

A HISTORY OF THE CRANBROOK DISTRICT IN EAST KOOTENAY

by

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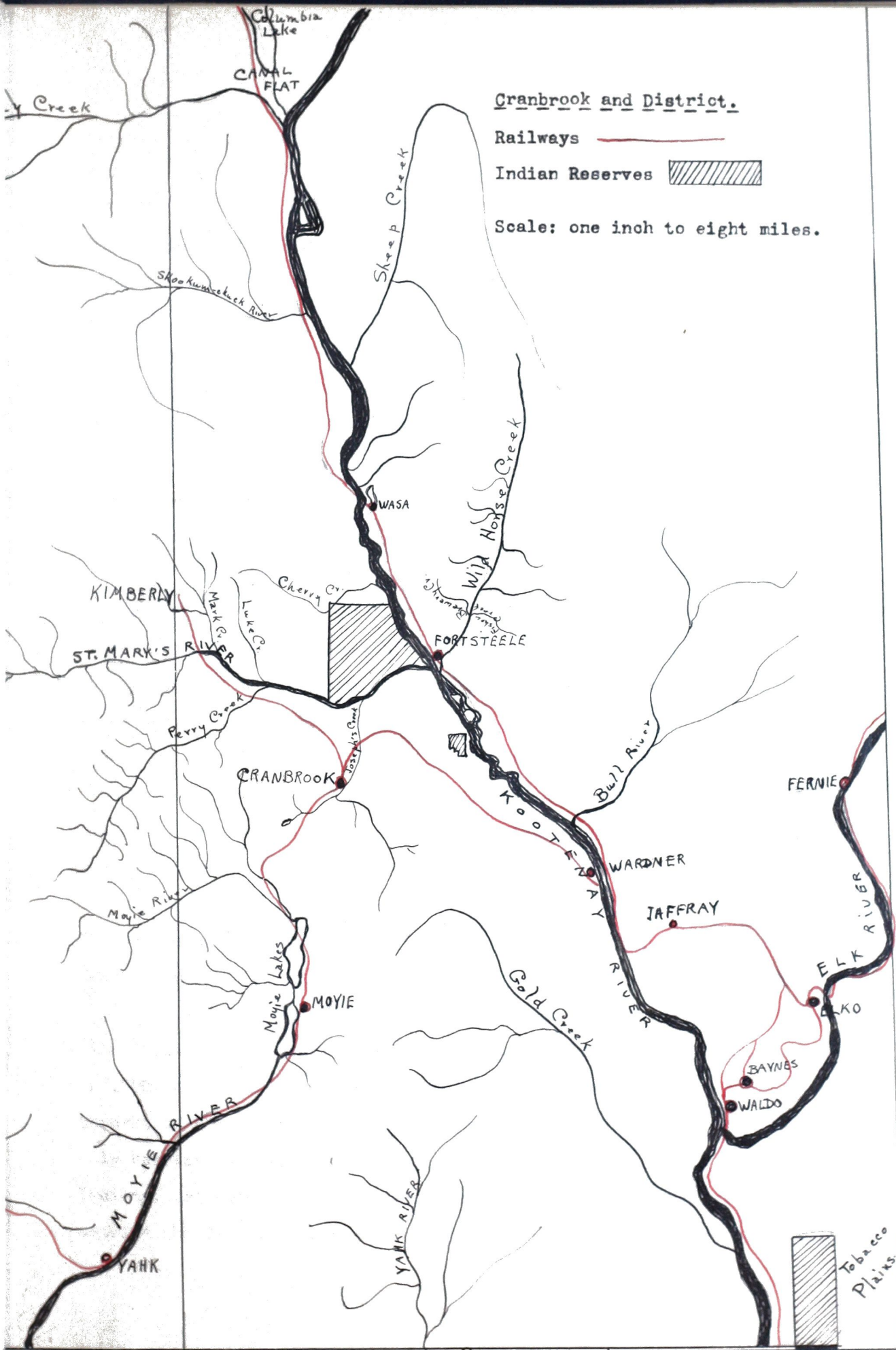
Wild Horse Creek (facing p. 20.)

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A HISTORY OF THE CRANBROOK DISTRICT IN EAST KOOTENAY.

I

DAVID THOMPSON.



Cranbrook and District.

Railways —————

Indian Reserves 

Scale: one inch to eight miles.

Since it is thought proper to begin a history of the Americas with the stories of the Vikings, and a history of British Columbia with the voyages of the Spanish and their predecessors, then this sketch may be allowed to begin with the first visits of civilized men to the Kootenay. Indeed it is from them, not from the Indians, that our scraps of information about earlier history are derived. We have given the Indians morsels of their own land, given them blankets and cast-off petticoats, given them white bread and sugar and religious instruction, and scrubbed their children with strong soap and water, but in accepting these gifts they seem to have lost all that was vigorous in their own life and tradition, to have lost even the memory of it.

The fourth recorded passage of the Rocky Mountains by a white man was made not far north of this district. David Thompson's discovery of the Howse pass and thence of the source of the Columbia river led to the opening of both the Columbia and Kootenay valleys to trade and travel. As Mackenzie and Fraser had both used the Peace River Pass, this was the second pass to be discovered on Canadian territory. But it was the width of the continent rather than the height of the mountains that delayed the opening up of British Columbia. The fur-trader hesitated at no difficulty, and, especially after the Lewis and Clark expedition, the North West Company had every reason to wish to extend its trade across the mountains. Reckless exploitation of the plains was already resulting in a diminished fur harvest.

The name of Peter Pangman, cut in a pine tree on a hill beside the North Saskatchewan, marked the point from which one of their partners, in 1790, had gazed longingly at the forbidding line of snowy peaks, and thought of the trader's paradise beyond. But the mountains were not the only barrier: at every gap were camps of Blackfeet, Blood, and Piegan Indians, determined to keep their hereditary enemies in the West from receiving the dangerous blessing of guns and knives and iron for arrowheads.

Thompson's first attempt to cross the mountains was a failure. In 1800 he was at Rocky Mountain House, on the North Saskatchewan, then the westernmost outpost of the Company. While exploring at the foot of the mountains, he met a band of Kootenay Indians, the first he had seen. It was a friendly encounter: he warned them of the approach of a band of Piegans, and they hurried home by way of the North Saskatchewan, taking with them to spend the winter in their country two of Thompson's men, named La Gassi and Le Blanc. Thus Thompson learned that the river led to a pass. The next spring he engaged an Indian guide who asserted that he knew the way, and started with a party equipped with trading goods. The guide, however, grew more and more depressed and timid as the mountains closed around them. Finally, after vainly begging his stern employer to abandon the enterprise because he had dreamed of hostile Indians lurking near, he led them to a lake between two sheer cliffs, and there confessed that he was lost. Nothing would induce him to try to find a way on, and they had perforce to return the way they had come, and count the season wasted. (1)

Five years passed before Thompson could make preparations for another attempt. He had been sent to Rocky Mountain House now as Senior Officer. This time he sent his man Jaco Finlay to clear a trail across the pass the Kootenay Indians had used in 1800. There were no Piegans about to interfere since they had gone on a war-party to the Missouri to avenge the death of two of their tribe killed by Captain Lewis in July 1806. (2) In May of 1807, therefore, Thompson made a safe start, taking with him seven men, his wife and his three children, who were all under six, and guns and goods for trading. Finlay's trail was found to be most unsatisfactory, and the party arrived exhausted and hungry at the junction of Blaeberry Creek with the Columbia river, to find only a broken and useless canoe awaiting them. With the usual skill of the fur-trader, however, they soon

(1) Account of an Attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains. Thompson MS.

(2) Tyrrell: Narrative of David Thompson, p.376.

built fresh bark canoes, and ascended the river to the lakes. Here they settled down to build a fort for shelter. Thompson was aching to paddle on and spend the rest of the season in exploring, but he dared not leave the party and the goods in charge of any of his inexperienced subordinates. Moreover, game was scarce, and they were suffering very greatly from hunger until the salmon appeared in the river. The Indians were well paid for any small offerings of food, and messengers were sent off to spread the news among them that a trader had arrived.

The fact that Thompson did not realize he had reached the Columbia is evident in his calling it the Kootanae, after the Indian tribe. The lakes were called the Kootanae Lakes, and his fort Kootanae House.(1) He lived here for the rest of the season, trading and taking careful meteorological and astronomical observations, as was his habit. The Selkirks he named Nelson's Mountains, after the hero of the day. One peak opposite his house he actually measured by means of his sextant, and named it Mount Nelson. This is still its official name. The Kootenay river,(2) when he found it, he named McGillivray's, "in honour of the family to whom may justly be ascribed the knowledge and commerce of the Columbia river."(3) He also sometimes gives it the name of Flatbow, which was an alternative name, of unknown origin, for the Indians of the lower tribe.

Before the fort was finished visitors arrived, watchful and inquisitive of all that they did. They were Piegans, mistrustful of this trader who was giving arms to their old enemies, the Kootenays. A month later a larger party arrived to camp at their door, and greatly outstayed their welcome. The barred gate and the log fortifications with loop-holes for shooting seemed to inspire respect, and no hostilities occurred, although the little party was nervous, stayed in the fort, and rationed the food strictly. After the departure of these troublesome guests news arrived of

(1)Thompson's spelling. This was later called old Fort Kootanae, to distinguish it from his Fort Kootanae just south of the present boundary.

(2)Official spelling. There are sixty-one different ways of spelling the word. See White:Handbook of the Indians of Canada,p. 258.

(3)Tyrrell, op. cit., note on p. 385.

of the plunder of Fort Augustus by the Blackfeet, and when two more Piegans appeared Thompson guessed that they were the advance guard of a war-party. He had by this time lived more than twenty years in the country, had lived with the Indians at times, and made an intimate study of them. In the person of the Piegan war-chief he knew he had an influential friend, although, as Alexander Henry laments in his journal, the Indians were losing the respect for their chiefs they had formerly entertained. (1) He now promptly made up parcels of tobacco for the two spies to take back to their chiefs. Their departure was fortunately hastened by the arrival of two Kootenay Indians, who, as Thompson says, "glared on the Piegans like tigers." (2) As he had foreseen, they went straight to the main party, and delivered the presents. The temptation of the tobacco prevailed over the temptation to fight: they smoked, and having smoked they remembered that they could not accept gifts from a man and then go and kill him. They were, besides, a little afraid of his guns behind those log ramparts. So they went home peacefully.

In April 1808 Finan McDonald, second in command, was left at the fort, while his master with four men went off on his favourite business of exploring. Making a portage across the plain now called Canal Flat, he embarked on McGillivray's river, and down this stream, barely escaping destruction in its whirlpools, he travelled so quickly as to reach Kootenay Lake by the middle of May. This was in spite of a painful portage over the rocks at Kootenay Falls, and a serious shortage of food. He was on the watch for Indians, both for future trading purposes and to buy provisions from them, but he seems not to have met any until near the Lake. Here he turned back, and paddled upstream as far as was possible against the strong current; then he stored the canoe, (near Bonner's Ferry) bought horses, and engaged an Indian guide to take him home by way of the Moyie river.

Thompson named this McDonald's river; Simpson later refers to it as Grand Quête. After a day's journey, when they had with great difficulty crossed

(1)Gouss: Journals of Henry and Thompson, p. 555.
(2)Thompson's Narrative, p. 382.

the swollen river by felling a huge cedar across it, and hauled the horses over with straps of hide, the guide disappeared. Thompson waited in vain for his return, finally in desperation sending two of his men back to the Lake Indian camp for help. The chief, Ugly Head, so called because he had curly hair, was much moved by their appeal, and summoned his tribesmen to hear it. "He bitterly reproached them for want of a strong heart, and contrasted their cowardly conduct with ours," says Thompson, "who braved every hardship and danger to bring them arms, ammunition, and all their other wants; calling upon them to find a man, or two, who would be well paid; but none answered the call; the dangers of the mountains at this season were too great, and too well known to them, and I was not aware of this until it was too late; finding no answer given to his call, he said, 'While I am alive, the white men who come to us with goods shall not perish in the mountains for want of a guide and a hunter. Since your hearts are all weak, I will go with them.'" (1)

As the snow was melting and every creek in flood, they had a terrible journey. St. Mary's river was a torrent which swept away every tree they felled for a bridge, and in crossing on horseback they lost some of their baggage and a parcel of beaver skins. Devoutly did Thompson thank Providence when at last they reached McGillivray's river safely, and stopped to build a canoe and to dry their valuable furs. Wild Horse Creek they called Skirmish Brook, and had some trouble crossing it; another stream flowing in from the east he called, after one of his men, Lussier Creek. (2) This, by the way, has since been rechristened Sheep Creek, although there are at least half a dozen others of that name in the province.

