened at Langford, gradually assumed the character of more permanent residential communities as the provision of urban services became common. Migration from the town has not been confined to these localities but spread also into the countryside along the main north-south transportation routes.

This new trend in the rural landscape has developed most rapidly in the period since 1945. Controlled at the present time only by the availability of water it is encroaching upon the very limited areas of farmland more by its economic influence which, by raising the level of taxation, places a value upon land too high

to sustain agricultural production than by direct occupation. Visually it detracts from the countryside by its intrusive appearance destroying the region's principal asset: its scenic quality.

This has been the last of three successive influences to have told upon the development of the rural landscape in the Victoria Region. Because each of these has special requirements for land none has completely excluded the others. The original mixed farming and dairying operations established in the early part of the last century occupy the low lying areas, where the heavy textured soils are not sufficiently well drained to support horticultural production. The smaller holdings of bulb, seed, flower, poultry, and most particularly, fruit farmers reach down to these from the ridges. It is to the ridges also that most residence has been attracted, drawn there by the views afforded from their heights. It is, therefore, into horticultural land that the most recent invasion of settlement has occurred. Its competition has, however, been limited to those areas possessing both adequate water<sup>1</sup> supply and good road communication with the town.

- 1 Piped water supply is presently available in Victoria City, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and Saanich Municipalities. In the case of Saanich some portions of the municipality are not yet served by distribution facilities. Except at Brentwood and Sidney the northern portion of the peninsula does not have any supply other than from individual wells. In the Langford, Colwood, Metchosin area water is available from the Greater Victoria Water Board (the wholesale supplier to the several municipal units of Greater Victoria aforementioned) at the cost to the individual of laying the necessary mains

The town itself has grown considerably during the present century although without causing any fundamental alteration to the functional arrangement depicted in Figure 7. In terms of area<sup>1</sup> this expansion has, however, changed completely the balance which existed at the beginning of the century between rural and urban portions of the region. It has made farming in the region hardly profitable, and in addition provided the opportunities for more remunerative occupation in the city. The question arises from these facts as to what extent the present trends in settlement will eradicate the existing pattern of land use. To date the limitation of the area available to settlement in the Victoria Region has not been seriously felt; the area of improved farmland not much restricted by urban expansion. The saturation point has, however, been reached, and if regional settlement attains higher densities, another change must occur within the regional landscape. Although such a change will be adaptive, it will also obscure much of what may now be read from the landscape of its cultural evolution.

1 The extent of the built up area at the present time is indicated in the map (Figure 10) appended

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NATURE OF SETTLEMENT IN THE VICTORIA REGION

The pattern of settlement which has emerged in the Victoria Region had its genesis in what is in western Canada a deep past. Although the centenary of the founding of Fort Victoria is not yet fifteen years old the city and the region about it have an historical development which belies such short a time span in the diversity of its political, social and economic evolution. During the earliest period, that in which the Hudson's Bay Company was most influential, British political supremacy in Vancouver Island was unquestionably established and the main course of future settlement in the region prescribed by this political affiliation which in subsequent years determined the region's allegiance to a Canadian rather than American federation.

While the Hudson's Bay Company's designs for the future economic development of the region to which it had given birth were dispelled within the relatively short space of fifteen years, the Company had in the meanwhile established an enduring influence. This has told most particularly in the organization which its physical plan of land subdivision has given to the downtown area and to the James Bay district, in the manner in which its landholdings have often remained, as is the case of the



Uplands residential area, distinct in the landscape. Many local place names, Finlayson, Helmcken, Pemberton and Douglas among others, bear witness to the contribution which the Company made not only directly but also through the indirect agency of its officers whose estates remained in many cases intact well into the present century.

The basis which the Company set for a settlement its policies all but precluded, became developed in the years following the decline of its authority. The large extensive farming operations of the pioneers who in the twenty-five years which followed the gold rush in 1858 cleared the land in the outlying districts, still remain in a number of places where conditions of soil do not favour the specialized farming which later became common. In some cases, as with the Thomsons, Mitchells, Sluggets, these farms are held by the descendents of the pioneers who first cleared their lands.

