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DAILY EDITION

Thursday, Feb. 13, 1913.

FREE LAND FOR SETTLERS.

At length it would seem that the government at Victoria has been alarmed into compliance with the popular demand for some more reasonable attitude toward the settlement of the unoccupied areas of the province. However reluctantly, the ministry is preparing to offer free holdings to settlers instead of making the homesteader pay for his land, as he has done in the past. The bill, which was brought in on Friday, will probably not be found to be too generous; the government, it would seem from the despatches, is desirous of retaining certain powers which may or may not be used to the disadvantage of the homesteaders. Imperfect as the bill may be, however, it will no doubt create an improvement in the conditions under which land is taken up for genuine occupation in this province. The presence of such a measure on the statute book, too, will probably enable those who have been pressing for a wise land policy by the government, as the Board of Trade of Vancouver has, to urge for still further reforms.

It has taken, the McBride government almost ten years to realize that the welfare of the province lies in the settlement of the agricultural areas,

under good conditions, by thrifty and industrious farmers, and it does not seem to have learned that lesson very fully yet; but any improvement on laws which have prevailed in the past will be welcomed by the public. The trouble is that the new legislation comes too late to be of great immediate service. Little government land of real fertility within reasonable distance of transportation facilities remains. As a result of the past seven years of alienation to speculators, the great areas in the hands of private corporations include all that can tempt any homesteaders except those who are prepared to go far from any market and wait for the advent of railways and the opening up of the districts. The legislation now before the House is therefore valuable merely from the standpoint of the future; of four or five years from this time.

It is a hopeful sign, however, that public opinion should exercise the influence it seems to have in this instance upon the McBride government. It is a sign, perhaps, that the government and its friends have satisfied themselves with the spoils of the province and can now afford to be reasonably honest. That, of course, is something, and if it is really so there may be some hope for the future.—Vancouver Sun.

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HOW OLD IS MAN?

Fascinating Article on Subject that Has Held Attention of Best Scientists

How old is man?

This is the problem that baffles the scientists and seems almost as far from solution now as it did over half a century ago, when Sir Charles Lyell created a sensation in a meeting of English scientists by stating he was convinced man's appearance on earth was infinitely older than the limits fixed by biblical record.

He even went so far as to endorse the theory given in "a work very shortly to appear by Mr. Charles Darwin," that man was old enough to have existed at least with the Siberian mammoth.

Such heterodoxy was denounced at the time by the vast majority of folk—even the members of this society. But what was heterodoxy then is orthodox now, and so a new heterodoxy must exist.

This, according to Prof. Arthur Keith in a recent address delivered before the British Association at Dundee, Scotland, has as its "advance man," M. Rutot of the Royal Natural History Museum of Brussels. The "conservative element" among the scientists has as its stalwart defender Prof. Boyd Dawkins, of Manchester, England.

Is Man 1,500,000 Years Old

In the latter's opinion—and the orthodox opinion of today—we may accept the view that the dawn of the earliest form of humanity lies 400,000 years before us; in that space of time man, as we know him now, was evolved from a crude almost prehuman form closely related to the anthropoid apes.

In the opinions of the conservatives, the history of man does not extend beyond the Pleistocene period—the phase of the earth's history immediately preceding the one in which we live. They accept the famous fossil man of Java—a being with a brain little more than half the size of a modern man's—as representative of mankind before the end of the Pleistocene; before the end of the period men of the modern type appeared.

So you see from the geologists point of view—he measures time by periods and not by years—man is a recent addition to the earth.

From this conservative estimate we turn to the radical and there it is found that the time of man's origin dates back at least a million and a half years ago. That is his age—1,500,000 years—and the scientists who uphold this theory give as proofs the records of bones and stone implements dug up from the earth. Of course new discoveries at any time may add a hundred thousand or so years to "our" age, but this is man's age as based upon present discoveries, according to the radicals' theory.

But whatever be the period which man made his appearance on earth—the Pleistocene, the Pliocene, the Miocene, or the Oligocene—the time must be long enough to allow mankind to be distributed and differentiated as we now see it in the world of today.