Chief Ugly Head accompanied them as far as McGillivray's Carrying Place, now Canal Flat, and then left in a canoe for his own country. The explorer hastened on to join his wife and family, with Mr. Finan McDonald and the men in charge of the furs, who had in his absence been reduced to eating all their dogs. They stayed only to kill a horse for food, then _ _ _

(1) Thompson's Narrative, p. 391.

(2) Ibid. p. 394.

all started east through the mountain pass. Racing down the current of the Saskatchewan in a birch bark canoe they had stored at the head of the river, they reached Rainy River House with the furs by July the twenty-second.

The first shipment of furs sent east, in 1807, had included one hundred skins of the mountain goat. "Some of the ignorant self-sufficient partners of the Company," to use David Thompson's own words, had laughed at these, but to their surprise they fetched a fairly good price in the London market. Accordingly they ordered him to send more, but he replied, that "the hunting of the goat was both dangerous and laborious, and for their ignorant ridicule I would send no more, and I kept my word." (1)

In another and more important matter the partners of the Company found themselves defied. In this new territory beyond the mountains Thompson was determined to conduct the fur trade without the use of liquor. As a boy at York Factory he had been disgusted at the state of affairs that prevailed: "The Company has the Bay in full possession, and can enforce the strictest temperance of spirituous liquors, by their orders to their chief Factors, but the ships at the same time bringing out several hundred gallons of vile spirits called English brandy, no such morality is thought of. No matter what service the Indian performs, or does he come to trade his furs, strong grog is given to him, and sometimes for two or three days men and women are all drunk and become the most degrade of human beings." (2) The craving induced made the natives dependent on the traders, but at the same time it ruined the faculties which made them good hunters. Thompson's policy now that he was in charge of a great new trading district was dictated not merely by personal prejudice, but by his knowledge of the demoralization which always set in when the Indians acquired the habit of intemperance.

When he was loading his canoes at Rainy River House in July 1808 for his return journey, his partners Donald McTavish and Jo McDonald obliged him to include two kegs of alcohol. For the passage through the mountains, however, these kegs were purposely tied onto a vicious horse, who quickly staved them in against the rocks, and thus got rid of his load. (3)

(1) Thompson's Narrative, p. 380.

(2) Ibid. p. 353.

(3) Ibid. p. 326.

Thompson then wrote to his partners to tell them what he had done, promising to do the same to every keg of alcohol sent out. Not another gallon was sent while he remained in charge, so that from this, the first period of their contact with white men, the Kootenay Indians can have suffered no evil effects.

The winter of 1808-09 was passed at Kootanae House without fear of interruption from Piegans, as the snow was too deep on the mountains to permit of travelling in the passes. Finan McDonald was sent down to establish a trading post just above Kootenay Falls, while Thompson himself remained at his Kootanae House trading and taking observations. In the spring there was a shipment of furs, seven hundred and fifty pounds, to be taken east. The high water making transport very difficult, Thompson accompanied his party as far as Fort Augustus on the Saskatchewan, returning to Kootanae House by August.

This season he spent in exploring the country of the Salish, paddling down the Kootenay river to a point near Bonner's Ferry, and riding across to Lake Pend d'Oreille by the Indian Road. The Salish had for their only weapons of offence against their enemies of the plains lances and arrows, which latter could not penetrate leathershields. They were eager to trade furs for the guns, iron arrow-heads, and tools in the white man's pack, listened to his sermon on gambling, and promised to be industrious in hunting the beaver. They very soon became better shots with their new guns than were their enemies the Piegans, whose only practise targets were the bison, shot at such close range that they could scarcely miss. For the first time the Salish were now able to hold their own in a pitched battle. As the Indians did not understand neutrality, Finan McDonald, who was with the Salish at the time, was obliged to join in the fighting against the Piegans, a fact which the latter noticed and did not forget when they drew off planning revenge for their defeat.(1)

Two store-houses were built, Kullyspell House, on Pend d'Oreille Lake, and Salish House, some sixty miles further along the river, where Thompson spent the winter. From this point he made various expeditions,

(1)Thompson's Narrative, p. 425.

trading and surveying. His habit of taking regular observations won him the Indian nickname of Koo-Koo-Sint, or the Star Man. By this time he had guessed that his "Kootanae" was really the Columbia, and that McGillivray's and the Pend d'Oreille river were probably tributaries of it. An attempt to reach the Columbia by canoeing down the Pend d'Oreille was foiled by rapids, and he returned home up the Kootenay river, hurried across the Height of Land, as he called his pass, rushed across the plains to Rainy River House to dispose of his furs, and turned west again. Near the foot of the mountains, however, he was forced against his will to pause.

The Piegans, although they did not want to quarrel with the traders, and so cut themselves off from supplies of the grog to which they were already enslaved, were determined to prevent their western enemies from buying any more ammunition with which to upset their horse-stealing business. Therefore they stopped Thompson on his way up the Saskatchewan, and flatly forbade him to go any further. He had to pitch camp and wait, but they waited also, sullenly watching the river to see that he did not slip by. Only by the strategy of making a whole band of them drunk at Rocky Mountain House did Alexander Henry succeed in dispatching the supplies that Thompson so urgently needed. Then, although winter had come on, this intrepid and tireless explorer calmly turned north rather than turn back, aiming now for a pass over which some Nipissings had passed a few years previously. Thus, enduring almost incredible hardships, which drove his men to the point of mutiny, did the first white traveller cross the Athabasca Pass into the Columbia valley. At the northernmost point of the river he discovered and named Canoe River, and settled down to rest at last at Canoe Camp, or Boat Encampment, as it came to be called. (1) Leaving here in the spring, April 1811, he set off with three men up the Columbia, down the Kootenay, on his famous trip to Astoria, from which he returned by way of the Columbia. The following spring he left the valley by the Athabasca, and never again came back to the West.

There is one aspect of his work which has hardly received the emphasis it deserves. Were any modern traveller exposed for even a few

(1) Coues, op. cit. pp. 667-669.

weeks to the hardships he endured season after season, what a story the newspapers would make of it! Few now could equal his travels, living on the country as he did, and building their own canoes of pine or birch bark, as he did. Six pounds of pemmican was the total stock of provisions with which he reached the Kootenay the first time: the enormous appetites of his French-Canadians and half-breeds had accounted for the rest of the supplies. "Gave the men a large dog for supper, for want of a better," is one entry in his journal.(1) Settled at their fort they were driven to eat a wild horse they had found dead, the meat of which made them all sick.(2) On his first trip down the Kootenay they could not shoot enough game to keep them from resorting to "moss bread and dried carp, both poor harsh food," obtained from the Indians.(3) This moss bread was made from a hairy moss that grows on the bark of trees. The Indians boiled it and beat it and baked it into black cakes. "I never could relish it," admits Thompson, "it has just nourishment enough to keep a person alive."(4) Father De Smet, who shared Indian fare in passing through the country forty years later, bears him out that this bread was "a most miserable food, which in a brief space reduces those who eat it to a pitiable state of emaciation." The priest, after naming the more or less palatable foods of the natives, continues, "To this catalogue I could add a number of detestible fruits and roots which serve as nutriment for the Indians, but at which a civilized stomach would revolt and nauseate." (5)

But Thompson was not a missionary; he was merely a trader employed at a salary insufficient for him to provide against penury in his old age. His worst privations were perhaps those which he courted by going north in the winter of 1810-1811 to the Athabasca. Alexander Henry notes of seven men whom he sent back for supplies, "On their way here they ate an old horse and five dogs, but had been some time without food and were worn out with fatigue and hunger."(6)

(1) Thompson's Narrative- Entry for June 26, 1807.

(2) Journals of David Thompson, Oregon Historical Quarterly, March 1925.

(3) Narrative, p.375.

(4) Ibid. p.375.

(5) De Smet: Oregon Missions, p. 118.

(6) Goues, op. cit., p.669.

The labours of Mr.J.B. Tyrrell and others have now established David Thompson's fame as a geographer and an explorer. The poverty of his old age has been duly regretted, and the recognition that the man demanded in vain from the British Government is now ungrudgingly and even proudly accorded to his memory. With the story of the Kootenay his name is most intimately linked - a very great and illustrious name with which to begin that story.



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II

TRADE AND TRAVEL IN THE KOOTENAY.



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While David Thompson ruled the new country, Alexander Henry was the officer in charge of Rocky Mountain House on the Saskatchewan. The latter's journal gives a fuller description of the country and the natives west of the mountains than does Thompson, whose practical mind restricted his records to the details of his work as though they were matters of mere routine. Henry did some exploring in the mountains, crossed the Athabasca Pass, and descended the Columbia to Fort Astoria in November 1813. There he was drowned the following May when a storm overturned his boat in the river.

In describing the different tribes of Indians with whom Thompson had opened trade, Henry mentions, among others, the Kootenays, who, he says, "have the reputation of a brave and warlike nation, though the whole tribe does not exceed fifty families. They are always at peace with their neighbours to the south and west..... These people are mild to their women, and particularly attached to their children. They are generally in amity with the Piegans, who are their nearest neighbours on the east. They have fought many desperate battles, but the Piegans now consider it to their own interest to be at peace with them, to be better enabled to encounter the Flatheads, from whom they plunder the vast number of horses they possess, the Kootenays being stationed on their frontiers, and having but few horses, as their country will not admit of the use of these animals further north than the headwaters of the Kootenay river." (1)

By Flatheads it is possible that he means a southern branch of the Kootenay family, though the name is sometimes applied to some of the Salish tribes in the south. It is difficult to account for the use of the term at all, as none of the tribes here followed that custom of the Coast Indians, of flattening the heads of their children.

The Lower Kootenays he refers to as the Flat Bow or Lake Indians, who "dwell on the borders of a large lake. (Kootenay Lake) They frequently come up the river as far as the falls, but seldom attempt to

(1) Coles: New Light on the History of the North West, p.707.

proceed higher. These people are but little known to us The country they inhabit does not abound in large animals." They lived chiefly on salmon, he adds, had no horses, and made peculiar canoes of pine bark.(1)

It is interesting to read that Henry found, on the eastern side of the mountains, remains of lodges which he declares to be those of Kootenay Indians. This is really the only definite evidence in support of the theory that the Kootenays once lived on the plains. "About the time the Kootenays were in possession of this part of the country," he remarks, telling the story as he must have learnt it from the Indians themselves, "the Snare Indians dwelt on the Kootenay or Columbia. But the former, being driven into the mountains by the different tribes who lived east of them, with whom they were perpetually at war, in their turn waged war upon their harmless neighbours on the west, the Snare Indians, and soon drove them off the land the Kootenays now inhabit. This is on the upper part of the Columbia and on Ram river, a little south of it, now called McGillivray's, but formerly termed by the natives Flat Bow river, from a tribe of Indians of the Kitunahan family who then inhabited the lower part of it. . . . The Snare Indians, it seems, retired north, to an uninhabited part of the Rocky mountains, where they continue to wander, a most wretched and defenseless people, who never war upon any of their neighbours. But so bloodthirsty is the nature of savages that the Stony Wood Crees of the Saskatchewan and the Swampy Ground Assiniboines frequently make long excursions in quest of them, during which they suffer very much with hunger and often narrowly escape starving to death, as that part of the mountains which the Snare Indians inhabit seems destitute of animals. But when the latter are discovered, generally in small camps of two or three tents, they become an easy prey, as these helpless people have no firearms, the bow and arrow being their only weapon of defense. Having no intercourse with traders, they exist in a rude state of nature; fish is their principal food, though they contrive to snare chance animals in the narrow confines of the mountains. Their numbers are few. . ."

(2) Such being the nature of the first inhabitants of the Kootenay valley,

it is not surprising that ^{they} have left no traces behind them. Possibly they did

(1) Coues: New Light on the History of the North West, p. 702.

(2) Ibid., p. 706.

leave a few stone implements, but in that country of rocks they would not be conspicuous.

The fur trade started in the new country continued and increased. The Hudson's Bay Company, curious to know what Thompson was doing in the west, had sent Joseph Howse to follow him up through the mountains in 1809. The next year he led a small party through the pass Thompson had found, which became known as Howse Pass, and down by Thompson's route to a point near the present Kalispell, Montana, where he spent the winter trading. But in the spring of 1811 the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned its attempt at competition in the Columbia valley, and its servants did not enter it again until the union of the Companies in 1821.(1)Jaco Finlay, who built Spokane House for Thompson in 1810, remained in its neighbourhood until 1826, as did also Finan McDonald. Fort Colville seems then to have been the centre of trade with the Columbia and Kootenay valley Indians, although a post called Kootenais, probably Thompson's southern Fort Kootenay, is listed among the thirteen establishments west of the Rockies in 1826.(2) By 1849, however, this had been abandoned.

The highway of travel, the route of the Company's express, was the Columbia river. After the transfer of Astoria Gabriel Franchere, Ross Cox, and Alexander Ross left the country by ascending the Columbia and taking the Athabasca Pass. All three wrote accounts of their experiences. Sir George Simpson traversed the country in 1824 and 1825, and his journal is among those to be published by the Hudson's Bay Company.

