The Days of Old and Days of Gold in British Columbia

A few Reminiscences of the Early Gold Mining Days

KAMLOOPS CENTENARY CELEBRATION, 1913

INTRODUCTORY

THE information given in this pamphlet is not, by any means, a connected history of placer-gold mining on the Fraser River and tributary streams, the richest of them, in the golden days of the early sixties, having been streams in the Cariboo country. It is rather, generally, a somewhat disconnected series of excerpts from published accounts of placer-gold mining in the interior of the Province, reprinted with the chief object of again directing attention to the great riches that were recovered from the gold-bearing gravels of the various streams mentioned during the years immediately following the time when British Columbia was very much what has been described as "the Mainland solitude."

156345
HR
F5823.3
B8

[British Columbia. Mines Dept.]

The Days of Old and Days of Gold in British Columbia

SO many accounts have been given of the first discovery of gold in British Columbia that it is not easy to determine which of them is most to be depended upon. One of these accounts, published in 1895, is as follows:—

"The early discoveries of gold in small quantities range between the years 1850 and 1857. In 1850 specimens came from Vancouver Island and Queen Charlotte Islands. An incipient mining boom took place at Queen Charlotte Islands in 1851 and 1852. Dr. Geo. M. Dawson said that from one little pocket or seam in Gold Harbour, Moresby Island, between $20,000 and $75,000 was reported to have been taken. It has been stated by others that more gold was lost in the harbour in the operation of mining than was recovered. However, much or little, the 'find' ended there. About the same time Indians from up Skeena River brought pieces of gold to the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, but the several expeditions to find it in places ended in failure. In the interior, gold was found in the Natchez Pass and Similkameen as early as 1852, and in 1854 Colville Indians were known to have had nuggets in their possession."

GOLD IN MANY PLACES.

Bancroft, in his "History of British Columbia," says: "Years before the great excitement, all along the coast, from Fuca Strait to Skeena River, were thought and talk of gold; and when men looked for it, they generally found evidence of its presence. Concerning its discovery in the interior, various statements have been made, among them one (by Henry de Groot, an explorer, prospector, and writer, who visited British Columbia in 1858) that 'Chief Trader McLean at Kamloop procured gold-dust from the natives of that vicinity as early as 1852,' since which time more or less gold has been received from the natives at that and other posts, though not in sufficient quantity to awaken a suspicion in the minds of the traders that paying diggings existed in the country; and that various parties at different times prospected the banks of the Thompson between 1855—the date of the discovery of the Colville mines—and 1858.

"It was at Nicommen, on the Thompson, according to some authorities, that the first gold was found in paying quantities in British Columbia. Waddington affirms that some Canadians from Fort Colville went over to the Thompson and Bonaparte, and thence to the Fraser River above the 'Big Falls.' They prospected on their way, found gold almost everywhere, and concluded to tarry among the natives on the Thompson in order to try their fortune at mining. It was the report of the results obtained by these men which induced others in the season of 1857-58 to embark in mining, and, results exceeding expectations, the news spread over Puget Sound and was carried thence to San Francisco. De Groot's version is that in the summer and autumn of 1857 a number of persons from Oregon and Washington Territories, familiar with the operations at the Colville (Washington) mines, accompanied by a sprinkling of Canadians and half-breeds, formerly in the Hudson's Bay Company's service at Colville, made their way to the junction of the Thompson with the Fraser. They found several rich bars in the vicinity, and worked them with good success. He also states that it was the news of their success which caused the Fraser River excitement.

"McDonald and Adams, two partners, who were engaged in mining on the Thompson and Fraser, in 1857-58 brought down some of the first gold from the bars where the first profitable workings were carried on. At the mouth of the Fraser McDonald killed Adams and secured his gold, which he carried to Olympia, and there displayed it."

GAVIN HAMILTON'S STORY.

The *Victoria Times,* on July 26, 1907, published Mr. Gavin Hamilton's account of the date when gold was found, as under:—

"Gavin Hamilton, of Lac la Hache, Cariboo, a veteran of the Hudson's Bay Company and one of the 'lords of the North,' states that gold was first discovered in 1856 on the Thompson River—not in 1857, as erroneously held by many at the present day.

"Gavin Hamilton was the chief factor in the northern British Columbia district in the stirring days of the Hudson's Bay Company's power in North America. He was a trusted friend of the great Governor, Sir George Simpson. Leaving Gravesend on August 14, 1852, he came by the Hudson's Bay ship 'Norman Morrison,' under the command of Captain Wishart. The ship arrived at Vancouver Island on January 7, 1853.

"Mr. Hamilton is absolutely certain that gold was discovered in the Thompson River during the season of 1856, because Mr. McLean, at Kamloops, had two pint pickle-bottles half full of gold taken from the river that year."

GOVERNOR DOUGLAS REPORTED FAVOURABLY.

In December, 1857, and again in January, 1858, Governor Douglas advised the Colonial Office, in England, of the discovery of gold within the Couteau embraced by the Fraser and Thompson districts. He wrote: "From the successful result of experiments made in washing the gold from the sands of the tributary streams of Fraser River, there is reason to suppose that the gold region is extensive, and I entertain sanguine hopes that future researches will develop stores of wealth perhaps equal to the goldfields of California — the geological formations observed in the Sierra Nevada of California being similar in character to the structure of the corresponding range of mountains in this latitude." In April Douglas advised that "the native population, who had discovered the productive mines, and washed out almost all the gold, about 800 oz., thus far exported from the country, were extremely jealous of the whites digging for gold."

GOLD ABOUNDS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

"And here," says Bancroft, "begins the infection which spread with such swift virulence in every direction. It is noised abroad that gold abounds in British Columbia. Then men everywhere throughout the world begin to study their maps, to see where is situated the favoured isle that guards the auriferous Mainland. California is to be outdone, as the rivers of British Columbia are larger than those of California. The glories of Australia shall pale before this new golden Aurora Borealis.

"The first load of 450 adventurers left San Francisco on April 20, 1858. Between April 20 and June 9, 2,500 miners, mostly from the interior of California, had taken passage by steamer from San Francisco; and it was estimated that 5,000 more at the same time collected in Puget Sound, on their way to the Fraser."

Later, Bancroft continues: The 20,000 who went to Fraser River from California in 1858 were warned that the bars where gold was reported would remain inaccessible on account of the high water until after midsummer, and that to wait for the opportunity to mine in that wilderness would be costly, and might be death. Before the river fell, thousands had left the country under the conviction that the water would never fall sufficiently, or that they had seen enough. Yet the diggings were over-

Yale, Fraser River—Head of Navigation.

crowded when this event took place, notwithstanding that the size of the claims was limited to 25 feet square. The greatest number were employed between Hope and Yale, but among the best diggings were those at Fountain, six miles above the great falls, and for some time the northern limit of mining.