"Let us look at the problem in a concrete form," says Prof. Wieth. "I will take opposite and contrasted types of humanity, the fair haired, white skinned, round headed European and the woolly haired, black skinned negro of Central Africa, and set them side by side and study them

from a purely zoological point of view.

Evolution Is a Slow Process.

"If we search the present world for the type of man who is most likely to serve as a common ancestor for both negro and European we find the nearest object of our approach in the aboriginal Australian. He has apparently retained to a greater degree than any other living race the characters of that common stock from which we all arose."

But don't think the man of this type is a "near relation." No, evolution is much slower than that; for example, if the man who lived in Britain 4,000 years ago were to walk down the streets of any American city dressed in modern garb, he would attract no attention whatever, so much like "home folks" would he be. In fact, so slow is evolution, the Neolithic men of France, Switzerland and Germany were not in any wise a lower race than their successors today.

At the close of the Pleistocene period, which even the orthodox and conservative geologists admit have come to end some 15,000 years ago, the men of Europe in stature and in size of brain were at least our equals. In tooth, limb and bone they were more robust. It is only when we pass into the Pleistocene to the epoch marked by the last or the fourth of the cold cycles which subdivided that period that man as we know him disappears; his place is taken by a human being of an altogether different kind—a human race denominated by scientists as the Neanderthal.

The remains of four individuals of this race have been unearthed. The strata in which the remains were found contain stone implements and bones of animals belonging to a cold climate. "Neanderthal man," says Prof. Keith, "appears suddenly in this latter part of the Pleistocene, and as suddenly disappears, to be replaced by modern man. It is impossible to conceive that just at the close of the Pleistocene, Neanderthal man was suddenly converted into modern man. We can only infer that at the close of this period there were two distinct races of mankind—Neanderthal and modern."

Lower Jaw Find Near Heidelberg. Going back to near Pleistocene period all we know of man in Europe is the famous lower jaw found near Heidelberg in 1907. This jaw with a full complement of teeth told a fairly complete story of the man to whom it belonged—that is, the story was complete to the scientists. "There is not the shadow of a doubt," says one scientist, "that the Heidelberg man belonged to the Neanderthal type; perhaps he may best be described as pre-Neanderthal, for in strength and massiveness of jaw he foreshadows the Neanderthal men whose remains are found in Europe toward the end of the Pleistocene. Although in many features this man shows resemblances to the anthropoids, in others he is highly specialized. The teeth of an Australian native make a nearer approach to anthropoid condition than those of a Neanderthal man."

Nobody loves a grouch, but that fact doesn't cure him.

"We have another fossil man at the beginning of the Pleistocene. In Java Dr. Eugene Dubois discovered the fossil remains of a man who in stature, posture and gait must have been very similar to us, but so unlike us in head form that his discoverer named this new type of man Pithecanthropus. The size of his brain was little more than half that of modern man."

"Thus we have knowledge of only two human individuals near the beginning of the Pleistocene period. The one was brutal in aspect, the other certainly low in intellect. It would thus seem that we must trace man—as a human being, that is—still further back to find his common stock."

"I for one am convinced that we have followed him almost unchanged back to the middle of the Pleistocene, when we find him accompanied by another form of man almost as distinct from him as the gorilla is from the chimpanzee. Still further back at the beginning of the Pleistocene we find at least two forms of men—the pre-Neanderthal of Heidelberg and the small brained man of Java."

The Problem an Eternal One.

"If we accept as authentic all the evidence brought forth by those who have traced man backward by means of flints which have the appearance of man's work on them, then we must admit that the Pleistocene man is possible, for stones apparently artificially fashioned have been found in strata as old as the Eocene."

"If, on the other hand, we examine the evidence relating to that group of animals to which man belongs—the higher primates—the facts so far as we know them render the existence of man in the Eocene and Oligocene periods impossible, improbable in the Miocene period, but quite probable in the Pliocene."

"It all depends upon the way you reason whether through the primates or the flints. One way you will place the birthday of man 1,500,000 years ago and the other only 400,000 years past."

"After all," says one scientist, "we must confess that the antiquity of the modern form of man is still an open problem."

Thus science puzzles over the age of man. And it would seem as if the problem were an eternal one.

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