The agricultural development of the rural region gave rise to nucleated settlements providing public and private services for a population at that time as distant from Victoria in travelling time almost as many hours as it is minutes presently. Saanichton was one such centre, and Sidney, at the northern point of the peninsula, another to which the farmers of the time came to have their wheat milled, to buy or to have repaired their implements, and

to meet together to discuss matters of mutual interest.

As Confederation became a reality for British Columbia with the physical integration of the province and eastern parts of the nation effected by the construction of the railway, the region's growth was again spurred. It had yet to be realized that Victoria's location on Vancouver Island would isolate the city from the continent in the future as much as it had bound it to the mainland in the past, and so Victoria and the region continued the centre of provincial immigration during this period as it continued the centre of maritime, manufacturing and political activity in the province. The results were far reaching, not only the town expanded as a result of the new commercial opportunities, but the region's physical qualities were made more easily accessible by the existence of the railroad. The countryside became transformed by an increasing number of small farms owing their existence in the first case to the larger local market offered for their specialized products, and in the second to the possibility of the market no longer being limited to the local area.

As the region emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century from an interval of economic decline the results of the new trend in rural land use became intensified . Taking advantage of improved transporta-

tion facilities the settlers of the earliest decade of the new century moved northward into the Saanich Peninsula where the land, proving more suitable for horticultural production than that in the western districts, became intensively occupied. The land requirements of these fruit farms differed basically from those of the mixed farms, which had been established previously. Their main crop, small fruits, was harvested early in the year before the season of summer drought had commenced, and the plants from which the crops were harvested required land which was well drained. Such land was available on the slopes of the esker-like ridges which ran throughout the region. These ridges supported a coniferous forest clearing which had proved difficult and, because the land it bared was too dry for the purpose of pasture or cereal cultivation, unprofitable to the farmer of the earlier period. The new mode of agricultural land occupance resulted therefore in greater acreages brought under cultivation; not replacing but supplementing the farming practice which had developed previously. By discovering the better capability of the soils in the peninsula than in the western district of the lowland for this purpose, development in the rural portion of the region at this time caused a differentiation between the two areas. This differentiation, stressed by the broken nature of the country to the west of the town, became more pronounced by the rapid improvement of

road and rail routes into the peninsula which resulted from its greater intensity of settlement, for these were the routes by which subsequent migration of the urban population into the country was to occur.

It was at the beginning of the century also that the modern form of the urban area was attained. A local boom related to the mining development of the Klondike and sustained by subsequent development throughout the province brought to the region another major influx of urban settlers whose industrial and commercial activities raised the buildings which still serve satisfactorily the commercial needs of the city's population. In the expansion new areas within the town were adapted for industrial functions. These changes represented the transformation in the spatial organization of land uses which has determined the functional structure of the city ever since. Residentially, development proceeded upon the urban margin giving rise to new municipal authorities.

However, as the twentieth century progressed it became evident that the continental railroad had caused a change in the region's geographical relationship with the mainland by which its potential development in many economic phases was to be limited in the future. This change as well as ordering the rate at which settlement has since progressed, has affected the landscape qualitatively. Most particularly it has restricted the development of

industry and expanded the resort function in the attraction both of transients and permanent settlers of retiring age. Residential use of land is on this account disproportionately large by comparison with others in the Victoria Region, and because settlement is now drawn to the region by natural no less than economic advantages it tends to spread its residential use of land thinly through a large area rather than to develop a smaller area at high density.

The use of land in the Victoria Region reflects these several component elements in the evolution of its settlement. The map (Figure 10) which generalizes the spatial arrangement of land uses reflects the manner in which settlement in the region has become adapted to the inherent qualities of the natural environment. Most particularly through more than a hundred years of settlement the upland of the Vancouver range has defied penetration enclosing with the sea a limited area within which the relationship established between life and land depicts each of the influences which has marked its historic course.