One of the most celebrated travellers in the Columbia valley was the great botanist, David Douglas, who between the years 1825 and 1834, explored much of the country from the coast to the mountains. Going home to rest after his adventures he stopped at the Sandwich Islands, and there met his death miserably in an accident. Brief entries in his journals, which are filled mostly with details of his discoveries in natural history, show what he suffered in the cause of science - hunger, thirst, every kind of privation, and, always, a terrible loneliness. The natives on the Columbia he found "anything but amicable". He once encountered a party of

(1)Tyrrell, op. cit., Introduction, p.cII.
(2)Howay and Scholefield: History of British Columbia, vol. II,p.404.

Kootenay Indians at Walla Walla. His guide, a chief from the Okanagan river, wished to fight them immediately, but peace was finally arranged and sealed with a feast that lasted several days, Douglas meanwhile waiting impatiently for his guide.(1) Later in the same year when at Kettle Falls he met "a party of twenty-one men and two females of the Cootanie tribe, whose lands lay on the shores of Cootanie Lake . . . an old quarrel of nine years' standing between them and the tribes on the Columbia Lakes, sixty miles above this place, who are at present here salmon-fishing on the falls, gave Mr. Dease and every other person much uneasiness. The parties met stark naked in our camp, painted, some red, black, white, yellow, with their bows strung, and such as had muskets and ammunition were charged. War-caps of calumet-eagle feathers were the only particle of dress they had on." The threatened fight was averted, however, by the action of Mr. Dease, a trader, in stunning with a blow on the nose one of the savages who was about to fire on another. The others were then so surprised and frightened that they separated.(2)

Ascending the Columbia in 1827, he mentions that he passed the mouth of McGillivray's, or Cootanie, river, giving it the same spelling he applied to the Indians. The previous year he crossed the mountains by the Athabasca Pass from the Columbia; he did not explore the source of the Kootenay.

Contact with the traders must have dulled the edge of Kootenay savagery, for in few years we learn that they have begun to listen to Christian teaching, and to await with curiosity the arrival of the Black Robes of whom they had heard. When Fathers Blanchet and Demers passed through in 1838 they were received with respect, listened to in silence, and allowed to baptize some of the Kootenay children.(3) Occasional visits from these and other missionaries who were arriving in Oregon kept the ideas of the new religion alive among them.

Three years later came the cavalcade of the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, rushing through on his journey round the world. He

(1) Journal of David Douglas, March 23, 1826.
(2) Ib., August, 1826.
(3) Choinel: St. Eugene Mission.

had followed an Indian guide through a rather difficult pass that no white man had ventured on before. (1) He mentions a party of immigrants who crossed the same year by a pass much easier than his, a little to the south of it.

Simpson describes the discomforts of the journey in graphic language. The grandeur of the mountain scenery was exchanged for a picturesque valley filled with ferocious mosquitoes, suffocating heat and dust. On his way down the Kootenay and along the Moyie he encountered a number of Kootenay Indians, "a miserable set of beings, small, decrepit, and dirty." (2) Some he observed were "all very dirty, dressed in skins, but, squalid and poor as they were, they possessed a band of about two hundred fine horses." He noticed, too, that they had been thrifty and provident enough to preserve the beaver from destruction. No sooner had he made this observation than he met another band: "a few miserable Kootenays with some horses . . . each loaded with the mother and younger children, along with pots, kettles, mats, etc. . . . On asking one of them, who was more destitute than the rest, how he came to be so wretchedly poor, we were told by him, with a show of boastfulness, that he had lost his all by gambling." (3) All alike were haggard, emaciated, and on the verge of starvation. Large trees had been felled along the river to be stripped of moss to make bread, which, with cakes of hips and haws which Simpson describes as insipid, or rather, nauseous, formed the basis of their diet.

The Pend d'Oreilles struck him as being slightly superior, although their lodges were full of dirt and rubbish. One scene impressed him sadly. On one of his earlier visits he had selected some boys from this country and sent them to Red River for their education. He now found one of these pupils, Spokane Garry, teaching his fellows to gamble with cards. On returning from school he had, for a time, tried to teach his companions to read and write, but, giving up the attempt, "he forthwith relapsed into his original barbarism, taking unto himself as many wives as he could get, and then, becoming a gambler, he lost both all that he had of his own and all

(1) Simpson: Narrative of a Journey Round the World, p. 114.

(2) Ibid. p. 130.

(3) Ibid. p. 128.

that he could beg or borrow from others. He was evidently ashamed of his proceedings" (1)

The next recorded visitor to the country came especially to study the Indians. From the pen of the great Jesuit, Father De Smet, organizer of the Oregon Missions, we have an eloquent description of the valley and its inhabitants. He had first come into contact with the Kootenays during the winter of 1841-42, which he passed near Flathead Lake. Here were thirty lodges of Indians, who had come from Tobacco Plains to enjoy this somewhat more sheltered spot. The priest quickly won their confidence, made friends with them, baptized their children and a few of the adults, and promised to visit them at their home encampment. Before he could fulfil his promise the urgent need for more helpers in the huge mission field of Oregon took him on a trip to Europe. But in the summer of 1845 he was on his way up the Kootenay river.

Near the Lake he found a group of ninety families already instructed in the elements of the Catholic religion, and singing canticles in French and Indian. The credit for this he gave to the trader Berland, who had been Simpson's guide in 1841, and who came up in this direction every year from Colville. The Father erected a cross and called the station Assumption. (2)

From here he passed on to rejoin his old friends at Tobacco Plains, whence he wrote to his Superior with delight of the warm welcome he received. He was shown, he said, sticks on which they had been making notches to mark the time since he last stayed with them. They, too, had kept up the custom of singing canticles and holding prayer together, and had even built a little log chapel for the purpose. Another cross was erected with fitting ceremony, and the station called after the Holy Heart of Mary. (3)

The child-like faith and simplicity with which they received his teaching rejoiced the Father's heart. Fourteen years later he revisited them, and was deeply touched to find them still adhering faithfully to the

(1) Simpson, op. cit., p. 142.

(2) De Smet: Oregon Missions, p. 120.

(3) Ibid. p. 126.

ritual he had taught them.(1) Particularly was he impressed with their sense of honour, as evinced by their integrity in dealing with the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company when he came among them, and their scrupulous respect for his property in his absence. Their chief, Michel, was like a good and tender father to his tribe. (2)

But his enthusiasm and admiration for his new converts was tinged with sadness. He had studied the history of the Paraguay missions as a preparation for his work in Oregon, (3) and he could not hope that the advance of civilization would have any less fatal effect on the natives here than it had had elsewhere. So far there had been no distribution of liquor in the valley, and very little contact with white men. But the priest was an acute observer: he saw the possibilities of the country. He had remarked pieces of coal along the river, and lead with a suspicion of silver. "What would this now solitary and desolate land become, under the fostering hand of civilization?", he cries. "Indeed, the entire tract of the Skalzi seems awaiting the benign influence of a civilized people." (4) Yet he knew from too sad experience how that influence would not be altogether benign.

There were only thirty lodges of Indians on Tobacco Plains at the time of his visit. Hunger, ever faithful to the Indian as his shadow, had driven the rest into the mountains to look for food. The most practical thing the missionaries could do for these people was, as De Smet saw, to teach them how to make a livelihood by agriculture. This policy had been successfully carried out at Flathead Lake, and at the request of the natives at his station of Assumption, he had promised to send them seeds and implements. This he apparently did, and for a time they were persevering and industrious in the new art. But Mr. Farwell notes in his report in 1883 that these lower Kootenay Indians had become so discouraged by the constant flooding of their lands, that they gave up farming in disgust, and had by

(1) De Smet: Lettres Choisies, p.91
(2) Ibid. p.92.
(3) E.V.O'Hara: De Smet in the Oregon Country, - Oregon Historical Quarterly, Sept. 1909.
(4) De Smet: Oregon Missions, p.125. Skalzi is his name for the Kootenays.

that time not only ceased to plant anything at all, but had gambled away all their once numerous stock of cattle and horses.

From Tobacco Plains De Smet undertook a journey to the land of the barbarous and pagan Blackfeet of the plains. His guides took him up the Kootenay river to the source of the Columbia. Here he found Baptiste Morigeau, one of Thompson's men, living in the solitude with his family. The priest baptized them, and then crossed over to the plains by what is now known as Sinclair's Pass and Whiteman's Pass. At the summit of the latter he erected a cross, which he called the Cross of Peace, praying that it might be "a sign of peace and salvation to all the scattered and itinerant tribes east and west of these gigantic and lurid mountains." (1) His return in the spring was by the Athabasca Pass, where he met the Hudson's Bay Company annual train for York Factory, conducted by Mr. Ermatinger, who had with him Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour. From the Boat Encampment was a journey of seventy miles that had to be performed on snowshoes. His friends at Rocky Mountain House had tried to dissuade the worthy priest from attempting this, on account of his weight; undaunted he began a fast of thirty days, and so, after much suffering, finally achieved his destination. He did not revisit the Kootenays, but descended directly to Fort Colville, passing the terrible Dalles des Morts, where twelve men were drowned in 1838. (2)

Undoubtedly there were other travellers in the valley besides these mentioned, but none came to stay. They crossed the mountains by passes already known to the whites, and followed one or other of the old Indian trails that led to the Columbia and the Coast. Not even the perils of its hidden rocks and rapids kept traffic off the Columbia.

No map since that of Thompson, and no systematic exploration since the time of David Douglas had been drawn or carried out. But in 1857 the British Government appointed an Imperial Commission to enquire into the suitability of Canada for settlement, and the feasibility of a transcontinental railway. Captain Palliser was placed in charge of exploration throughout the whole country. He was instructed to ascertain if any more southerly

(1) De Smet: Oregon Missions, p. 144.

(2) Ibid., p. 206.

passes than those already known to exist over the Rockies, could be found on British territory. (1)

In accordance with these instructions he made strict enquiry, but found it necessary to go personally to explore the mountains, as the Indians proved to know very little about them. The chief discovery result- was that of the Crows Nest Pass, which he called the British Kutanie Pass. It was frequently used by the Kootenay Indians on their buffalo-hunting expeditions to the prairies, although they preferred to use another pass just south of the forty-ninth parallel. Dr. Hector, the geologist of the expedition, thoroughly explored the division between the waters of the Col- umbia and the Kootenay, and the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan. He was convinced that it would be possible to construct a railroad through the pass here, which bore his name, although Captain Palliser, in his report, did not favour or advise an attempt at any such project.

Palliser's opinion of the Kootenay Indians he met was not high. ". . . arrived on Kootenay river, where we found a camp of Kootenay Indians. These are the most wretched-looking fellows I ever met; the men, women and children all living on berries, the men naked and the women nearly so, yet, strange to say, although these people were starving, destitute of clothes and ammunition, they possess a wonderful number of horses and these very superior to the Indian horses east of the mountains. . . I had eleven horses with me . . . most in wretched condition . . . these they eagerly exchanged and good ones were given in their stead." (2) Dr. Hector, on reaching the Upper Kootenay valley from the Kicking Horse Pass, was surprised to find no trail anywhere; the Indians had evidently not been there for many years.

In 1860 Palliser finished his map,, the first map to show the Rocky Mountains in detail, although that detail was yet far from perfectly accurate. Soon, however, the name of Kootenay was to stand out on every newspaper of the continent, and a crowd of men were to pour into the hither- to unknown country, tapping every inch of its face with their miner's picks.

(1) Excerpt from Journal and Proceedings of Royal Geographical Society, No. XXIII, vol. 2, Proceedings: Progress of the British North American Exploring Exped- ition.

(2) Ibid.

III
THE GOLD RUSH.