Gradually the miners worked their way higher up the Fraser, past the junction of the Thompson with the Fraser at Lytton, to Cayoosh and Bridge Rivers, at Lillooet, then to the Chilkoten, and thence on past Fort Alexandria to the mouth of the Quesnel. "Late in the season of 1859 definite reports came that the search for gold had proved successful on the Quesnel; and in 1860, by the time the pioneers of the column reached Antler Creek, 600 white miners were said to be engaged on this river, making from $10 to $25 a day, and occasionally turning up nuggets weighing from 6 to 8 oz. each."

"TURN WE NOW TO GOLDEN CARIBOO."

In an article published nearly a score of years ago, the following sentence occurs: "Turn we now to Cariboo—Golden Cariboo—which might appropriately be termed the cradle of British Columbia, as it was the gold-rush there in 1859 that raised it from the position of a 'fur' country to the dignity of a colony and finally a province."

Extracts from Bancroft's account follow:—

"On the headwaters of Fraser River the mining operations, previously confined to the beds of the main rivers, spread in 1860, 1861, and 1862 over a large area of elevated country which was somewhat indefinitely designated as the Cariboo Region. (Douglas said, in regard to the name given to the region by the miners, properly it should be written Cariboeuf, or reindeer, the country having been so named from its being the favourite haunt of that species of the deer-kind. Cerf-boeuf—deer-ox—appears to have been the original. This was corrupted in its application to the large species of reindeer inhabiting British America.)

"The Cariboo region seemed in the autumn of 1860, when the first intimations were received of mining about the fork of the Quesnel, to be as remote and as difficult of access as the Arctic regions. Impressed with the belief that the coarser gold of the country would be found higher, a handful of miners had this year penetrated along the main and north branches of the Quesnel to the Quesnel and Cariboo Lakes. Launching their rafts, they voyaged along the winding and extended shores, prospecting the tributary streams with varied adventure and success.

"From Cariboo Lake was visible, a short distance to the westward, a group of bald mountains, subsequently known as the Snowshoe and Mount Agnes Bald Mountains. Behind these the prospectors were now penetrating. This was the core of the auriferous-slate country, whence radiated the four great rivers of the Cariboo region, the Bear, Willow, and Cottonwood Rivers, and the north branch of the Quesnel, hitherto unexplored and unnamed, but destined to become famous through their respective tributaries, Keithley, Antler, William, and Lowhee Creeks—insignificant streams issuing from the same Bald Mountain group. A year later they were the sites of the principal mining camps of the Cariboo region, known throughout the world; and the Snowshoe and Mount Agnes Bald Mountain chain, like the Sierra Nevada of California, the main range of the country, was rendered familiar to the sight of men in places where solitude and the wild animal had reigned from a primeval day.

"In August, 1859, Governor Douglas was able to report to the Colonial Secretary that 'the newly explored tract of country about Fort Alexandria and Quesnel's River' possessed 'more of the general features of a gold country than any yet known part of British Columbia.' This conclusion was simply a reflection of the opinions expressed by miners, who had reached the Quesnel Fork diggings, touching the character of the Cariboo Mountain region in its relation to the gold in the rivers; abundance of coarse gold having been found in the diggings, where it was evident it had remained in the vicinity of the gold-bearing rock.

A COUNTERPART OF CALIFORNIA.

"In the course of a few years there was disclosed to the world a counterpart of California, equally rich, and extending at least from the Horsefly branch of the Quesnel and the Clearwater tributary of the Thompson at the south to the Canyon Creek tributary of the Fraser in the north-west, over two degrees of latitude in the direction of the range. But a new lesson was to be learned by the gold-miners. Hitherto the surface had been skimmed with the aid of rocker and sluice, and a few insignificant hydraulic enterprises had been undertaken on the benches; but in Cariboo the mystery and art of deep placer-mining in its true technical sense were to be practically studied and unravelled by means of shafts and drifts, pumps, and hoisting machinery. On the Fraser, as in the Columbia River basin, the richly concentrated gold-leads of the ancient rivers lay in buried channels below the level of the modern streams, and drifting underneath the clay strata in search of these deposits became in Cariboo the main feature of mining. Exceptionally raised strata on the streams had in several cases revealed the richer leads below; but this indication was not always found, nor was the lead continuous. Peculiar difficulties were encountered in following the windings of the buried channels, confused and obliterated as they were by glacial action, which had also frequently modified or altered the courses of the modern streams. From Yale to Lillooet, from Alexandria to the Quesnel River, the miners only left one kind of deposit to enter upon another. Thus the 'Fraser River Humbug,' was, nevertheless, a continued mining operation; it was a repetition of the history of gold-mining in California; and the transition on the Fraser, in view of the remoteness and inaccessibility of the diggings, was as speedy as it was successful.

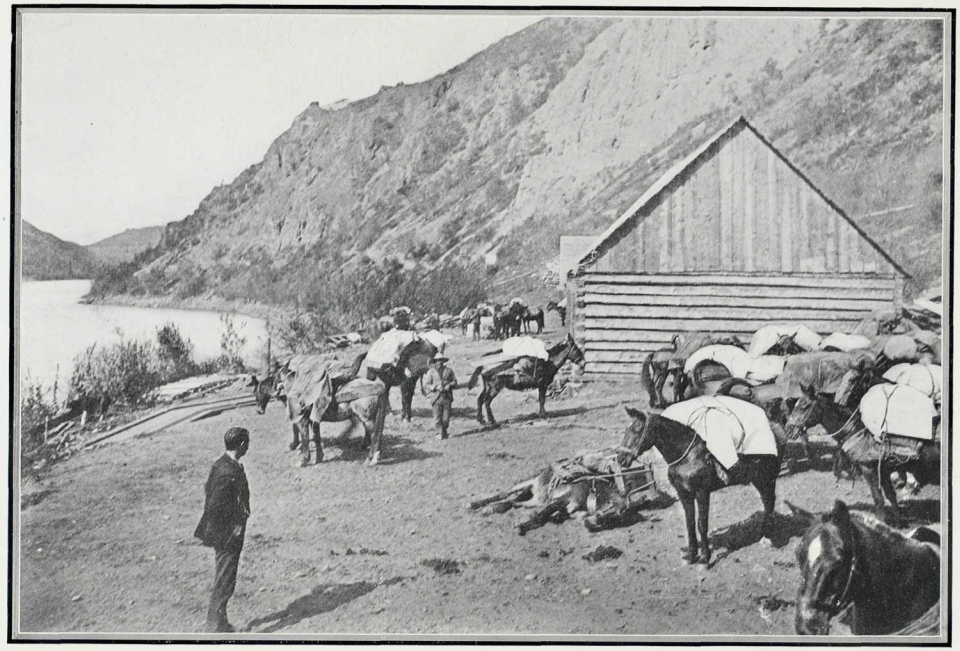
"The significance of the discoveries in the Cariboo country did not become apparent at Victoria until very near the close of the year 1860. After the season of depression and depopulation which had been experienced almost from the commencement of mining on the Fraser, everything had the appearance of premature death and dissolution in the colony. But in November, 1860, with the return of the successful miners from the fork of the Quesnel, came bags of nuggets which revived the fainting hopes of the trading community by the sea. These were the assurances that the country was safe.