APPENDIX A

REGIONAL AND DISTRICT AREAS

Table XXI

Figure 8

TABLE XXI

VICTORIA REGION, LAND DISTRICT AREAS

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>AREA</u>
North Saanich	17.64 sq. miles
South Saanich	19.40
Lake	23.32
Highland	25.16
Victoria	26.24
Esquimalt	19.52
Metchosin	24.16
Sooke	30.28
Goldstream	20.88
Otter	17.64
VICTORIA REGION	<hr/> 224.24 <hr/>

# POLITICAL & LEGAL DIVISIONS, VICTORIA REGION

MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES - - - - -

Land District Boundaries - - - - -

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles to scale

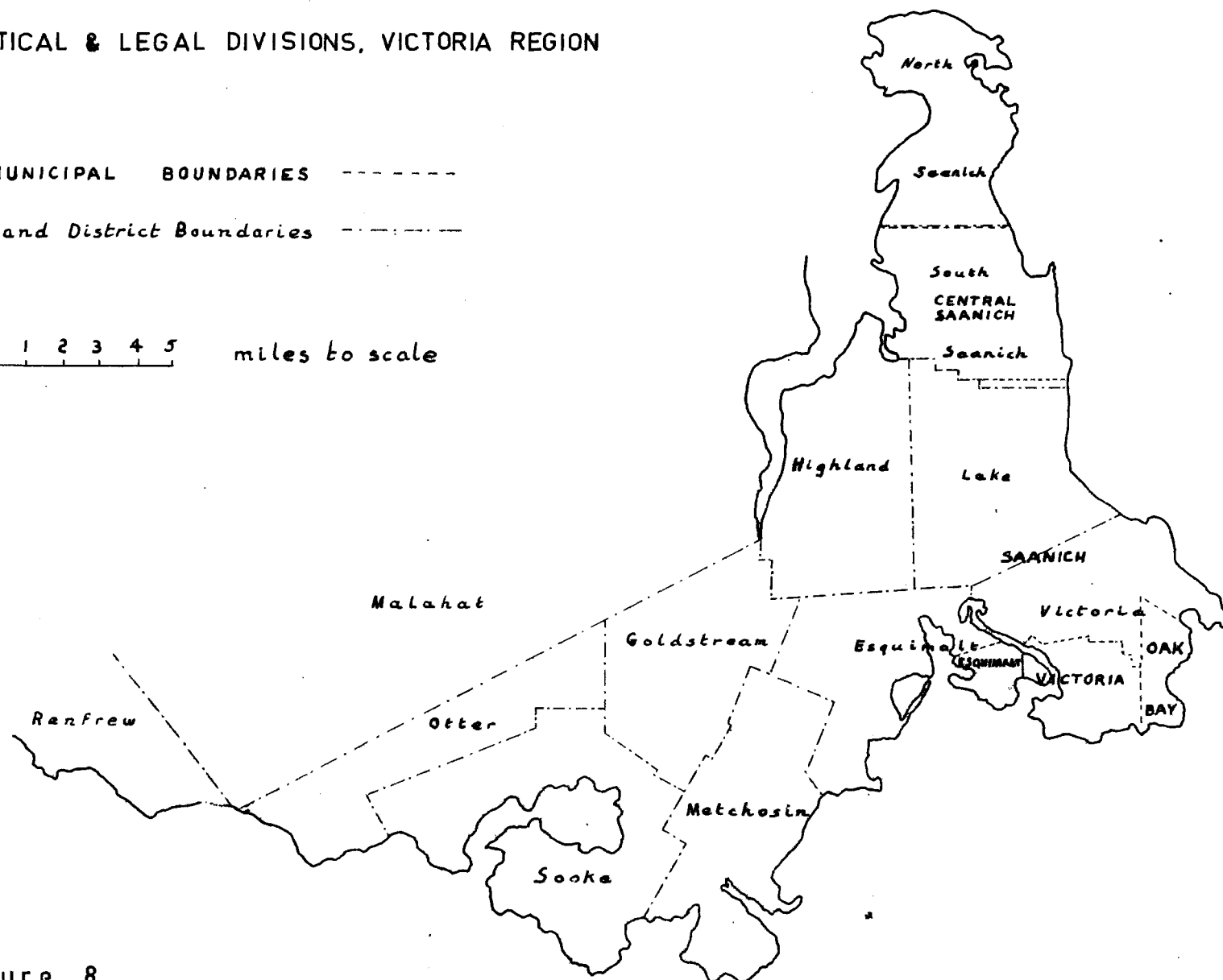


Figure 8



APPENDIX B

REGIONAL POPULATION 1851-1951

Table XXII

TABLE XXII

VICTORIA REGION, POPULATION 1851 - 1951

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
Victoria City		4,000	3,270	5,925	16,841	20,919	31,660	38,727	39,082	44,068	51,331
Saanich E.D.#		100					6,026				
Victoria L.D. <sup>1</sup> #			570 <sup>2</sup>	762	742	1,418					
Oak Bay Mun.								4,159	5,254	9,240	11,960
Saanich Mun.									11,485	16,513	28,481
Lake District				286	335	700 <sup>2</sup>					
N. Saanich L.D.			) 300 <sup>2</sup> )	488	) 610	) 2,692		6,534	1,706	2,362	3,894
S. Saanich L.D.											
C. Saanich Mun.									1,218	1,362	2,069
Esquimalt E.D.		1,900		614			5,919	3,458			
Esquimalt L.D.			400 <sup>2</sup>		740	1,695			1,235	1,930	3,234
Esquimalt Mun.									3,274	3,737	10,153
Metchosin L.D.			300 <sup>2</sup>		215	160			744	759	1,233
Sooke L.D. <sup>3</sup>			140 <sup>2</sup>		3,270	2,400			750	1,076	2,554
Highland L.D.									385	180	935
VICTORIA REGION	300 <sup>2</sup>	6,000 <sup>2</sup>	4,980 <sup>2</sup>	8,075	22,753	29,984	43,605	52,878	65,133	81,227	115,844