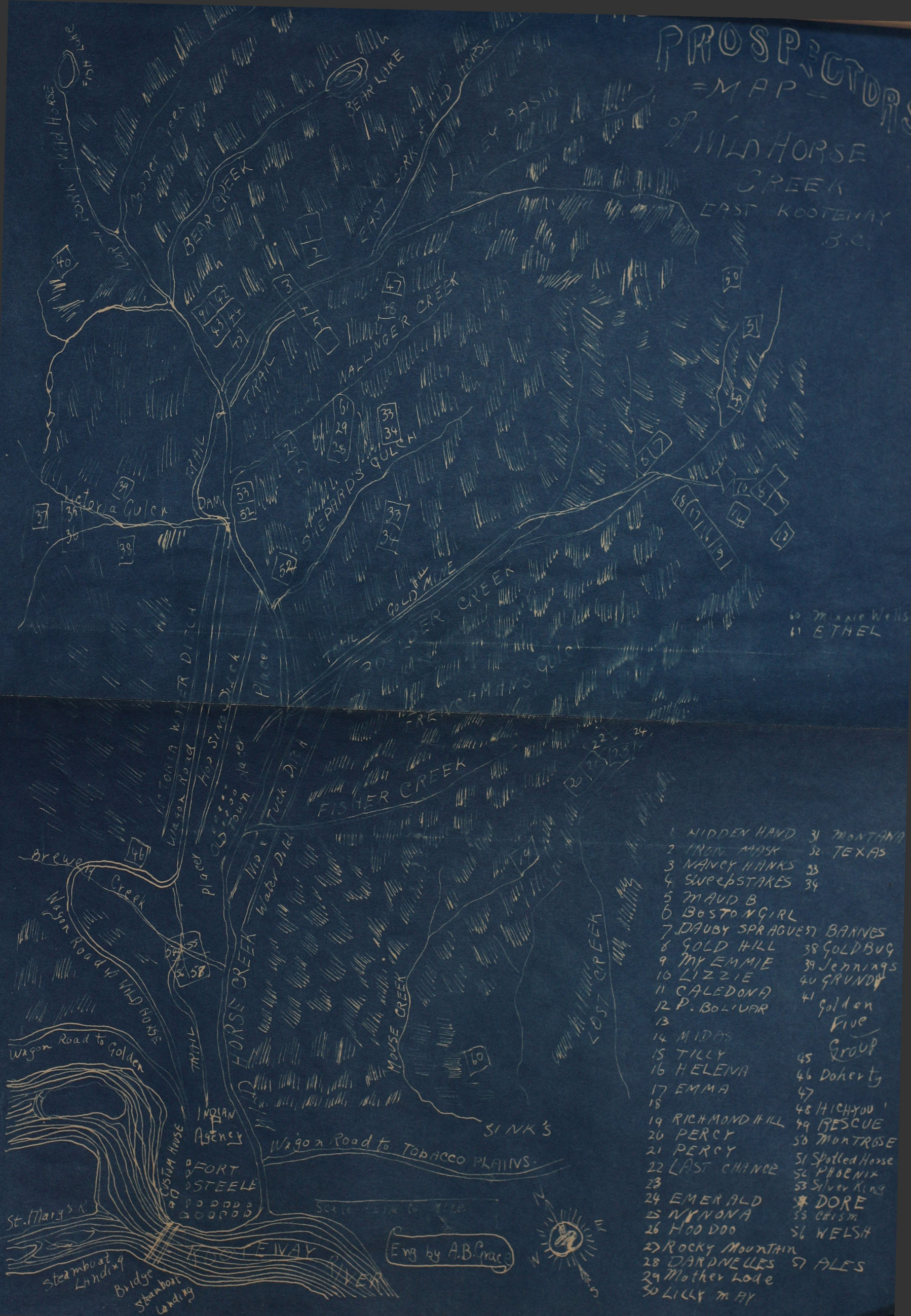
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PROSPECTORS

=MAP=

OF WILD HORSE CREEK

EAST KOOTENAY B.C.



60 MINE WELLS
61 ETHEL

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 HIDDEN HAND | 31 MONTANA |
| 2 IRON MASK | 32 TEXAS |
| 3 NANCY HANKS | 33 |
| 4 SURESTAKES | 34 |
| 5 MAUD B | |
| 6 BOSTON GIRL | |
| 7 DAUBY SPRAGUE | 37 BARNES |
| 8 GOLD HILL | 38 GOLDBUG |
| 9 MY EMMIE | 39 JENNINGS |
| 10 LIZZIE | 40 GRUNDY |
| 11 CALEDONIA | 41 GOLDEN FIVE |
| 12 P. BOLIVAR | |
| 13 | |
| 14 MIDAS | 45 GROUP |
| 15 TILLY | 46 DOHERTY |
| 16 HELENA | 47 |
| 17 EMMA | 48 HICHYU |
| 18 | 49 RESCUE |
| 19 RICHMOND HILL | 50 MONTROSE |
| 20 PERCY | 51 SPOTTED HORSE |
| 21 PERCY | 52 PHOENIX |
| 22 LAST CHANCE | 53 SILVER KING |
| 23 | 54 DORE |
| 24 EMERALD | 55 CHISM |
| 25 WYMONA | 56 WELSH |
| 26 HOO DOO | |
| 27 ROCKY MOUNTAIN | |
| 28 DARNELLES | 57 ALES |
| 29 MOTHER LODGE | |
| 30 LILLY MAY | |

Eng by A.B. Grace

It was the prospector, rather than the fur-trader, who created British Columbia. Under a government of fur-traders the colony of Vancouver Island stood still; while the mainland remained merely a private preserve for the Hudson's Bay Company, its highways still the old Indian trails. The arrival of the surplus population of California disturbed this peaceful solitude and made necessary the creation of the colony of British Columbia, headed by Governor James Douglas, who was now obliged to sever his connection with the Company.

Prospectors had scattered northwards as soon as the California gold fields had passed their peak. A few had brought little nuggets back from East Oregon in 1853 and 1854, and had found the object of their search in spots along the Yakima, Pend d'Oreille and Coeur d'Alene rivers.(1) But war with the Indians prevented any thorough examination of this country. North of the boundary line gold was first found on the Columbia river, near Fort Colville, in the year 1855. Within the next two years the hopes that had been damped by the failure of the Queen Charlotte Island vains quickened again with hysterical delight as the story of discoveries along the Thompson and Fraser rivers leaked out. Victoria woke in 1858 to find itself a bustling city. The noisy disappointment of those who had gone up the Fraser expecting to pick up their fortunes from the ground without waiting for the high water to subside caused a temporary lull, but business soared again as news came through from Quesnel, Similkameen, Rock Creek, and Keithley, Antler, Lightning, Lowhee, and Williams Creeks. Each new discovery sounded richer than the last, and none could tell where they would end. Every distant mountain creek beckoned to the prospector. On he went, and northward, looking for the miraculous source of all this treasure.

To a public in this state of mind, racked with the gambling fever, came rumours of a vast new gold field in that far corner of the province watered by the Kootenay. (2) On the heels of rumour came an authentic story of a creek richer than any in Cariboo. Reports were copied from (1) Scott: The Pioneer Stimulus of Gold, Oregon Historical Quarterly, Sept. 1917. (2) Macfie: Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p.252.

American papers as early as March of 1864 - the Walla Walla Statesman, the Boise News, the Golden Age, of Lewiston. Governor Seymour declared that "It was first through American papers that I became aware of a rich and prosperous mining town existing within our limits, about five hundred miles due east of New Westminster." (1)

The "Victoria Colonist" was first on the Coast with official news: "The Government of British Columbia has obtained official information of the most startling nature as to the extent and richness of the gold mines, so much so we understand it has actually obtained a gold commissioner for the new district, and so satisfied is it of the almost certainty of a great rush to that country that it is even contemplated to appoint a county court judge to be in readiness for duty. . . .We are informed the diggings are richer than anything in Boise or Cariboo, besides being much more accessible. . . . The diggings are at present entirely in British territory, and are believed to extend over the whole country between the mouth and source of the river." (2)

Extracts from a letter addressed to Roderick Finlayson from Fort Colville, June 2, had already been published. The writer spoke of nuggets "weighing as much as eighty dollars," and that "a great stir appears to be made in Oregon and Washington territories in consequence of the discovery." The Hudson's Bay Company were said to be preparing to supply large quantities of goods to the district, and the Government had promised assistance in the building of a trail from Okanagan Lake to the mines. (3)

The other two Coast papers, whether or not from a genuine healthy scepticism, had hitherto hung back, whispered caution, and suggested that the "Colonist" was not quite reliable. The latter retaliated by giving its contemporaries a severe editorial drubbing: "Those kindred spirits, the 'Chronicle' and the 'British Columbian' unite in a ferocious onslaught on the 'Colonist' in reference to the interesting and important Kootenai

(1) Deaville: The Colonial Postage System . . . p.120, quoting from Union papers, 1866, p.36.

(2) Colonist, June 18, 1864.

(3) Ibid June 15, 1864.

news which we have lately laid before the public. The 'Chronicle', with that innate blackguardism which characterizes its principal conductor, pours on us, from its choice vocabulary, a torrent of abuse, such as, rascality, criminal, and contemptible, unenviable reputation, bogus, unprincipled, etc., because, forsooth, we have given to the public news which it has been unable to procure, and the 'Columbian', with an assumption of superior knowledge that is supremely ridiculous in a journal of so diminutive a calibre, gravely lectures us on our foolishness in giving news that has not appeared in its columns and takes upon its ignorant self to state that the information is incorrect." It went on to affirm the reliability of its news, and declared further that a large company was already being formed in the city to proceed to the new mines.(1)

From now on the newspapers vied in prophecies of the glorious future awaiting the mysterious Kootenay. Something was needed to atone for the strange tricks that Cariboo was playing. The production of 1863 had broken all records, but luck seemed to be deserting all but a few of the diggings, and these the deeper ones belonging to companies with capital. A correspondent was writing to the paper from Williams Creek in a mood of depression, "There are about two thousand men on the creek, nearly half of them doing nothing: only five claims taking out money. Money is tight. . ." (2) What was really wanted was a fresh Cariboo, and this the public was steadily promised. The demon of pessimism was to be exorcised by the demon of persistent boosting and clamorous optimism.

A letter from Rock Creek, dated May 27, described the state of affairs at Colville. "Everybody talked, dreamed, and spoke of nothing but Kootenay. There are a thousand and one rumours in regard to that country of untold wealth, but I could trace none of them to any authentic source. ." The letter concluded with advice as to the best route to the mines. (3)

The Kootenay district being most accessible from the American side, a contributing factor in the rush was the failure of the Boisé mines, or rather, the failure of a supply of water to work them. There were _ _ _

(1) Colonist, June 25, 1864.

(2) Ibid. June 6, 1864.

(3) Ibid. June 20, 1864.

reported to be twenty thousand in that country, many of them unemployed and in great distress. (1) This number was possibly an exaggeration, as was the estimate of five thousand men in the Kootenay by August, given as the statement of an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company. (2) Actually there were only a fifth of that number, and reports had been correspondingly exaggerated from excitement throughout.

No two tales of the same discovery ever coincide, but accounts of the Kootenay pioneers agree in crediting the discovery of gold to a half-breed named Finlay, a son of David Thompson's servant. In 1863 Finlay washed out several hundred dollars worth of coarse gold from the creek that was thereafter to be called by his name. (3) On his way south he sold the gold to the nearest white man, a Mr. Linklater, the Hudson's Bay Company agent at Tobacco Plains. Staying with Mr. Linklater was a prospector named James Manning, an English surveyor who had been in San Francisco but had failed to find satisfactory employment there, and had come to try his fortune in British Columbia. Seeing the fine quality of Finlay's gold he determined to go north himself, and when a band of Shuswap Indians from the Columbia Lakes came to the post to trade, he returned with them, remaining as their guest for the winter, and starting exploring early in the spring. (4)

Meanwhile the story of Finlay's gold spread like wildfire. Such excitement did it arouse that a party of men were at his creek the next March, while the snow and ice were yet too thick to allow of any work being done. Further south, however, they found another creek in a more sheltered crevice of the mountains where they were able to prospect, and finding nuggets in abundance they lost no time in staking out claims and settling down. Manning fell in with them in time to share the profits of discovery, in the shape of one of the richest claims. They christened the creek Stud Horse, after a black cayuse seen on the hillside, but later changed this to Wild Horse. (5)

(1) Colonist, July 8, 1864.

(2) British Columbian, Aug. 10, 1864.

(3) Wrongly spelt "Findlay" on the maps.

(4) Manning MS., Provincial Archives.

(5) Both Thompson and Henry mention the herds of wild horses that were common in their time.

A romantic tradition has it that these men were sixty rough characters turned out of Montana by the vigilantes, and that violent brawls occurred between them and all newcomers from Washington. (1) A glowing account of the old days that was published by the "Fort Steele Prospector" in 1896 declares that the original pioneers were fifteen men from Hell Gate, Montana. Baffled by the deep snow at Finlay's Creek, they turned back and camped on some flats by the river, since known as Bummer's Flats. Then, in company with Bob Dore and Lem Harris, the first arrivals from Walla Walla, they explored the nearest creek, staking their claims a few miles up where the ground was extraordinarily rich. (2) Another story names the five discoverers as Bob Dore, Pat Quirk, Peter Dunn, Ike Stephens, and Jack Fisher. (3) It was after this miner, Jack Fisher, a "squawman", that the little town that sprang up was named Fisherville, and the eight thousand foot peak that towers above the creek is still known as Mount Fisher. The Dore, the Cuddy, and the Fisher, lying near the mouth of a tributary known as Brewery Creek, were among the first and richest claims staked. The owners of this first group of claims are reputed to have taken out an immense quantity of gold during their first season, a veritable fortune which they threw away in lordly fashion in one San Francisco winter, returning the next year like beggars.