FRASER RIVER AND CARIBOO BECAME WIDELY KNOWN.

"Fraser River and Cariboo became as famous and as widely known throughout the world as Sacramento River and Ballarat, and miners from California and Australia were emphatic in their declarations touching the comparative merits of Cariboo. With a population of 1,500 people, the district shipped to Victoria before the end of the season of 1861 two millions of dollars.

"The first effect of these discoveries was to produce another movement of population from California and Oregon into the basin of the Fraser. The abundant yield of gold this time created a stampede for the new mines, which held out with every element of genuineness. The excitement was not fully started till the finding in January, 1861, of the extraordinarily rich prospects on Antler Creek, about twenty miles from the mouth of Keithley Creek, constituting the principal attraction of the rush of 1861.

"Incited by the discoveries on Keithley, Harvey, Antler, and Cunningham Creeks in the spring of 1861, a number of miners wandered farther in various directions to prospect. First Grouse Creek, forming with Antler Creek the headwaters of Bear River, was discovered to be equally entitled to attention, and from the head of this creek the valley of William Creek, on the headwaters of Willow River, was not only visible to the enterprising explorers, but within easy reach. The same ridge, culminating in Mount Agnes, disclosed to them on looking westward the valleys of



Getting Pack-train ready to start.

Lightning and Lowhee Creeks, tributaries of Swift and Cottonwood Rivers. Nothing was wanting but the disappearance of the snows to enable the prospectors to descend these several valleys, and to complete the series of discoveries which in the course of that notable season made most of them famous.

POPULATION, 5,000; GOLD YIELD, $3,000,000.

"The actual mining developments of 1861 began with the arrival of additional forces from every mining district in the country, forming at the end of May a population of from 1,000 to 1,400 miners, a large proportion of whom was occupied with transportation trade in its various branches, and in road-making. Further accessions later in the season furnished a total prospecting, exploring, and actual mining population of about 1,500. The country now for the first time became known as Cariboo. This was simply the extension to the entire region explored of the name of the Cariboo Lakes, situated on the north fork of the Quesnel, from which the explorations may be said to have started.

"The Fraser excitement was never a more universal topic of conversation in California than was Cariboo at Victoria in the autumn of 1861; it seemed hardly credible, even to those accustomed to see rich diggings and lucky strikes. The news spread farther, and thousands of people from California, Canada, England, and every other quarter of the globe ascended the valley of the Fraser early in the season of 1862. Owing to the unexpected distance, and the difficulty of reaching Cariboo before the completion of the wagon-road, many turned back without entering the mines; while others consumed on the way the provisions intended for the relief of those who had wintered in the mines, consequently there was almost a famine at Cariboo.

"Exploration in 1862 was, nevertheless, vigorously prosecuted by an actual mining population estimated at 5,000 in Cariboo district. Although extending over an area of fifty miles square, the operations were chiefly on contiguous ground, and resulted in the production of a total yield from Cariboo thus far of about $3,000,000."

KEITHLEY AND ANTLER CREEKS.

Keithley and Antler Creeks seemed to have been the most important in the earliest Cariboo times. Afterwards they were greatly surpassed by William and Lightning Creeks.

"On Keithley Creek mining was so successfully carried on in 1860 that several stores were erected there, and near its mouth the town of Keithley came into existence in 1861, as supply depot for the entire region of the north branch of the Quesnel. The gold on the creek consisted partly of solid nuggets paving the bed-rock within a few feet of the surface. A party of five men, in June, 1861, divided $1,200 between them as the product of a single day's labour, and their daily average for some time was said to be a pound weight in gold. In September, 1861, several companies were making from $50 to $100 a day to the man in the bed of the creek, and $100 in the dry-diggings on the hillside. In 1867 the lead was lost; yet the Chinese on the creek continued to make money, the claim at the mouth of the creek paying from $12 to $16 a day to the digger. After 1875 the yield fell off.

"Antler Creek, the original objective point of the gold-seekers who explored Cariboo in 1861, was the first in that part after Keithley Creek to attain a decided reputation, and the first to establish the character of the Cariboo region. Its fame, like that of Keithley and William Creeks, also rested upon the circumstance that the present stream had in one or more places cut down into the ancient channel. The *London Times*' correspondent wrote that the bed-rock was found paved with gold. Every shovelful contained a considerable quantity, in some cases as much as $50. Nuggets could be picked out of the soil by the hand, and the rocker yielded

$50 in a few hours. The diggings were discovered by Rose and McDonald in the fall of 1860. The following summer eleven companies were working with large profits, and individuals were making as much as $1,000 a day, while the yield of the several sluice and flume claims was 60 oz. a day to the man, and the daily aggregate of the creek during that summer over $10,000. Much of the ground yielded $1,000 to the square foot. Three-quarters of a mile below the town of Antler two partners were said to have obtained from 40 to 60 oz. a day each with the rocker.