# E.D. - Electoral District; L.D. - Land Registration District

1 Existing city

2 Estimated

3 Including Goldstream and other adjacent areas

APPENDIX C

VICTORIA REGION, MAP SHOWING PLACE  
NAMES REFERRED TO IN TEXT

Figure 9

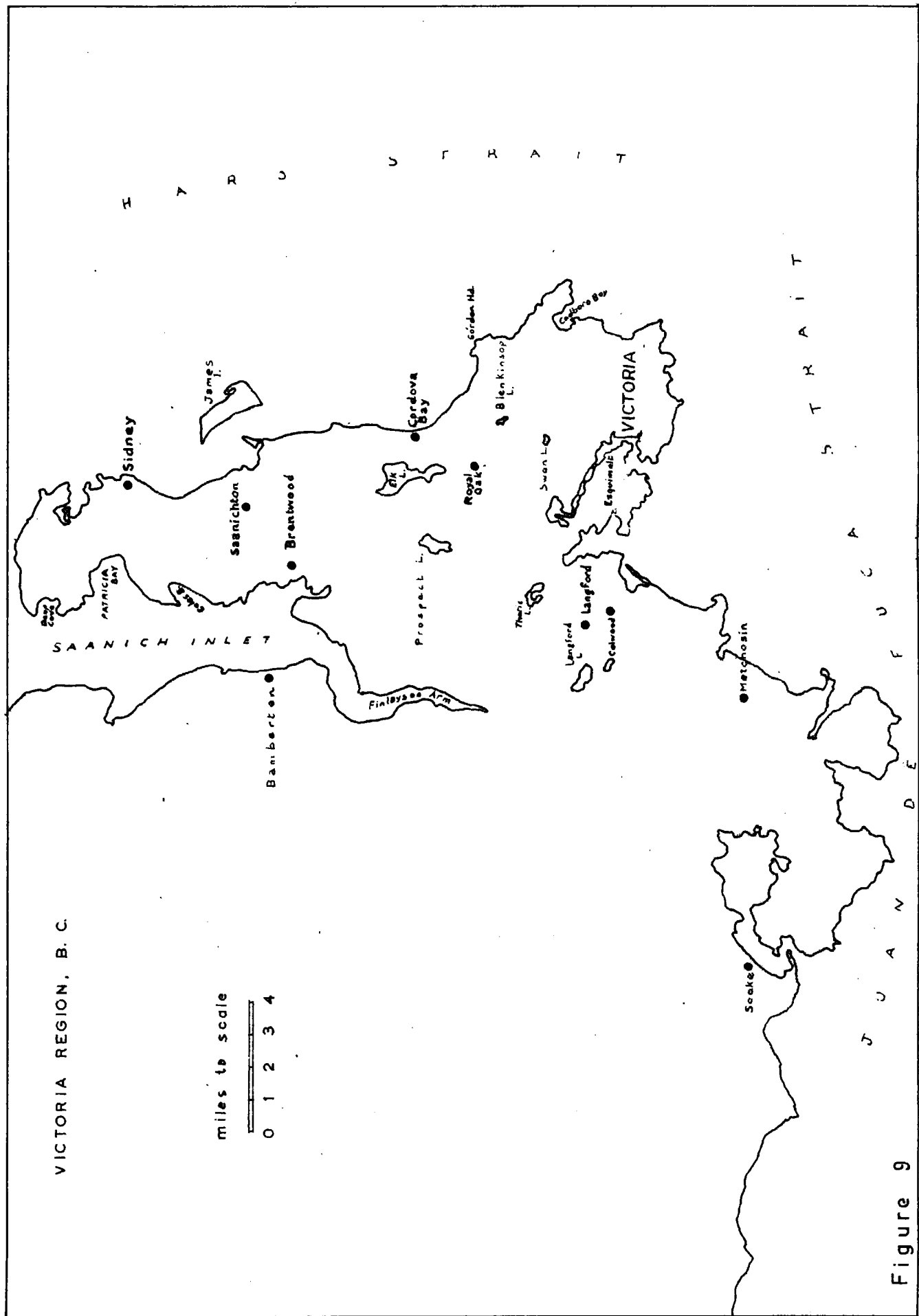


Figure 9

## APPENDIX D

### SOURCE OF INFORMATION, TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Tables

Diagrams

APPENDIX D

SOURCE OF INFORMATION, TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

TABLES

TABLE 1 "The Capital Region Takes Stock"

- 2 R.E. Gosnell, B.C. Gazette
- 3 Census of Canada
- 4 Census of Canada
- 5 Census of Canada
- 6 Census of Canada
- 7 Census of Canada
- 8 "Vital Statistics" 83rd Report, Department of  
Health and Welfare, B.C.
- 9 Census of Canada
- 10 Census of Canada
- 11 3rd Annual Report British Columbia Department  
of Agriculture
- 12 3rd Annual Report British Columbia Department  
of Agriculture
- 13 Census of Canada
- 14 Census of Canada
- 15 Census of Canada
- 16 Census of Canada
- 17 Census of Canada
- 18 Census of Canada
- 19 Census of Canada

TABLE 20 Census of Canada

- 21 Planimeter measure from National Topographic Series, at scale 2 miles to 1 inch
- 22 Census of Canada (1871-1951) newspaper and directory evidence (1851-1871)

DIAGRAMS

FIGURE 1 Tracing

- 2 Reduction of National Topographic Series originally at scale 2 miles to 1 inch
- 3 Generalized from a map of land slopes prepared on National Topographic Series at scale 1: 25,000 (Contour interval 25')
- 4 Spilsbury, R.H., "Soil Survey of the Southeastern Portion of Vancouver Island", Tracing
- 5 Census of Canada
- 6 Prepared from maps of land subdivision and contemporary building records
- 7 Prepared from maps of land subdivision and contemporary building records
- 8 Reduction of National Topographic Series at scale 2 miles to 1 inch
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- 10 Generalized on the basis of extensive field work throughout the region