These lucky few were not far ahead of the main rush - two months later there were a hundred and fifty men on Wild Horse Creek, and many more prospecting around the headwaters of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers. They had, of course, been in far too great a hurry to bring with them provisions for the season, depending on traders of foresight and enterprise to keep them from starving, and incidentally to relieve their pouches of a considerable portion of the gold dust they were accumulating. The two traders established there in May could not fetch in supplies fast enough to keep up with the demand, and prices were high. (4) But traders and packers

(1) B.R. Atkins: article in Vancouver Province, Aug. 5, 1922.

(2) Fort Steele Prospector: April 18, 1896.

(3) Statement by Rufus Kimpton, of Windermere.

(4) Letter in Colonist, June 22, 1864.

were as ready to gamble as the improvident miners, and pack trains were soon flocking in. A party of miners who journeyed to Osoyoos in July to register their claims and secure licenses declared that five or six hundred loaded animals had already reached the mines, and that trains were arriving daily.(1) By August there were a thousand men at the creek.

During four months, until the arrival of Mr. J.C. Haynes to act as Gold Commissioner, there was not a single British official in the district to explain and enforce the laws, or to settle disputes. As hundreds of men were pouring in from Idaho, Montana, and Washington, mining territories where crime not uncommonly escaped punishment, it would not have been surprising if disorder and violence had attended the natural competition for the best claims in this new country. If greed had been the sole motive that drove these men into the wilds, this would surely have been the case. Yet it is a surprising fact that even the most colorful stories of Wild Horse recall only one murder in 1864, said to have occurred during the celebration of the fourth of July. A character known as Yeast Powder Bill shot another named Walker in retaliation for the shooting of his thumb. The murderer was punished by being promptly run out of camp. (2)

(3) It was about six weeks after this event that Mr. Haynes arrived, to find the miners had elected a committee which was about to enforce a code of mining laws they had drawn up themselves. He was recognized at once as the sole authority in the district, and neither he nor his successors had any trouble whatever in maintaining law and order. The reputation of British law and justice, and the high character of the gentlemen chosen to represent it, combined to inspire the respect and obedience of all that miscellaneous crowd of men, who were accustomed to the vaguer law of the fringes of American civilization.

The Gold Commissioner in such an isolated part of the country was like a local governor. Too far distant from New Westminster to ask for instructions in dealing with any difficulty, he had constantly to act on his own initiative and rely on his own resources. Nor could he fall back on --

(1) Colonist, July 28, 1864.
(2) Fort Steele Prospector, April 18, 1896.
(3) Birch's Report, Oct. 31, 1864.

police or military assistance in case his orders were defied, for before he could despatch a letter to the authorities the offenders could be safe across the Border. Mr. Haynes had to assist him in his duties but one constable, yet this force of two collected all taxes and duties, settled all disputes, and maintained peace and order.

He took up his headquarters in one of the little log huts that were growing up in such numbers as to form a small town, about five miles from the junction of Wild Horse Creek with the Kootenay river. Diggings extended along four and a half miles of the creek bed, and some extremely rich ground was also found in the benches of the hillside. Fisher's company was the first to construct a long ditch to bring water to work these hill claims. (1) Soon there were a number of tunnels boring into the side of the hill, and shafts were being sunk in the bed of the creek. This involved a large capital outlay, but so much money had been taken out that the miners could afford to use some for development work. Ordinary claims paid twenty and thirty dollars a day to each man working, and there were ten or a dozen claims of seemingly fabulous wealth, but that we have the word of Commissioner Haynes attached to a list of their returns. During August alone of this first season, for instance, fourteen men working on one of these one hundred foot squares of ground took out almost thirteen thousand dollars worth of gold. During the same month twelve men on another claim took out one thousand and forty-four dollars per day. These are official returns, (2) and so it is probably scarcely an exaggeration that some men made as much as twenty thousand dollars in the course of a few months. (3)

These reports brought the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Arthur N. Birch, over the five hundred miles of terrible trails from Hope to Fisherville, to ascertain for himself if the boom was likely to continue, and if so, how the government might best act so as to secure the trade of the

district for British Columbia. So far, with the exception of a few veteran

(1) Colonist, June 22, 1864 - extracts from the Lewiston Golden Age.

(2) Haynes' Report, Aug. 30, 1864, in Provincial Archives.

(3) Fort Steele Prospector, April 18, 1896.

adventurers from Cariboo, the Kootenay mines had been worked entirely by American miners, and all trade and communication was still conducted by the trails leading south.

Mr. Birch estimated that there were about seven hundred men at Wild Horse, and he was told that there were three hundred more out prospecting. Such was the spirit of eager optimism that "numerous report of new and extensive discoveries kept coming in", yet, the visitor observed, "I could obtain no information sufficiently authentic to place any credence in them." In the town he noticed "numerous substantial stores," also four restaurants and a large brewery. Labourers were paid seven dollars a day, and board was low enough to enable them to live well for a dollar and a half. About half the population were building log cabins and planning to remain for the winter. (1)

The Colonial Secretary concluded the official report of his tour with a tribute to Mr. Haynes' efficiency in carrying out the manifold and difficult duties of his position. "I arrived", he says, "within six weeks of Mr. Haynes' residence in the district, to find the mining laws of the colony in full force, all Customs duties paid, no pistols to be seen, and everything as quiet and orderly as it could possibly be in the most civilized district of the colony, much to the surprise and admiration of many who remember the early days of the neighbouring state of California."

On his return he took with him the contents of the treasury, about fourteen or fifteen thousand dollars worth of gold dust that Haynes had been guarding in an old portmanteau in his hut. He and his companions, he notes, were thus "the first gold escort direct from the Rocky mountains to the seaboard of the colony." On their way they met "ten or twelve heavily laden pack trains daily" bringing in supplies for the winter. Fisherville traders were reckoning on a rush from Boise of ten to fifteen thousand miners in the spring. (2)

Indeed the wealth yielded up by Wild Horse Creek in the summer of 1864 justified high hopes for the future. True, Finlay Creek had proved
(1) All taken from Birch's Report, published in B.C. Gazette, Nov. 1864.
(2) Ibid.

a failure, but there must be others as rich as Wild Horse, or richer, among the innumerable streams that threaded the mountains. Perhaps they were at last nearing the source of all the gold. "We have a hundred Cariboos yet to open up," cried an editor from his armchair at the Coast. (1)

(1) British Columbian, July 9, 1864.



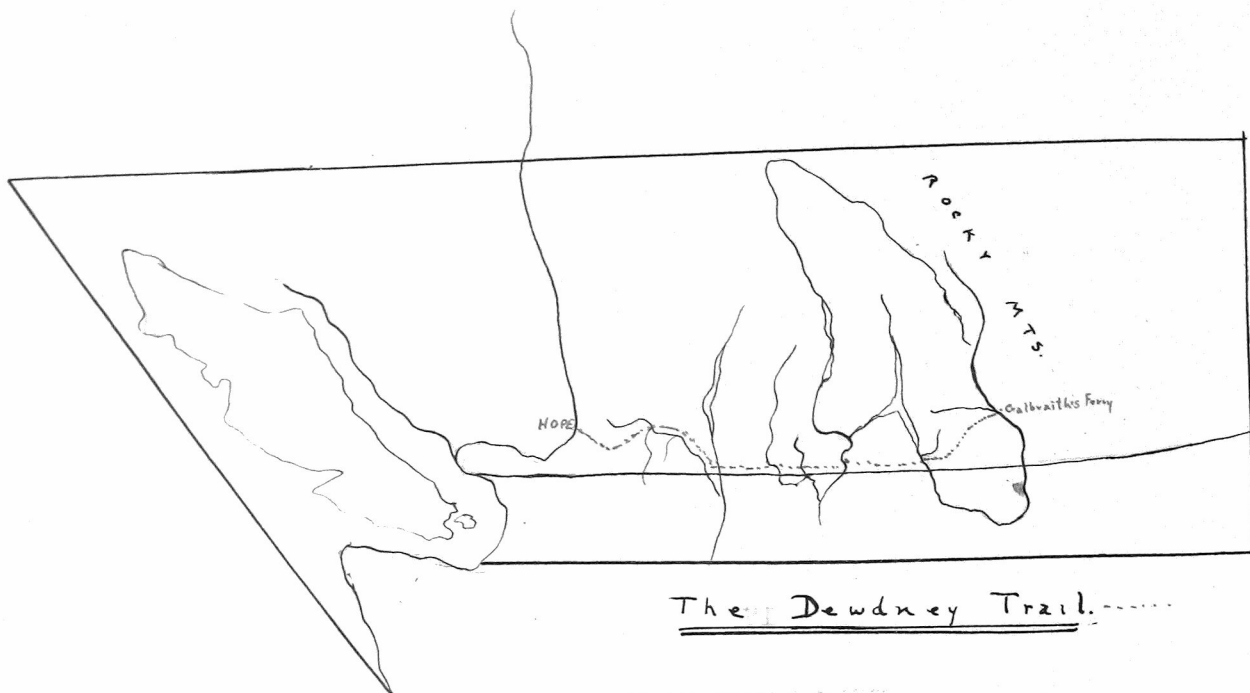
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IV

THE DEWDNEY TRAIL.



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The Dewdney Trail......

1911-1912



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No sooner was Kootenay mining an established fact than the Government of British Columbia was beset with demands that they exert themselves in the name of patriotism and business to secure the trade of the new district for their own people. Practically all the gold of Wild Horse, with the exception of the revenue collected, was going out of the country by the same trails by which the miners had come in. How to divert this trade from its natural geographic channel was indeed a problem.

The Hudson's Bay Company had been one of the first concerns alive to the possibilities of the rush. Their old post of Fort Kootenay had been finally abandoned after the boundary survey, when it was found to be south of the line, and a new one had been placed at Tobacco Plains, on the Canadian side, and distant about seventy miles from Wild Horse Creek. But even though theirs was the nearest post when the mines opened, they did not capture all the trade.

Among the first to hear the news of Finlay's discovery was a certain John Galbraith, son of a Dublin professor. He had already had an adventurous career in California, Oregon, and Idaho, but he was seized once again with the excitement that gold brings with it. Promptly making his way up the Kootenay, he saw the promising nature of the mines, and decided to engage in trade. Joined by his brother James, he set up a ferry, a store, and procured horses and mules for pack trains.

Other traders there were, and many packers, but the firm of Galbraith Brothers was to be the most successful, in the end absorbing most of its rivals. During the sixties competition was strong, but the ferry business only thrived all the more. Among the most curious articles of freight it must have carried were camels, said to have been used by a Walla Walla firm in an endeavour to corner the British Columbia trade. But they had to be abandoned here as elsewhere, on account of the terror they inspired in the horses and mules, who invariably stampeded on meeting them.(1)

(1) They were used in the Kootenay in 1866 and 1867. The last lone animal was turned loose, and finally served to vary the diet of the Galbraiths in the winter of 1870. Camels had been used by the United States army for some years following 1856, and proved superior in strength, speed and endurance to pack horses or mules. From article in Sunday Oregonian, Oct. 7, 1928 - S. Lewis.

Most of the goods were brought the four hundred miles from Walla Walla, by way of Lake Pend d'Oreille, Bonner's Ferry, and then either by Tobacco Plains and the Kootenay, or else across to the Moyie river, following it up to Peavine Prairie at the head of Moyie Lake, then through Joseph's Prairie to Galbraith's Ferry on the Kootenay river, a little way above the mouth of Wild Horse Creek. Large herds of cattle were driven in over the trails, some all the way from Salt Lake City; in fact, beef was the cheapest article of food at the mines.

Packing charges were from twenty to twenty-four cents a pound, so that prices were usually high, even in time of abundant supply. Tea was at first \$2.25 a pound, tobacco \$2.50, butter \$1.50; (1) by the fall these were slightly cheaper, tea costing only \$1.75, tobacco \$2.00, butter \$1.00, while bacon remained \$1.00, flour was forty cents, and beef could be had for twenty cents. (2)

These prices were much the same as those prevailing in Cariboo at the same time, in spite of the superiority of the fine Cariboo road over the rough pack trails leading into Kootenay, the latter, moreover, having to cross the border at points well guarded by customs officers. The fact was, of course, that nearly all the goods consumed by British Columbia at that time came from the neighbouring States, and the normal price was therefore increased by the tariff, whether the goods were handled by British merchants or not. The Colonial Secretary, however, coming back from his visit to the Kootenay filled with optimism, seems to have overlooked this in his confident declaration, "The merchants of this Colony need therefore have little fear of being able to compete with the American merchants when it is remembered to what enormously high tariffs American goods are now subject." The distance of a trail going all the way to Kootenay on British territory, he reckoned, need not be more than four hundred miles, that is, no greater than the length of the Walla Walla trail.