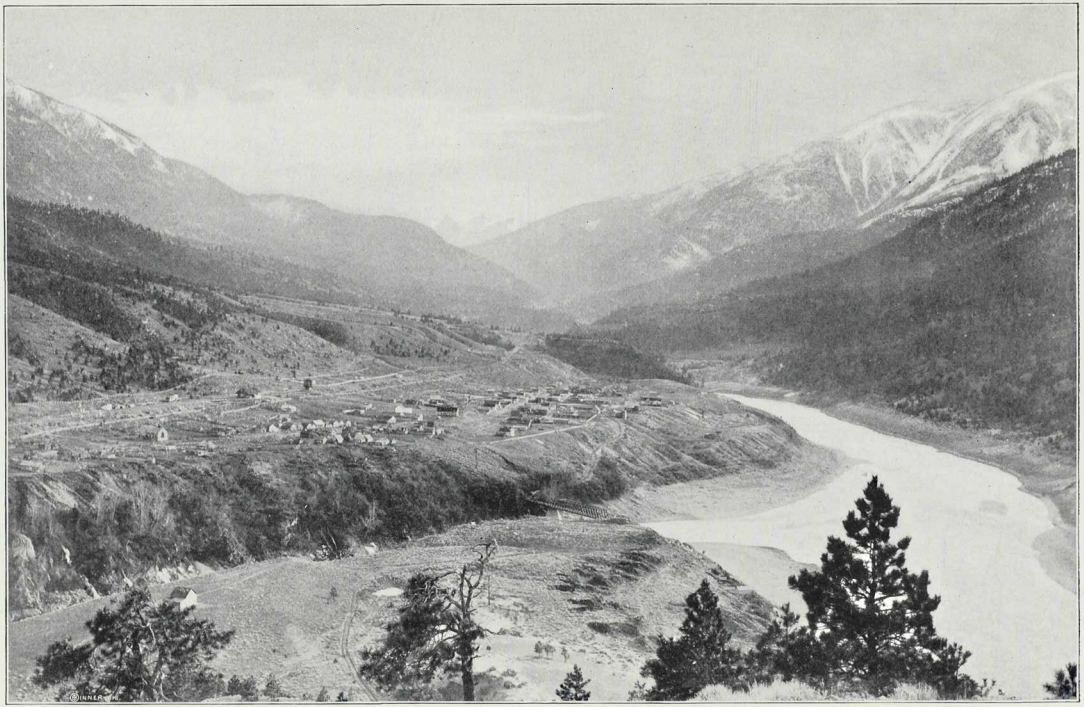
"After the shallow part of the old channel was exhausted, the problem of working the buried portion was encountered, and without systematic work the lead could not long be followed. The declension came about gradually. In 1867 the town of Antler was deserted, and only a few men remained on the creek, cleaning up, for the second time, the old ground.

WILLIAM CREEK.

"William Creek has a history in many respects similar to that of Antler Creek. Its first-discovered rich deposits were shallow, and in the bed of the present stream, above the canyon. Below these diggings was a flat, supposed to have been the bed of a former lake, in which the channel sank and was lost. Here the problem of working the deep ground by means of shafts and pumping was for the first time systematically attempted, and profitably solved. The crossing of Snowshoe Mountain by the inflowing prospectors of 1861, and their descent into the basin of Bear River (Antler Creek), thence into the basin of Willow River (William Creek), changed the centre of operations from Keithley to William Creek, and with it the approach from a circuitous to a more direct route into the Bald Mountains of Cariboo. On the completion of the road along Lightning Creek, in 1865, Barkerville on William Creek became the principal distributing point for the Cariboo region, the aggregate product of which amounted in seven years to $25,000,000.

"The creek received its name from William Dietz, a German who prospected upon the headwaters of Willow River, and was the first in the spring. (NOTE.—Writing from Barkerville on October 23, 1865, a correspondent of the *Victoria Weekly Colonist* said: 'The name of Humbug Creek, at first applied to this most famous of Cariboo streams on account of its supposed worthless character, was soon abandoned, and the proper name of William Creek gained the ascendancy to which it became justly entitled when the first noteworthy discovery was made at the Canyon. Three seasons elapsed before the richest deposits found in the deep ground of William Creek were fairly developed.')

"The discoveries in the summer and autumn of 1861 of the astonishingly rich lands on William, Lowhee, and Lightning Creeks gave an immense impetus to further prospecting. A rush at once set in, and claims were worked in the shallow ground with great success, for the gold lay thickly studded in a layer of blue clay consisting of decomposed slate and gravel, which in some cases gave prospects of over $600 to the pan. In the State claim this layer was 6 feet thick, and had a top stripping which ranged from a few feet to three fathoms in depth. Others had less difficult ground to work, and the yield was rapid, amounting in several claims to over 100 oz. a day for the season. The Steele party was reported to have obtained in two days 387 and 409 oz., and in two months $105,000. (NOTE.—Steele told Governor Douglas that they had 8 to 18 feet of stripping; then a 6-foot layer of blue clay. From a space 25 by 80 feet they took $105,000 in two months.)



Junction of Fraser and Thompson Rivers at Lytton.

GREAT RICHNESS OF WILLIAM CREEK.

"Toward the close of the season of 1861, all previous discoveries were exceeded by the developments in the rich ground lying 50 or 60 feet under the flat below the canyon. To the Barker Company belongs the credit of having sunk the first paying shaft into the new deposit, and in honour of this event the nucleus of a town which here sprang into existence was named Barkerville. Supported by the underground mining, the town grew rapidly in population, and maintained for years the position of the principal town in Cariboo. (It was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1868, but by the end of September forty new buildings had risen.) The Diller Company were among the next in order to bottom a shaft into deep ground, washing out in one day, it is said, 200 lb. of gold, the largest yield recorded for one day in Cariboo. (This statement was taken from Allan's Cariboo. Mr. Allan, editor of the *Cariboo Sentinel*, was in a position to know the facts, so was regarded as a good authority. Two hundred pounds equals 2,400 oz., worth, at $16 per ounce, $38,400.) A number of claims were located all over the flat, and by means of the systematic drifting and tunnelling introduced in 1862, and carried on throughout the year, the old channel of William Creek was traced for a considerable distance beneath the surface. Some claims yielded 100 oz. and more daily, during the season three taking out $100,000 each between October, 1862, and January, 1863. The Cunningham turned out over 600 oz. a day on several occasions; the Caledonia yielded at one time from $5,000 to $6,000 a day; and the Cameron and Tinker were not far behind. (The Cunningham claim averaged $2,000 a day throughout the season. It had a frontage of 600 feet. On several occasions 52 lb. of gold were taken out of it in a day. The Bishop of British Columbia witnessed the taking-out of 600 oz., or 50 lb., from one day's work. The Adams Company in 1862 paid $40,000 each, clear of expenses, to three partners. The claim of William Dietz, the discoverer, proved to be one of the poorest on the creek; but generally the claims which were first worked at a depth not exceeding 12 feet yielded remarkable returns.)

"THE GOLDEN YEAR."