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# VICTORIA REGION LAND USE

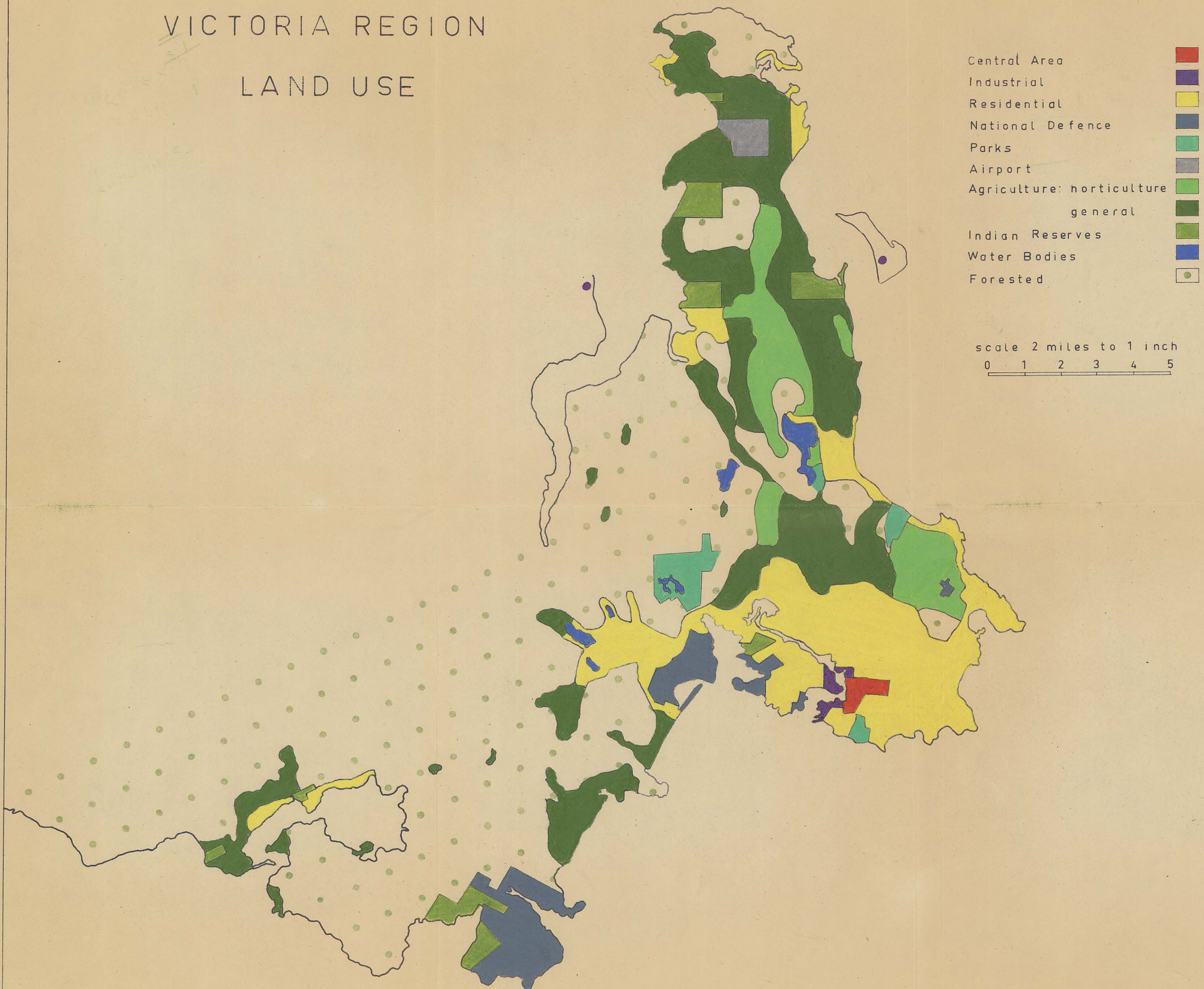


Figure 10