The distance to be covered by such a trail running eastwards from the Coast might not be any greater than that covered by the trails run-

(1) Haynes' Report, Aug. 30, 1864.
(2) Colonist, Nov. 11, 1864.

ning southward into American territory, but the difficulties in the way of its construction were enormously greater. Nevertheless, the Government was soon regarded as pledged to undertake the enterprise. (1)

If Sir James Douglas had been able to carry out his scheme of a waggon road across British Columbia to meet another from Canada at Edmonton, thus linking coast with coast, all would have been well with Kootenay. Starting from Hope, the road was to have reached Okanagan Lake via the Similkameen, crossed the Columbia, and to have found a pass through the Rockies in the Kootenay district. It was barely begun when the project had to be dropped, (2) but a trail was carried through to Similkameen. Demand for the road was renewed when Kootenay came into prominence. A correspondent wrote to the "Columbian" in July, urging that action be taken at once: "If the people of British Columbia wish to compete with their more enterprising neighbours of Oregon and Washington, they must be up and stirring, push the Hope waggon road through, and improve the road down the Similkameen and Kettle rivers to Fort Colville or Fort Sheppard and thence to Kootenay. If something is not done, and done quickly, British Columbia may bid farewell to the trade of the Kootenay country." (2) Meanwhile citizens of Colville, on their own initiative, cut a new trail through from Fort Shepherd to Kootenay.

The route thus afforded, however, was most unsatisfactory, as well from the length and roughness of the trail as from the fact that it made a detour through American territory. Mr. Birch found it necessary to make two such detours, one to Fort Colville, and another from Kootenay Lake to join the Walla Walla trail in the Moyie valley. Moreover he found the Colville merchants' trail, which was supposed to have been improved by the Hudson's Bay Company, in a terrible condition. "It seems to have been the ambition of the road party to carry the trail through as many swamps as possible . . . one of the Company's own pack trains . . . was fourteen days in reaching the Kootenay valley, and lost six horses. . ." (3) -----

(1) Colonist, June 20, 1864.

(2) Gosnell: YearBook of British Columbia, p.35.

(3) Birch's Report.

Private enterprise having thus failed, it was left to the Government to find a practicable route, and exploring parties were sent out. It had been urged that since water transport was so much cheaper than packing on land, it would be well to make use of the Thompson-Shuswap stretch of navigable water. Mr. Turner was accordingly despatched to find a way from Shuswap Lake across the Gold Range to the Columbia. He succeeded in crossing the divide, the distance at one point being being only thirty-five miles, and started to ascend the Columbia. Cold and hunger forced him to turn back, however, after reaching the Boat Encampment, and Turner reported that the depth of snow in the mountains and the number of falls and rapids in the Columbia made the route quite unsuitable. (1)

Another party under Mr. Jenkins, lately of the Royal Engineers, was sent to examine the country round the Kettle river and Grand Prairie, to discover the easiest way through the mountains that lay beyond. He returned in January advising that the last portion of the trail follow the valley of the St. Mary's river, and it was announced that this was the route to be adopted. (2) Early in 1865 Governor Seymour gave orders to Mr. Edgar Dewdney to carry on further explorations and to complete a trail from Princeton, then known as Vermilion Forks, to Wild Horse, keeping entirely on British territory. The inconvenience of a detour across the border was that to comply with customs regulations it was necessary to submit to an escort of United States customs officers, and to pay their expenses for the journey. (3)

Dewdney explored the St. Mary's river pass, and found that it would be too late in the season before the snow melted there, and chose his route by way of Goat river. From this valley he found an easy passage to the Moyie river, reaching it at the present site of Yahk, and from that point his trail merged in the old Walla Walla trail. Plenty of labour was available at seventy-five dollars a month, and work was rushed forward from various points on the line, with two hundred men, including some Chinese,

employed. (4)

(1) British Columbian, Jan. 4, 1865.

(2) B.C. Gazette, Jan. 27, 1865.

(3) Dewdney, in Trail Creek Mines, pamphlet, 1896.

(4) Colonist, Aug. 3, 1865.

By early in September, 1865, the first trail from east to west across British Columbia was completed and thrown open. The Dewdney trail, it was called, although Dewdney himself only constructed certain sections of it. From the junction with the old Walla Walla trail, for instance, it had been a matter of improvement merely, not of construction. But be the achievement what it may, it brought small glory to the name connected with it. A year later the "Colonist" observes, briefly and bitterly, that "Dewdney's trail, on which \$80,000 were expended, is useless." (1) And useless, or practically useless, it proved to be.

In the first place, although the trail passed over several rivers, there was a total absence of bridges. Presumably the time and money for their construction were begrudged, but it seems a strange oversight. The trail was to have been paid for out of the proceeds of the Gold Export tax, but this was the one tax which the miners consistently evaded, so that it had finally to be abandoned. (2)

The year after the opening of the trail two packers and a horse were swept away by the current while trying to cross Goat river. The men managed to save themselves, but the horse was drowned, and several other horses in the same train were lost at other points of danger on the trail. (3) Even in the fall, a dry season in that country, and a time of low water, it was said that "informants represent the trail across the Kootenay bottom as execrable. Not a bridge on the whole route." (4)

This frustrated the whole purpose of the trail, which was to provide a route entirely on British territory. For in winter the deep snow on the mountains beyond Hope blocked all travel, and in summer, "the long low stretches of land on the river (Kootenay) flooded during the summer months, and the unbridged and unfordable rivers, viz., the Kettle, Goat, and Salmon rivers render the Trail, during the summer months, impassable, and

(1) Colonist, Aug. 23, 1866.

(2) Gosnell, op. cit., p.36.

(3) Colonist, Nov. 15, 1866.

(4) Ibid. Nov. 6, 1866.

(1) According to Howay and Scholefield, vol. 11, p. 233, thirty thousand pounds was allowed for the trail in the estimates of 1865, and the expenditure on it was seventy-four thousand dollars.

travellers and pack trains are consequently obliged to make a detour of one hundred and sixty miles through American territory, by Colville and the Spokane Prairie, meeting the Fort Shepherd trail about sixty miles from the mines. If this detour could be avoided, the importance and value of the District to British Columbia would be increased, as the supplies would more generally be forwarded by the Colonial merchants, instead of, as now, by those at Walla Walla; but the extra expense incurred, and the troublesome system of bonds which the American authorities enforce prevents the merchants on this side from attempting to establish branches at the Mines." (1)

The whole situation has been briefly summarized by an American writer, who, after observing that the real importance of the Kootenay mines in a history of the country arose from their location, goes on to say that, "In spite of the high tariff, the improvement of the British trail, and the eagerness of the government to draw trade to Victoria, physiographic considerations prevailed, and nearly all the trade was with points south of the boundary." (2) It was indeed a case of government contending with geography. Undoubtedly the engineering difficulties were immense, but if the government had expended a little more money with a little more intelligence on the task it would surely not have failed so completely of its purpose.

After 1866 scarcely anyone ventured over the famous Dewdney trail. Neglected and forgotten, it was soon overgrown with brush. And yet, even had it been the smoothest of roads, the same fate would in a very few years have overtaken it. For the traffic, passing mainly out of Kootenay and meeting very little coming in, would hardly have justified keeping its whole length in repair. The placer mining had fallen short of expectations; The story of Kootenay gold has to tell of promise unfulfilled. -----

(1) H.M. Ball to Colonial Secretary, Dec. 28, 1869.

(2) Trimble: The Mining Advance into the Inland Empire, p. 58.

V

THE DECLINE OF WILD HORSE.



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Although the Kootenay winters had been represented as mild and short, the winter of 1864-65 brought exceptionally heavy falls of snow, and with it great hardship to the miners who had stayed on in the little town of Fisherville or Wild Horse. In the middle of the winter, in spite of the difficulty of travelling and prospecting a number of them rushed off to the Columbia and Spillimacheen district, with their usual child-like trust in casual rumour; they straggled back disappointed and frostbitten. For the rest it was a dull and uneventful time. The constable left in charge wrote to his superior that "Christmas week passed cheerfully and quietly. I do not think a more orderly community than this of three or four hundred men principally idle, is to be found on the coast." (1)

Although these are the chronicles of a placer mining town, there is a total absence of picturesque murders and sensations. All that happened before the spring was that provisions ran painfully short. The weather was so severe that stock kept at Tobacco Plains, usually a safe and sheltered spot, began to die off. To ward off starvation men were forced to go out hunting and fishing in the bitter cold. They might all have died before any help could reach them, imprisoned as they were in snowbound isolation. Not until the second of April did anyone succeed in getting over the trails from the south, and two others before him were frozen in the attempt, one losing his life. (2)

Many of the miners were destitute before spring, and would have perished but for the generosity of their fellows. A fine spirit of comradeship characterized these men. None had more to eat than a little bacon and beans, with some oats instead of flour, but none starved. Towards the end of April supplies began to dribble in, but early in May one was writing to a friend, "We are without anything to eat except beef and mutton, or I should rather say bones, for which we pay fifty cents a pound. . . . A woman here offered a hundred dollars for ten pounds of flour, and could not get it at that price. . . Powder and shot, as well as fish-hooks, have all

(1) Young to Haynes, Jan. 10, 1865.
(2) Ibid.

been sold out. . . . I never want to see the like again." (1)

It was an inauspicious opening for the season, for the men were in such poor condition that they could not work. The deep snows turned the creek into flood, and half the summer was wasted. Although it has been spoken of as the banner year of Wild Horse, it was in this year that, in addition to all other misfortunes, its end appeared to be in sight, or rather, its limitations. For a short time there were fifteen hundred men on the creek, but only a third of these found profitable employment. (2) Freight rates had risen, and everybody was in debt. Commissioner O'Reilly wrote that "Kootenay is not so extensive as was represented, though the claims are undoubtedly good and have the advantage of being easily worked." (3) The building of the Dewdney trail had not brought the cut in prices that would have followed on competition: provisions were slightly dearer than they had been the previous season, tea being quoted at \$2.50 the pound, and tobacco \$3.50. In the same letter that is quoted above, O'Reilly declared that there were four hundred men loafing about doing nothing, and not prospecting: "I have never known a class of miners who showed less enterprise in this respect." No doubt the ordeal of famine through which many of them had passed in the spring, and the general state of indebtedness had impaired both their spirit and their credit.

In the middle of the summer came more rumours of marvellous discoveries in the Coeur d'Alene and in the upper Columbia country. With hopes high again, the impoverished and dissatisfied men at Wild Horse rushed off to the new fields. O'Reilly described the Coeur d'Alene reports as "utterly groundless", and confidently expected to see his men back within a few weeks. He had information which also made him very sceptical about the new Columbia diggings. (4) Reports were conflicting even then, but so early as July one reads of parties starting for Wild Horse, and changing their destination for the Big Bend, as they termed the district at the

(1) Colonist, Aug. 3, 1865.

(2) Ibid. July 6, 1865. - extract from Gold Commissioner's Report.

(3) Ibid. Aug. 3, 1865.

(4) O'Reilly's Report, July 10, 1865. Archives.

northern loop of the Columbia. (1)

Turner's exploring party was one of many which had found gold on the bars of the Columbia. They came back enthusiastic, reported as predicting that the new country would support an enormous mining population.(2) The California papers took up the cry; by the autumn Big Bend was the headline everywhere, Kootenay being relegated to a less conspicuous position in the papers.

Chinese had already been working bars on the Columbia below Fort Shepherd, content in their patient way with results steady but not spectacular. Even their phlegmatic tempers, however, were stirred by the latest movement, and Chinese joined the streams of prospectors setting towards Big Bend from Boise, Kootenay, Yale and California. (3) The river reminded a spectator of the Fraser in 1858, with its procession of boats and canoes. (4)

This was the last rush, but it ran its course more quickly than the others. Prospectors as usual exaggerated involuntarily, in the sheer joy of discovery, infecting the whole country with their enthusiasm. The first in the field were always the poorest class of miner, those who could afford only the simplest equipment for their work, and who in their haste to recoup their fortunes omitted to take, or were unable to obtain credit for, adequate supplies. These men suffered much hardship toiling up the Columbia and its tributaries, (5) but the rewards promised at first sight to be greater than those of Kootenay, because there were a large number of creeks actually showing gold. But they did not bear enough to satisfy the anxious hungry crowds that swarmed up and down the valleys, finally scattering and melting away in disgust. The collapse of their hopes dealt a final and almost fatal blow to the business of the colony, that had too long been buoyed up on nothing but that peculiar optimism that fastens on the people of a mining country.

(1) Colonist, July 1, 1865.

(2) British Columbian, Jan. 4, 1865.

(3) Colonist, Sept. 14, 1865.

(4) British Columbian, July 6, 1865.

(5) Colonist, Sept. 14, 1865.

There was still gold in Wild Horse Creek, gold enough to support a small industrious population. But from the wandering fortune-seeker's point of view, its charms had vanished in the unhappy season of 1865.