"Large as was the yield of 1862, the following season proved even more prosperous, and received the appellation of 'the golden year.' According to Macfie, the creek was then worked over an area of seven miles, and of the numerous claims about forty yielded handsomely, while about twenty produced steadily between 70 and 400 oz. a day. Palmer states that the chief owner of the Cameron claim went home with $150,000 saved by him in one year, and Milton and Cheadle witnessed the process of cleaning up from a day's washing in the Raby of 310 oz., while they found the Cameron yielding from 40 to 112 oz. daily. A number of claims were only reaching bed-rock in 1864, and obtaining the usual rich prospects, the Wake-up-Jake Company, for instance, washing 52 oz. from a panful of dirt. Other claims again were yielding better than before, as the Ericsson, which opened in 1863 and turned out an average weekly amount of 1,400 oz. during the summer. In 1865 this claim paid nearly twice as large dividends as before."

(In a reference foot-note to the foregoing the following information is given: "In 1864 Douglas says the Ericsson claim paid $8,000 to the share, or a total of $90,000 clear of expenses; and in 1865 the dividends were $14,000 to the share; but of the above the Government received $5,000. For seven successive weeks in 1864 the following was the yield reported from the Ericsson claim: June 17, 900 oz., $14,400; June 24, 640 oz., $10,240; July 1, 1,400 oz., $22,400; July 8, 1,926 oz., $30,816; July 15, 1,256 oz., $20,096; July 22, 1,300 oz., $20,800; July 29, 2,600 oz., $41,920; in all, 10,042 oz., $160,672. The Adams Company had yielded, so far as known, in all, $50,000 from 100 feet; the Steele, $120,000 from 80 feet; the Diller,

$240,000 from 50 feet; the Cunningham, $270,000 from 500 feet; the Burns, $140,000 from 80 feet; the Canadian, $180,000 from 120 feet; the Neversweat, $120,000 from 120 feet; the Moffatt, $90,000 from 50 feet; the Tinker, $120,000 from 140 feet; the Wattie, $130,000 from 100 feet. In addition to those already named, there were the Barker, Balhead, Grier, Griffin, Wilson, Beauregard, Raby, Cameron, Prince of Wales, and many others, whose fame went throughout the world.")

CHIEF EXCITEMENT WAS OVER.

"Despite this showing, the facts could not be disguised that the excitement was over, and that the miners were diminishing in number. Of the 1,500 forming the estimated population of William Creek in November, 1864, half only remained throughout the winter, and the former number was not made up again. For this there were good reasons. The large yield came chiefly from few claims, while the larger number had returned but a small share. The shallow diggings which formed the attraction for the great majority were now pretty well worked out.

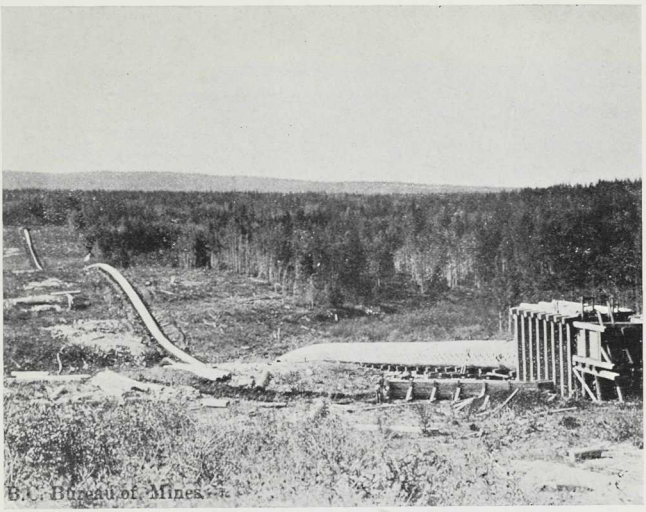
"The great difficulty, the flow of water, had hitherto been overcome with the aid of the limited water-power of William Creek, and with the home-made wooden pumps of small capacity. But these means had failed in several operations. Adit levels or bed-rock flumes with powerful steam-pumps appeared to be the only effective means. In 1865, accordingly, a costly 'bed-rock flume' 1,600 feet in length was laid, at a first cost of $120,000, commencing at the canyon below the Black Jack tunnel, and several companies began washing into it with a great increase of forces, taking out some coarse gold, including a 37-oz. nugget. Among the claims most successfully worked at this time were the Conklin Gulch and Ericsson Companies; the former being reported as taking out an average of 127 oz. a day and the Ericsson from 900 to 2,000 oz. a week.

"Although the decline of the district was a conceded fact after 1865, there were in 1867 still over sixty paying claims, apart from the flume companies and hill claims. Some of them had been producing for six years, and were still paying wages of from $8 to $10 a day to the hand. The Cunningham, California, and Tontine claims stood each credited with a yield up to 1865 of $500,000.

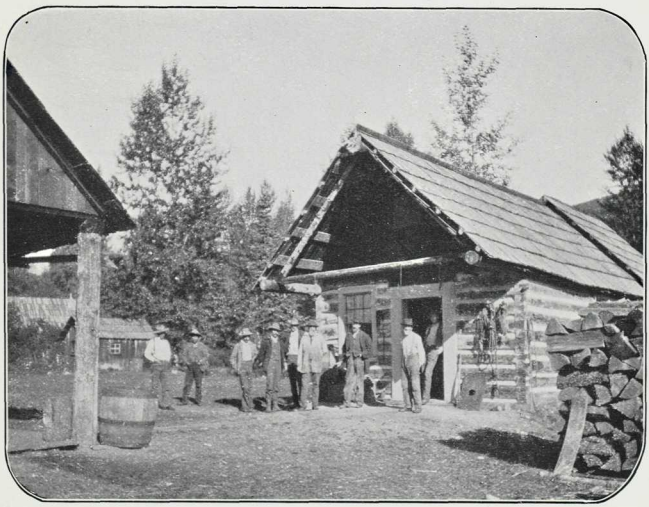
"BOYS, THIS IS LIGHTNING."

"Crossing to the western slopes of the Cariboo Bald Mountains, we find the principal mining district upon the Lightning and Swift River branches of Cottonwood River, and the most important camps on Van Winkle and Lowhee Creeks, with a history parallel to that of Antler and William Creeks. The valley of Lightning Creek was explored early in 1861 by three prospectors, Bill Cunningham, Jack Hume, and Jim Bell, who first descended to Jack of Clubs Creek, and thence struck southward over the forest-covered mountains. The hardships encountered in descending the steep banks of the creek evoked from Cunningham the expression, 'Boys, this is lightning'; whereupon his companions jocosely accepted this as the name of the stream. (This story, John Evans, the mining surveyor of Lightning Creek, doubtless obtained from the explorers themselves. Taliesin Evans varies the account by attributing the remark to the occurrence of one of the terrific thunderstorms common at certain seasons in the Cariboo Mountains.) After a rough journey they were obliged to fall back upon their base of supplies at Antler Creek, without discovering the riches which shortly afterwards placed Lightning Creek among the famous localities of Cariboo.

