



**TYPICAL FARM LAYOUTS** in the Prince George district are seen in this aerial photo. There are few open patches or natural clearings except some old burns where land-clearing is simplified. In general, however, farm



**HY-BRED CHICKENS** are the result of several years of experimenting by farmer J. H. Cuddie of Prince George, who is shown tending his home-bred flock. A cross between two popular poultry strains, the new breed is ideally

suited for northern poultry farming, claims Mr. Cuddie. Poultry-raising for both egg and meat production is a growing trend in Prince George's mixed farming areas.—(Photo by Wally West Studios)

# Untouched Farmland Near Hub City Faces New Stage of Development

BY JOHN ZACHARIAS  
District Agriculturist

A half-million-acre tract of untouched farm land fanning out from the junction of the Fraser and Nechako rivers in Central British Columbia is facing a new era.

Surrounding the city of Prince George and one of the fastest-growing communities in the province, these rolling lands will soon be host to the builders of a new highway which will provide modern access for the first time, and a continuous road from Prince Rupert on the Pacific coast to Edmonton.

To date, only one-tenth of the potential agricultural acreage of the area has been cleared for cultivation.

Greatest development has taken place south of Prince George, including districts of Pineview, Tabor Creek, Red Rock and Woodpecker, and near McBride on the Fraser River, 140 miles east of Prince George. Other farming communities are Beaverly and Mud River to the west, Reid Lake and Chief Lake to the north-west, Salmon Valley to the north, and numerous small settlements lying along the CNR east to the McBride district.

Clay soils predominate. Silts and silty loams are found along the Fraser and Chilako rivers and in the districts northwest of Prince George. Tree cover on these soils consists mainly of poplar and lodgepole pine with some willow and birch. Heavy stands of spruce are common on the silts and in the river valleys heavy groves of cottonwood may be found.

## HIGH FERTILITY

The fertility of these soils is comparatively high as demonstrated by good yields of hay and grain. They are, however, somewhat low in organic content. Barnyard manures and commercial fertilizers can be used to very good advantage and crop rotations designed to increase the organic matter content are essential.

The climate may be described as cool and temperate. The seasons are characterized by abrupt changes and strong temperature contrasts. The growing season is short with long warm days and cool nights. Summer frosts are common. The total annual precipitation is approximately 21 inches, one third of which falls as snow.

## MIXED FARMING

The district as a whole is suited to mixed farming, although the lack of readily available domestic water is a serious problem in many locations, especially on the higher hills. Coarse grains and most forage crops are well adapted. Potatoes and vegetables such as turnips, carrots and cabbage are grown on a commercial scale in the river valleys.

Other cash crops include hay, grain and alsike clover seed. Within recent years, a number of car lot shipments of grain have been made to coastal markets.

## LOCAL DEMAND

The rapid growth of the city has created a good local demand for livestock, dairy and poultry

products of all kinds. This situation is expected to cause a definite swing to livestock farming.

Local production of fluid milk has increased but is still insufficient to meet the needs of the city. Very good opportunities exist for poultry farming. Small herds of beef cattle are common and a few farmers with ample feed supplies have been successful in finishing feeder cattle purchased from the range areas of the province. This industry is expected to grow although the raising of beef cattle is handicapped by the limited amount of natural pasture and the long winter feeding period.

The McBride district is particularly well adapted to dairying and seed potato growing but future expansion along these lines in that area will depend largely on the development of markets and completion of the Northern Trans-Provincial highway to Prince George and the Yellowhead route to Kamloops.

At present, the total number of farmers in the entire Prince George area is estimated at less than 500. Many of these are partially engaged in lumbering, sawmilling or railroading activities.

But increased production is expected to come, partially through expansion and development of existing farms, many of which are now too small to be considered as economic units, and future development.

Production in most lines so far has been insufficient to warrant the setting up of organized marketing facilities and grading regulations. Thus local farmers are often faced

with severe competition from established areas in a position to ship in steady supplies of graded, attractively-packaged produce.

Potato production has now increased to the point where the local supply exceeds the requirements of the city, yet large importations from Southern B.C. and California are necessary, owing to the fact that the local supply is usually unwashed and ungraded.

Local farmers and businessmen alike are working to overcome such difficulties, assuring the efficient producer of a steady reliable income. But the

emphasis is on greater development and higher production to feed a hungry northland.

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## New Telephone Service For Northern B.C. Points

Expansion of local and long distance telephone facilities in northern B.C., as well as in the central and coastal areas, has been accelerated since two associated companies acquired the Canadian government telephone system west of the Rockies last April 1.

The system was purchased recently by the B.C. Telephone Co. and Northwest Telephone Co.

While small in number of telephones—approximately 4,500—geographically, the recently-acquired territory is large and scattered, stretching from the Queen Charlottes into central B.C., including the Cariboo, along with the Sechelt Peninsula, the west coast of Vancouver Island, and some islands between the mainland and Vancouver Island.

Hundreds of telephones and a large quantity of switchboards are scheduled to be installed within the next few months in many of the 27 central offices in the territory. In the meantime, local service is being provided for waiting applicants in areas where equipment is already on hand.

Major development in this field has been the opening of a

(Continued on Page 21)

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## Capacity Up, Prices Lower BCPC Reports

The B.C. Power Commission in the fiscal year ended March 31 increased its generating capacity 35 per cent, while bringing electricity costs to its residential users down for the seventh consecutive year.

These figures were released in Victoria by commission chairman T. H. Crosby, who said the provincially-owned utility will "continue to expand, as when and where needed."

# Better Long Distance Telephone Service For Northern British Columbia

Because we had faith in the north, we bought the Canadian Government's telephone system west of the Rockies this spring. This gave us a line of telephone exchanges from the Queen Charlotte Islands east to Prince George and down through the Cariboo country to the southern area we already served.

These exchanges are tied together by long distance telephone circuits which also connect them to southern B.C. and the world in general.

To meet the industrial growth of the north, we have already increased our northern network of long distance circuits. The pole line running south from Prince George has been supplemented by a chain of 12 very high frequency radio-telephone stations between Prince George and Vancouver, providing more talking and teletype circuits.

At Prince Rupert we have a medium frequency radio-telephone station which connects boats and isolated land points to the regular telephone system.

At Prince George we have another medium frequency radio-telephone station which will serve isolated points over a considerable area.

Northern industries are already benefitting from the enlargement of the long distance telephone network, and other projects in hand will result in further improvement.

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