"Kootenay is flat," announced one of the numerous private letters then given such prominence in the newspapers, at the end of that year. (1)

Still it was estimated it was "able to maintain about six hundred miners . . . many of the claims will not pay over wages. . . The actual valuable claims are few. . . The reputation of the extent and richness of the Kootenay diggings has been greatly overrated, and has caused considerable overstocking in every business. . . when ten or twelve of every profession have to divide what would be only a fair remuneration for one, it naturally makes the camp one of the poorest. . . There are sufficient dry goods in this camp to supply two thousand miners for five years, and still pack trains are rushing in. . ." (2) Yet in the height of the Big Bend excitement it was feared that Wild Horse would be deserted. This was the opportunity of the Chinese miner; he gained his first foothold in Kootenay in the winter of 1865-66.

This season marks the end of the Kootenay gold rush: Wild Horse Creek remained an important mining centre, the centre from which all later discoveries in the district were made, but its decline had begun, and it never again raised extravagant hopes. Already a number of the houses in the little town had been pulled down, because the ground they stood on was found to contain gold in paying quantities. (3)

The charm of the country had induced many to contemplate settling in the beautiful valleys of the Columbia or Moyie rivers, or along the Kootenay at the foot of the Rocky Mountains; over fifty preemptions of land were recorded during these first two years. (4) All were taken up by miners, some giving their nicknames, such as "Dancing Bill," and "Black Jack." A number recorded their intention to go south below the boundary to fetch in seeds, stock, or implements, but few, if any, returned when they heard the

(1) Colonist, Jan. 15, 1866.

(2) Cariboo Sentinel, Aug. 26, 1865.

(3) Trimble, op. cit., p. 56.

(4) Record Books, Dept. of Lands.

mines were on the wane.

It is a tendency of those who grow old to dwell fondly on the small follies of their youth, to magnify them into a luxuriant crop of wild oats. So there have been old-timers who liked to convey the impression that the old placer mining days were full of lawless violence, of bold adventurers whose deeds were as colorful as their speech. Others there are who testify to the splendid camaraderie that existed among the miners, and the rarity among them of the criminal type. The rougher sort were probably more in evidence in Kootenay than in Cariboo, yet perfect order was maintained there without difficulty by an absurdly small constabulary force. The latter of course was not free from anxiety at all times: William Young, left at Fisherville as sole representative of the law during the first winter, wrote to his superiors requesting that the other officers for the next season be appointed as early as possible, as "men will be rushing here in numbers, many of them of the roughest stamp from the next Territories, and until we have a good jail and a suitable staff we are but ill-prepared to meet them." (1) But the officers seem to have had little to worry them but the collection of debts; the only crimes mentioned after this are the murder of an Indian by a white man, and the circulation of counterfeit gold dust by three men, one of whom came from Cariboo. (2) Evasion of the gold export tax was common and comparatively easy, as the trails passed through fairly open country for the last few miles, but the amount of customs collected was always large. Possibly there was a feeling in Cariboo that their more American brethren in Kootenay were addicted to undesirable habits; at any rate, the "Cariboo Sentinel" represented the condition of affairs there as "most alarming . . a number of desperadoes had congregated and bade defiance to the constituted authorities. These desperadoes were mostly driven from the American side by vigilance committees, and are ready for the perpetration of the most diabolical crimes . . a plot for the robbing of the government place of deposit was spoken of . ." (3) The answer

(1) Young to Haynes, Jan. 10, 1865.

(2) Cariboo Sentinel, Sept. 30, 1865.

(3) Cariboo Sentinel, July 23, 1865.

to this sort of thing is best given in the words of Mr. O'Reilly, saying in that same year, "We are all very quiet, though if we were to believe what we hear one half of the population is made up of murderers, highwaymen, and horse thieves. There is very little litigation." (1)

One hundred white men and a score of Chinamen formed the population of Fisherville in the second winter of its existence. (2) By the autumn of 1866 there were three hundred Chinese, and less than a hundred whites, the others having all drifted off to the Columbia diggings. It was not that Wild Horse was worked out, far from it: it would repay hard work with good wages, but there seemed to be little easy money left to pick up. Chinese, too, were willing to pay highly for claims that had been partially or even wholly worked over once. As much as eight thousand dollars was said to have been paid by them for one claim. (3) In addition to the mines they were taking possession of trade, buying cattle, and the businesses of bakers and butchers. Some of these cattle they were unfortunate enough to lose when a band of marauding Blackfeet drove off with them in triumph. (4) This was the first occasion of molestation of the miners in the Kootenay by Indians, but it was not the Kootenay Indians who were guilty. In fact they lost their own horses in the Blackfoot raid, as also did the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Kootenays were said to have fled up Wild Horse valley to claim the protection of the white men. (5) Later they joined the Spokane Indians and the Flathead Lake tribe in a great council of war at Tobacco Plains, planning to take the aggressive together against the Blackfeet. (6)

Although it would spend no more money on the Dewdney trail, the government recognized by now that Wild Horse was likely to remain the scene of a small but steady mining settlement. In 1866 a post-office was opened at Fisherville under the name of Kootenay. No steps were taken, however, to establish a regular mail service. Responsible persons were offered the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars for carrying the government mail to _

(1) Colonist, Aug. 3, 1865.

(2) Ibid. March 22, 1866.

(3) Ibid. Aug. 23, 1866.

(4) Ibid. Oct. 11, 1866.

(5) Ibid. Nov. 6, 1866.

Kootenay, but despatches were so infrequent that the residents engaged a private express and sent their mail through Walla Walla. (1) Theirs was a lonely outpost, isolated the whole winter, and with but four expresses to bring them outside news in the summer. (2)

Another event that took place in this year was the first election in Kootenay. Mr. John Galbraith was elected by a majority of thirty-nine votes over the other candidate, Mr. John Duncan. (3) Although the population was dwindling steadily, until in the eighties there were merely a dozen white settlers at Wild Horse, yet they never lost their right to representation in the Provincial House.

The discovery of gold on Perry Creek in 1868 threw for a time a brighter light on the future. Named after Perrier, a French half-breed, this creek is a tributary of St. Mary's river. There was a rush to the spot as soon as the news leaked out, and a mushroom mining town of a hundred and fifty inhabitants sprang up. But the ground was not rich enough to induce men to stay long in such a lonely place, and after a few years it was almost deserted.

In 1870 the Hudson's Bay Company began to consider closing out its Kootenay posts, as their business showed no signs of anything but further decline. Finally they sold out their interests to the Galbraith firm who thus gained almost a monopoly of trade in the district, operating stores on Joseph's Prairie, Perry Creek, and Fisherville, as well as at the Ferry.

Except as the home of discontented Indians and a handful of panic-stricken whites, East Kootenay is hardly heard of now until the nineties when there was a revival of placer mining and of prospecting for other minerals besides gold. Fisherville was then already forgotten; all that remains of it at the present day are a few remnants of log houses, and a neglected cemetery. One of those who died and were buried here was Mr. J. Boles Gaggin, the second Gold Commissioner to serve on the Creek; but the fences have been allowed to decay and the names on the wooden boards at the heads

(1) Deaville; Colonial Postage System, p. 132.

(2) H.M. Ball to Colonial Secretary, Dec. 28, 1869.

(3) J.B. Gaggin to Colonial Secretary, Oct. 6, 1866.

of the graves have long been obliterated.

It is difficult to form any estimate as to the original yield of Wild Horse Creek. The evasion of the gold export tax has been mentioned before; although traders were honest and made no effort to smuggle goods into the country, (1) no one credits the miners with giving a full and exact tally of their earnings, and no doubt they smuggled out a good deal of gold dust. Their habit of keeping accounts for only a week at a time (2) also made it hard for officials to arrive at any accurate idea of the amount of gold mined. A great deal of money was spent on ditches to work hill claims; for instance, the Victoria Ditch was supposed to have cost \$125,000. ⁽³⁾ Figures for the expenditure on this development work vary enormously, as do the estimates or guesses as to the amount of gold dug out. A conservative judgment is that one million was taken out during the first rush (4); another is that nine million was yielded in the first three or four years of the mines. (5) This last figure, however, was written down in the optimistic air of Fort Steele in its happiest days. _____

- (1) H.M. Ball to Colonial Secretary, Dec. 28, 1869.
- (2) Birch's Report.
- (3) Trimble, op. cit., p. 56.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Fort Steele Prospector, April 18, 1896.

VI

THE ST. EUGENE MISSION.



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"The filthy little civil and faithful Kootenais," is Bancroft's brief description of the tribe. ⁽¹⁾ The justice of the first epithet cannot be denied, yet there is a longer list of qualities beneath the surface and worthy of admiration. The early traders, according to MacLean, agreed that they were "honest and industrious . . . dignified and intelligent above any of the tribes of the plains." (2) Their dirt and poverty were of course remarked by every passer-by, whether or not he paused like David Thompson to consider how clean civilized man would remain if living under the same conditions, and without soap: but upon those with whom they had any personal dealings they always made a most favorable impression.

Colonial Secretary Arthur Birch paid a high tribute to the Indians in his report on the Kootenay, the result of his flying trip there in the fall of 1864. "The Kootenay Indians," he wrote, "are by far the finest specimens of the Indian race that I have yet seen, and are among the few tribes remaining that have not yet been demoralized by contamination with the white man. I believe with few exceptions they have become converts to Christianity, and it was a pleasing sight to see the Chief of the tribe, who accompanied me on my road for several days, kneel down before each repast and thank God for his daily bread. They appeared much pleased with the few presents I gave them. . . ."

Edgar Dewdney, cutting his trail through the same country the next year, reported that the natives camped at the Lake were "the most miserable uncivilized lot I have seen." (3) The apparent contradiction in these observations is not difficult to explain. The Lake Indians, called by De Smet the Flat Bows, seem always to have been of inferior stock to the other branches of the Kituhahan family. Birch, coming down later in the season, probably met some of the Upper Kootenays wandering down to see what fish they could get. Intermarriage has now more or less merged these different branches together, but at one time they were quite distinct. _ _ _

(1) Bancroft: British Columbia, p.50.

(2) MacLean: Canadian Savage Folk, p.137.

(3) Dewdney to the Colonial Secretary, June 29, 1865. Provincial Archives.

Father De Smet, who called the family Skalzi, estimated its numbers at a thousand, divided fairly evenly among three camps, that of the Skalzi at Flathead Lake, who had taken up agriculture at his mission there, the Kootenays at Tobacco Plains, and the Flat Bows. ⁽¹⁾ Rowand, a trader, reckoned about the same time that they numbered eight hundred. (2) Dawson later divides the family into four branches, the Upper Kootenays, the Tobacco Plains Kootenays, the Lower Kootenays, or Lake Indians, and the Flathead Kootenays living in American territory. They were all closely related, speaking slightly differing dialects of a language that was distinct from any other Indian language. With the Upper Kootenay stock is now mixed also a small group of Shuswap Indians, led by one of the Kinbaskets from Kamloops to settle around the Columbia Lakes at some time early in the last century.

Of all the praise bestowed on the Kootenays by their first white friends, that of Father De Smet is the most enthusiastic, the most likely to be termed extravagant by the cynical. (3) But the Father was far from being carried away by his feelings; he is critical, most critical, for instance, of the habit his converts had of maintaining large retinues of half-starved dogs, who preyed on everything that could be chewed, not excepting the property of guests. (4) Furthermore, he paints in most vivid language the misery and degradation of the Indians of the Columbia river; if there had been darker shades to be included in his picture of the Kootenays, we feel he would have put them there. (5)

No permanent mission was conducted among them till the arrival of Father Leon Fouquet, O.M.I., with Brother John Burns, in early October, 1874. Father Richard came later. (6) At a very beautiful spot on the banks of the St. Mary's river, as they named it, about six miles above its junction with the Kootenay, they built a two-storey log house, the beginning of St. _ _

(1) De Smet: Lettres Choisies, p.91.

(2) Rowand and Dawson both quoted by MacLean, in "Canadian Savage Folk", p.137.

(3) "On trouve chez eux le beau ideal de ce caractere indien qui n'a nullement souffert du contact des Blancs. . . . On ne remarque point chez eux les vices grossiers. . . Le vol leur est inconnu." De Smet: Lettres Choisies, Lettre VI, p. 92.

(4) Ibid.

(5) De Smet: Oregon Missions, p.237.

(6) Choinel: St. Eugene Mission.