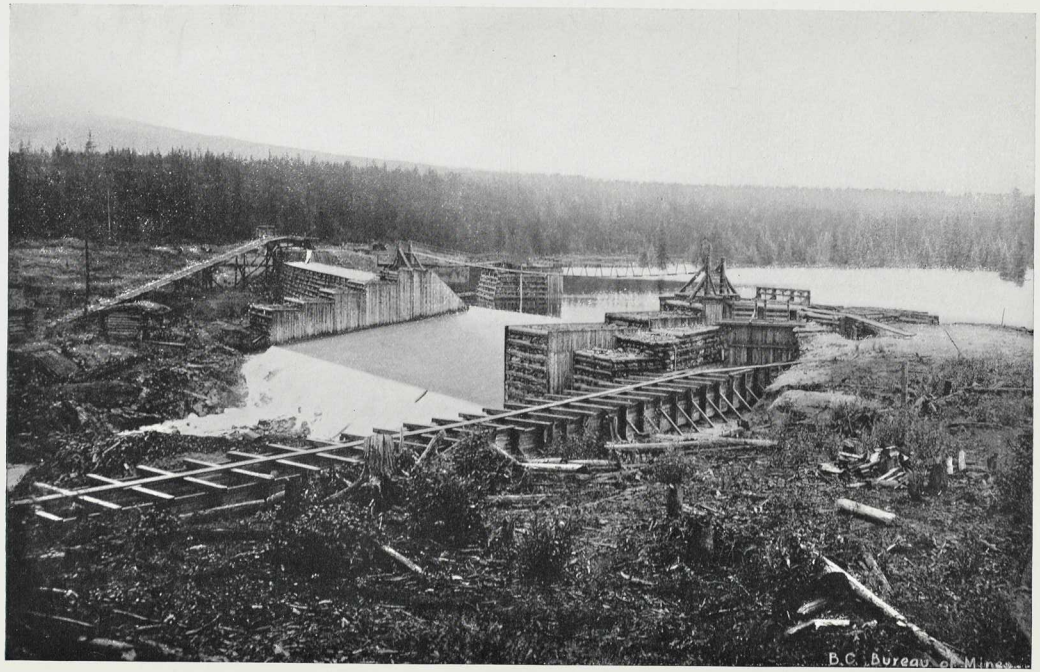
"In July, 1861, Ned Campbell and his companions opened a rich claim several hundred yards above the site of the town of Van Winkle, known as the second canyon, from which they took out 1,700 oz. in three days' washing. A great rush followed this discovery, particularly to Van Winkle Creek, where 2,000 feet at the



Quesnelle Hyd. Gold Mng. Co.'s Wood-stave Pipe Siphon.



Veith's Ranche, Keithley Creek, Cariboo.



Quesnelle Hyd. Gold Mng. Co.'s Dam—Swift River.

lower end yielded from $100 to $250 a day to the man, through the season. Up the creek the lead disappeared. The total product of this stream in October, 1876, was $500,964, from 1,600 feet of ground running with the creek, and varying from 200 to 300 feet in width.

"The diggings on Last Chance Creek, another tributary of Lightning Creek, were likewise opened in 1861. The Discovery Company, consisting of four men, took out 40 lb. of gold in one day, and the yield that season, from half a mile of the creek, was at least $250,000. The Chisholm, Davis, and Anderson tributaries, near the same place, yielded also quite a quantity of gold from their shallow parts. The second season on Lightning Creek yielded comparatively little, for the gravel, being loose and porous, was difficult to work, though the pay deposit was only from 8 to 30 feet below the surface.

"For two or three seasons much difficulty was experienced with the flow of water, so that in the autumn of 1864 most of the claims were abandoned. In 1870 several companies resumed work by sinking shafts into the deep channel, and with the aid of improved machinery and methods the water was controlled. The Van Winkle, Vancouver, and Victoria Companies, with ground situated below the town of Van Winkle, effected their object by sinking through the bed-rock at the side of the creek, and thence drifting into the channel. At the same time a costly 'bed-rock drain' was opened at the lower end of the diggings. The developments made underground at different times proved the existence of separate old channels at different elevations, consequently of different ages.

BIG YIELDS FROM LIGHTNING CREEK CLAIMS.

"As a result of this successful engineering feat fresh localities were opened for a distance of five miles along the creek, and gold began to flow again to some extent, the total yield of thirteen claims amounting in November, 1875, to $2,179,272, of which the Victoria produced $451,642, the Van Winkle $363,983, and the Vancouver $274,190. The production of ten other leading claims to November, 1875, was: Dutch and Siegel mines, afterwards the Perseverance claim, $130,000; Dunbar, $30,000; Discovery and Butcher, $120,000; Campbell and Whitehall, $200,000; South Wales, $141,531; Lightning, $153,962; Point, $136,625; Spruce, $99,908; Costello, $20,476; Vulcan, $56,955.

"But this showing was by no means so satisfactory as it seemed, for it embraced only the successful companies, and did not point out the expenses, which were very large, amounting in many claims from $40,000 to $70,000. Both the expenditure and the yield served, however, to resuscitate the district, and by 1875 the diggings and towns on Lightning Creek, Van Winkle, and Stanley had taken the first place in Cariboo for production, prosperity, and population, while William Creek, with its principal of Barkerville, had fallen into decay.

"The southern branch of Cottonwood River had also a rich district on Lowhee Creek, one of its headwaters, which at one time promised to rival William Creek."

CARIBOO IN 1874.

The first "Annual Report of the Minister of Mines" for British Columbia was that for the calendar year 1874, published in 1875. Hon. John Ash was then Provincial Secretary and Minister of Mines, and Mr. Charles Good was his deputy. The first official report of Cariboo District printed in an "Annual Report" on the subject of the mining industry of the Province was, therefore, that included in the report of that year. It was as follows:—

"The most extensive and costly workings in operation in the Province are at Cariboo. Here there are 5 steam-engines, 27 water-wheels, 13 tunnels, 63 shafts,

43 hydraulics, 23 ground-sluices. The miners employed number more than 1,000, and the estimated yield of gold (for the year) amounts to $700,000.

"The district embraces an area of some 7,000 square miles; it occupies an elevation varying from 2,000 to 5,000 feet above the surface of the sea, between the 52nd and 54th degree of north latitude; it is bounded on the south and south-west by the Quesnel Lake and River; on the west, north, and east by the Fraser River, which here bends back suddenly, almost parallel to its original course. It includes the well-known William's, Lightning, Grouse, Van Winkle, Otter, Cunningham, Musquito, Stanley, Peterson, Davis, Nelson, Chisholm, Burns, Antler, Keithley, Harvey, and Snowshoe Creeks; Lowhee and Stouts Gulches; Swift, Cottonwood, and Quesnel Rivers.

"It is impossible to estimate correctly the amount of gold that has been taken out of William's Creek during the last ten years. But the annexed return of the yield of a few of the claims at Cariboo in 1861-2-3-4 will serve to illustrate the enormous value of the gold-deposits of that district.

"Antler Creek in 1861, for some time, yielded $10,000 a day. About $1,000 was taken out of a sluice-box for one day's work. Steele's claim on William's Creek gave a maximum yield of 409 oz., or $6,524 a day. More than $100,000 was taken out of this claim of 80 by 25 feet.

"In 1862, the highest amount taken out by any one company in twenty-four hours was $9,050. This was from the Cunningham claim, on William's Creek, which realized at the rate of nearly $2,000 a day for the season; on several days as much as 53 lb. weight of gold was taken out. The Adams claim yielded to each of its three partners $40,000 clear of expenses. In the Barker claim, eight partners realized $7,000 each. These claims were above the canyon. In 1863 three claims below the canyon yielded $300,000; Diller's claim yielded in one day the extraordinary sum of 102 lb. of gold—$20,000.

"In 1864, many of the claims continued to pay as well as before. On Conklin's Gulch, a discovery of that year, the Ericsson claim yielded from 400 to 500 oz. a day. The Butcher claim, on Lightning Creek, yielded 350 oz. a day; the Aurora, from 300 to 600 oz.; the Caledonia, 300 oz.; and the Wake-up-Jake, 150 oz. These few returns are given merely to illustrate the wealth of Cariboo, and in no way describe the amount of gold taken out over the whole district; only that from a few claims selected for illustration.

"Van Winkle and Lightning Creeks are now attracting considerable attention. The claims below mentioned have turned out in 1874 the amount of gold set opposite their names, respectively:—

"Vancouver	$150,000
Victoria	167,441
Van Winkle	141,000
Vulcan	21,539
	$479,980

"These rich deposits have been invariably found on what is known as the bed-rock, at a depth of 60 to 80 feet from the surface, and in the channels or beds of ancient watercourses."

Cameron Claim, William's Creek, 1863.

PRICES AT BARKERVILLE IN 1875.

In his report, dated Barkerville, October 25th, 1875, Mr. John Bowron, Gold Commissioner, gave prices then current in the district, as under:—

"*Wages*—

Labourers, per day	$ 5 00
Mechanics, "	7 00

"*Supplies*—

Flour, per pound	08
Beans, "	15
Bacon, "	35
Tea, "	1 00
Sugar, "	33½
Tobacco, "	1 50
Yeast-powder, per box	50
Butter, per pound	60
Cheese, "	50
Gum boots, per pair	8 00
Candles, per pound	50
Soap, "	40
Beef, "	12½
Fish, salted, per pound	30
Pickles in bulk, package of 5 gallons	10 00
Nails, per pound	25
Salt, "	20
Brandy, per bottle	1 75

"The rate of freight from Yale, the head of navigation, to Barkerville averages from 7½ to 8 cents per pound in the spring, and about 12½ cents in the fall."

SOME CARIBOO RHYMES.

Many an old-timer will remember "Sawney's Letters and Cariboo Rhymes," by James Anderson. Just for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne," some are quoted here:—

FROM "LETTER NO. 1" (WRITTEN FEBRUARY, 1864).

Dear Sawney.— * * * * * * *
Your letter cam by the Express,
Eight shillins carriage—naethin' less.
You'll think this awfu'—'tis, nae doot—
(A dram's twa shillins here about);
I'm sure if Tamie Ha'—the buddy
Was here wi' his three-legged cuddy
He hauls ahent him wi' a tether,
He'd beat the Express, faith a'thegither—
To speak o't i' the truest way,
'Tis Barnard's Cariboo Delay.

. . . . . .

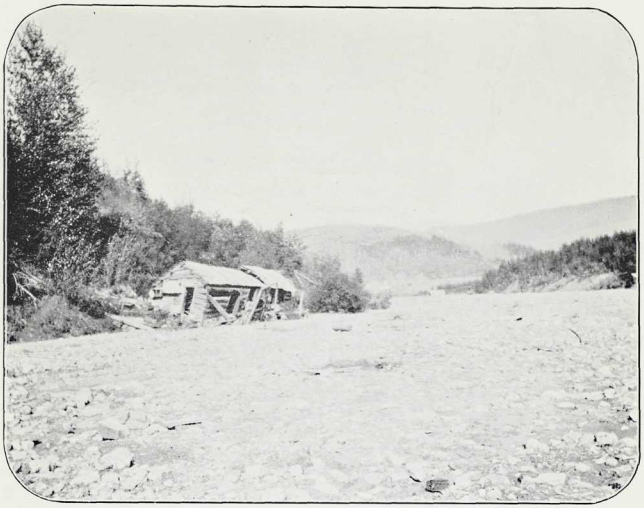
Aitmeal four shillins, flour is twa,
And milk's no to be had ava.
For at this season o' the year
There's naething for a coo up here
To chaw her cud on—sae ye see
Ye are far better aff than me—
For while you're sittin' warm at hame,
And suppin' parritch drooned in crame,
The deil a drap o' milk hae I,
But gobble up my parritch dry.
Of course, I can get butter here,
Twal shillin' a pund—its far oure dear.
Aye—a'thing sells at a lang price,
Tea, coffee, sugar, bacon, rice,
Four shillins a pund, and something mair,
And e'en the weights are rather bare—
Sae much for prices.

. . . . . .

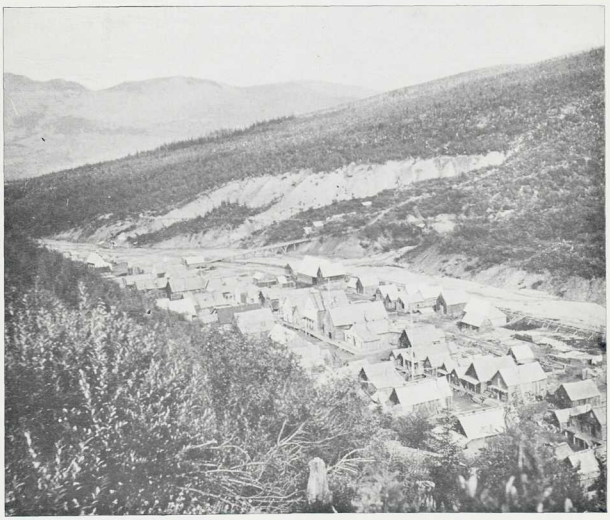
THE PROSPECTOR'S SHANTY.

See yonder shanty on the hill,
'Tis but an humble biggin',
Some ten by six within the wa's—
Your head may touch the riggin'—
The door stands open to the south,
The fire, outside the door;
The logs are chinket close wi' fog—
And nocht but mud the floor—
A knife an' fork, a pewter plate
An' cup of the same metal,
A teaspoon an' a sugar bowl,
A fryin' pan an' kettle;

The bakin' pan hangs on the wa',
Its purposes are twa-fold—
For mixin' bread wi' yeast or dough,
Or pannin' oot the braw gold!
A log or twa in place o' stools,



Ruin of "Cariboo Cameron's" Cabin, Barkerville.



Barkerville in the Nineties.

A bed withoot a hangin',
Are feckly a' the furnishin's
This little house belangin';
The laird an' tenant o' this sty,
I canna name it finer,
Lives free an' easy as a lord,
Tho' but an' "honest miner."

FROM "LETTER No. 3."

Dear Sawney.—Little did I think
That Eighteen Sixty-seven
Wad see me still in Cariboo,
A howkin' for a livin'.
The first twa years I spent oot here
Was nae sae ill ava,
But hoo I've lived since syne, my freen',
There's little need to blaw!
Like foot-ba' knockit back an' fore,
That's lang in reachin' goal,
Or feather blawn by ilka wind
That whistles 'tween each pole;
E'en sae my mining life has been
Fu' mony a weary day,
(Will that sun never rise for me,
That shines for makin' hay?)

. . . . . .

Weel, here at last I'm workin' oot,
A lab'rer by the day,
'Mang face-boards, water, slum an' mud,
To keep the wolf away!
Adversity's a sair, sair school,
An' ane that few can prize,
Altho' its hardships aften are
But "blessin's in disguise."
My sympathies gang wi' the man
Wha labors for anither,
That never kent what 'twas to toil
For ten lang hours thegither.
Some maisters look on workin' men
As packers see their trains,
But beasts o' burden, naethin' mair,
For addin' to their gains;
But ilka doggie has his day
Baith thorough-bred an' cross;
Sae very aft ane sees oot here
The mule become the boss!

. . . . . .

Your letters, Sawney, are a boon,
An' postage now is less,
An' Barnard's Cariboo "Delay,"
Can fairly claim "Express."
Be sure an' write me every month,
If naething but "cauld kale."
To see hoo much hame news is prized,
Read "Waiting for the Mail."

WAITING FOR THE MAIL.

. . . . . .

A teamster from the Beaver Pass—
  "What news of the Express?"
"'Twas there last night, if I heard right;
  'Twill be in to-day, 'I guess.'"
A miner, next on William Creek
  Arrived, from wint'ring south,
"He heard some say 'twould be to-day
  Expected at the Mouth."
But here comes Poole, in haste his rule—
  "Hallo! what of the mail?"
From him we learn, with some concern,
  "Just two days out from Yale!"

Ah! waiting is a weariness,
  "The Express is at Van Winkle!"
This makes the face deny the case,
  And quite removes the wrinkle.
But whether good or bad the news,—
  This happens without fail—
Your letter read—the fire is fed
  For waiting on the mail.

. . . . . .

A few hours more—a great uproar—
  The Express is come at last!
An Eastern mail, see by the bale,
  As "Sullivan" goes past;
And now, an eager, anxious crowd
  Await the letter sale,
Postmaster curst—their "wrath was nurs'd"
  By waiting for the mail.

. . . . . .

The day is pass'd, the office closed,
  The letters are delivered,
And some have joy without alloy,
  While some fond hopes are shivered;
A sweetheart wed—a dear friend dead,
  Or closer tie is broken;
Ah! many an ache the heart may take
  By words tho' never spoken.

Old Black Jack & Burns Hydraulic, Cariboo, 1863.

THE CARIBOO OF TO-DAY.

Much more might be added relative to early gold-mining on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, and in the larger field of Cariboo, but for the time the information given in the foregoing pages must suffice. Just a few words, though, concerning the total gold production of Cariboo District to date, together with a reference to hydraulic mining, and a glance at the altering conditions for access to the district as compared with bygone years.

In the introduction to the report on Cariboo printed in the "Annual Report of the Minister of Mines" for 1902, it is stated that "the output of the Cariboo District from 1858 to date amounts to about $37,500,000." The official records for the nine later years, 1903-11, show a total of more than $3,000,000; so it may be stated that the total gold-production of the district to date is nearly $41,000,000. It is manifest, however, that continued profitable production is confidently expected, for there have been large expenditures of money during the last few years in connection with the enlargement of previously existing hydraulic enterprises and the establishment of new ones. It is well known that during the years that the late John B. Hobson was engaged in hydraulic placer-gold mining in Cariboo District, the company of which he was manager washed more than 10,000,000 yards of gravel and recovered gold to the value of more than $1,000,000. Among the illustrations shown in this pamphlet are two of the most recent of the larger installations of hydraulicking plant and works—an installation that has involved an outlay of more than $1,000,000, and that is now being operated in full expectation of profitable returns resulting. It is not too much to look for other equally important gold-saving enterprises being established in the district, following the success of several now contributing materially to the industrial prosperity of the district.

Prominent among the things that are big with promise for Cariboo District being even more prosperous in the future is the railway situation. A great drawback in past years has been the high transportation costs. Now it is certain that this obstacle to greater development will shortly be removed and railway communication with the heart of the extensive Cariboo District become an accomplished fact. The great impetus this will give to mining and other industries can hardly be measured at the present time, but that it will make for the abundant and permanent prosperity of this big territory, rich in natural resources, may not reasonably be doubted. Railway routes, practically at water grades, are obtainable in several directions, and there is not likely to be much longer delay in providing the much-needed transportation facilities that will greatly facilitate the opening of the country to an industrial activity and increasing settlement of considerable proportions, so that from being the "cradle of British Columbia," as quoted early in this pamphlet, the district will develop into one of the mainstays of the Province.

VICTORIA, B.C.:
Printed by WILLIAM H. CULLIN, Printer to the King's
Most Excellent Majesty.
1912.