Eugene Mission. They bought land from John Shaw, one of the early miners, and one of the first justices of the peace in the district. The crown grant was made in Leon Fouquet's name in 1881, two adjacent lots on the south side of the river being taken up in the names of his assistants Napoleon Gregoire and John Burns. (1)

These pioneer missionaries bent every effort to raise the social condition of the Indians. They had first to be shown how much more their land would yield besides the few miserable roots and berries which their women gathered. Seed wheat was imported, and the soil so well cultivated that they reaped a plentiful harvest; stones were sent for and a flour mill set up, which supplied the mission for many years. There was pressing need for some sort of medical work among the women; this Father Fouquet undertook, organizing a band of assistants among the women themselves. With all this they lost no opportunity to carry on religious instruction, and a log church was built, with a cross above the gable. (2)

For thirteen years Father Fouquet worked at the Mission, years during which white settlers were gradually filtering into the hereditary lands of the Indians. His own word must surely be taken as to the character of the people whom it was his business to know. It bears testimony to their high moral character, for he wrote that in all his stay among the Kootenays, only one public scandal had come to his notice, and only two cases of intoxication by drink. (3)

Owing to advancing age Father Fouquet had to retire from pioneer fields, and a younger man, Father Coccola, O.M.I., was sent to relieve him. The newcomer picked up the work at the most difficult point, just when the Indians were beginning to feel fear, distrust, and hatred of all white intruders, but all these obstacles he overcame by the force of his personality. An old man now, he has not given up his work even yet, but carries on still in the most northern missions of the province.

He was born, Peter Nicolas Jourdain De Coccola, of a family of Corsican gentry. He was destined for the army, but made up his mind early

(1) Record Books, Lands Department.
(2) Choinel: St. Eugene Mission.
(3) Ibid..

to enter the Church, and later joined the Order of Oblates. The fire of his temper is shown by his own story that as a young man studying in France he told his Superior that the Religious "ought to show more backbone", and if necessary take up arms against the enemies of the Church, who were working for their expulsion from the country. (1)

In 1880 he arrived at Victoria, and was sent to St. Mary's Mission, at Spence's Bridge, then to Kamloops, and to the Merritt Indians, then to the construction camps along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and from here to the Kootenay. This was in the fall of 1887. Bishop D'Herbomez sent Father Baudre, as the senior, to meet Coccola at Golden, whence they were to proceed to the St. Eugene Mission. Arrived at Golden, they found the river closed to navigation, and no horses to be hired. The Bishop being apprised of their difficulty telegraphed his orders that old Father Baudre return to Kamloops, and leave his younger colleague to go on alone. Some Shuswap Indians had appeared, and agreed to conduct the priest so far at least as their home. They evidently wanted to keep him to themselves; they were very loth to guide him south of the lakes, and sought to deter him from going on by drawing gloomy pictures of the ferocity of the Kootenays. When he started on foot they gasped at his folly, and reluctantly lent him a guide and a horse.

His first meeting with the Kootenays was not reassuring. A band of young braves in war-paint - "variegated blankets, painted faces, hair frizzed out and full of wire and other ornaments" (2) rode up to have a look at him, staring in silence and then wheeling suddenly away. Old Morigeau promised him he was in no danger, and sent his father-in-law on with him for a guide, who proved to be a sullen and disagreeable companion. Near Canal Flat he joined a band of Kootenays, was offered a portion of evil-smelling stew for supper, and spent a wakeful night among the mouldering bones and bits of venison with which the floor of their teepee was strewn.(3) He pressed on to reach the Mission, and Father Fouquet, who was in poor --

(1) Denys Nelson: Memoirs of Father Coccola.

(2) Ibid..

(3) The World is his Country - Cranbrook Courier, Biography of Father Coccola, commencing Christmas 1926.

health, left almost at once for New Westminster.

Father Coccoła's manner of dealing with the Indians was characteristic. While being shown around the Mission he chaffed the young men who were lounging about, asking them if they had nothing at all to do. He puzzled them by his attitude. What should a man do but hunt and fight? Lately, it was true, they had been obliged to discontinue their annual expeditions through the Crows Nest and the Southern passes to hunt buffalo on the plains, for the buffalo were no longer there to be found. Still their enmity for the Blackfeet remained, who had always resented their incursions and had retaliated by coming to steal their horses whenever they needed new ones. This periodical conflict with their enemies had bred in their hearts a pride in their skill as warriors; as warriors they knew they could command respect. Since the white men had been showing so little respect for their tribal rights some among them felt tempted to punish the intruders by forcibly expelling them from the valley. This was the reason why Father Coccoła received no better welcome on his arrival. He played an important part in reconciling the Indians to their lot, but before explaining that we must turn to consider what grounds there were for the Indian grievances.

VII

INDIAN UNREST.



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The war waged by the Kootenays and their allies against the Blackfeet had occasioned the miners no little anxiety, as they feared, not without reason, that their friends the Kootenays might prove to be the weaker side. Indeed they were so uneasy as to what might befall them in 1874, that their representative, Mr. Mara, moved the following resolution in the House: "That whereas the mining camps of Wild Horse and Perry Creeks, owing to their isolated position and close proximity to the American border, cannot rely on protection from this Province in case of an attack by the Indians, and whereas the Blackfeet and other hostile tribes of Indians are frequently camped in the District, and whereas there is a feeling of insecurity in the minds of the Farmers of the District, which greatly retards settlement; Resolved, that an humble Address be presented to his Honor the Lieut.-Governor, praying that he will urge upon the Dominion Government the immediate necessity of carrying out the recommendation of the late Adjutant-General Ross by establishing a Military Post in or near the Kootenay District . . ." (1)

Similar representations were made by the settlers at Kamloops, who feared that the Thompson Indians might adopt some drastic means of proving their dissatisfaction with the reserves allotted to them. The Kootenays as yet had no reserves with which to be dissatisfied, and, the danger from the Blackfeet subsiding, the government put off the day of dealing with their problems for ten years more. Meanwhile the Kootenays regarded themselves as still the rightful owners of all their hereditary lands, and resented very deeply the intrusion of surveyors, farmers, and miners, both yellow and white. True, even by the eighties there were still but a handful of settlers in the valley, but their preference for the best land was so marked that any Indian with imagination could foresee the time when, if these invaders had their way, they would make him a beggar and an outcast in his own country. This was a prospect which Chief Isadore, for one, could not endure, and he was a chief who exercised an unusually firm (1) Sessional Papers, 1875.

authority over his tribe, the Upper Kootenays.

Their feeling was only natural, but it was dangerous on account of their possession of arms, and of their knowledge of the fairer treatment accorded Indians elsewhere. They spent an occasional holiday drinking and gambling with their kinsmen south of the line, who met them with other friends at old Fort Kootanie; (1) there they discussed with envy the annuities paid by the United States government, their practice of compensation for lands taken away, and the huge reserves they had set aside for the Indians. They knew, too, of the treaties made by the Dominion government with the Indians of the plains. Isadore, who owned a large herd of cattle and horses, which he kept on the banks of the Kootenay, a few miles below Galbraith's Ferry, declared that the ranges should be free, and that no man had the right to build fences. (2)

The alarm the settlers felt at hearing of this communistic doctrine was at length communicated to the government, and in 1883 Mr. A. S. Farwell (3) was sent to report upon the situation. He wrote that "all the Upper Kootenays are civil, good-natured, and appear well-disposed towards the whites," yet, fearing that they might not be too good-natured towards an official of the government that had so far disappointed them, he avoided questioning them directly, and collected his information from the white settlers. What he learned then made him fear there might be an outbreak before long, and he urged upon the government "the grave necessity of settling the Indian land claims in this district at the earliest possible date." (4)

The matter turned upon the need of the Indians for good grazing land for their cattle. Since cattle had been introduced into the district during the gold rush, the Indians had been collecting herds of their own, and wintering them with success by the Columbia Lakes. They came to depend upon them for their staple food, and troubled no more about the vanishing buffalo of the plains. As a result they waxed far more prosperous:

(1) A.S. Farwell: Report, Dec. 31, 1883.

(3) Surveyor-General for B.C. in 1876.

(4) Farwell's Report.

(2) Steele; Forty Years in Canada, p. 245.

at the time of Mr. Farwell's enquiries they were said to own about four hundred head of cattle, and five hundred horses, this in spite of the severe losses they had suffered in the exceptionally cold winter three years before.

The most sheltered pastures lay on the east side of the Columbia Lakes. Up till 1882 the only settler there was Mr. Baptiste Morigeau, who had a house and trading post on the creek of his name. Engineers and other employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, however, had been exploring in the neighborhood, and several had staked off land and recorded their claims. (1) These pioneers were E.J. Johnston, F.W. Aylmer, and F.P. Armstrong and D. Bellhouse. The last two had pre-empted three hundred and twenty acres and eighty acres respectively, lying on the Indians' favourite cattle run. There was still room left, but, adds Farwell, "Numerous applications have been filed for large tracts of meadow and grazing land between the Kootenay and Columbia rivers, by different parties, chiefly stock-raisers from the North West territory." In fact, he had just filed such a claim himself. (2)

The government lost no time in acting upon this report, but promptly sent Mr. P. O'Reilly, Indian Commissioner, the same who had formerly served as Gold Commissioner both in Kootenay and Cariboo, to settle the question of Indian reservations in East Kootenay. Mr. O'Reilly gave careful consideration to the needs of the Indians and the character of their land, although he could not take a census, and by the end of 1884 he had allotted a total of about forty-two thousand acres. This included blocks on Tobacco Plains and the Lower Kootenay and Lower Columbia Lakes, together with a reserve on the St. Mary's river and three ranches, one of them Isadore's. (3)

The Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works at once protested against his generosity, pointing out that he was giving four hundred and forty acres to each family of five persons, whereas he had himself reported that the amount of land actually cultivated by the Indians amounted to no

(1) Record Books, Lands Department.

(2) Ibid..

(3) Correspondence on Indian Affairs, Sessional Papers 1885.

more than one acre for each family. He argued that Indians could not possibly utilize more than the quantity of land which the Dominion Government considered ample for a white settler, namely, one hundred and sixty acres. If, as was hoped, the Indians were to advance and finally become enfranchised, they should be accustomed to the same treatment in the matter of land as was accorded other citizens. He reminded O'Reilly how the original amount of land allowed an Indian family of five in British Columbia was ten acres. After the entrance into Confederation the Dominion authorities had demanded that this be increased to eighty acres. The Provincial Government had consented to make it twenty acres, and after much discussion the Commissioners had finally been given a free hand, "to make such allotments as might be necessary, according to the varied requirements of the several tribes, without being bound by a strict limit of twenty acres to each family." He regretted that the Commissioners had proceeded to act with "reckless extravagance", and that in the present instance "you have overestimated the requirements of the Indians and underestimated those of the whites, who, if not there now, are more than likely to be there in the near future, anxiously looking for more land to settle upon." (1)

The reserves, however, were left as O'Reilly had defined them, as he presented such forcible arguments in defence of his action. "I had the utmost difficulty," he wrote, in persuading the Kootenays to agree to the boundaries fixed by me, and which they look upon as meagre in the extreme, compared with the millions of acres set apart by the United States Government for American Indians, a few miles south of the line. Moreover, I think it important, for Provincial and International reasons, that Indians living on the frontier should have no reasonable ground of complaint." He stated that had he included all the scattered patches of land cultivated by the Indians, the reserves would have been larger still. So far as possible, he had given the land in blocks, so that the Indians would be living by themselves, with less likelihood of friction with the whites. He argued further that the Indians had hitherto been restrained from cultivating as much land as they might have wished, until they should know just where

(1) Correspondence on Indian Affairs. Nov. 29, 1884. Sessional Papers 1885.

their reserves were to lie. In proof of this, he said that as soon as he had indicated the reserves, they had set to work fencing with rails split ready for the purpose, and had immediately sent away for ploughs and other implements. (1)

In 1886 Dr. Powell, general superintendent of Indian Affairs for the province, paid an official visit to East Kootenay to inspect the reserves, giving the Indians every opportunity to air all their grievances. The Shuswap and Columbia Lake Indians, whom he interviewed first, on his way south from Golden, appeared to be contented and comparatively prosperous. "They have supplied themselves with farming implements, live in comfortable log houses, some of them very good indeed, and wear an aspect of cheer and satisfaction. They expressed loyalty and attachment to the country and its laws." Their only requests were for a trading post near to the reserve which would deal honestly with them, since "Young men going a long way off are apt to get into mischief," and for a resident agent to look after their interests. (2)

Chief Isadore and his leading men, however, who met them at Galbraith's Ferry, had much more to say. They united in demanding that the whole country from Bull river to Wolf Creek should be assigned to them. Mr. O'Reilly, they said, was mistaken if he thought they ever intended to accept his reserves. Dr. Powell reminded them that they had the right to graze their cattle on vacant Crown lands, but they said they wanted grazing lands of their own, and did not want their cattle mixing with those of white men. The doctor pointed out that they were impoverishing themselves by maintaining so many inferior ponies, and reproached them with laziness, for "the Queen will not give you lands to remain idle."

Isadore stubbornly held his ground. "We owned the whole country and why were we denied this? Nothing less than what we have asked will satisfy us. You have told us that you want to do all you can to help us, do this." They were offered the stretch of country between Bull and Elk rivers, where at that time there were no settlers, but that did not suit them. - - -

(1) O'Reilly's Report, Dec. 10, 1884. Sessional Papers, 1885.

(2) Powell to Supt.-Gen. at Ottawa, Nov. 18, 1886. Unpublished records, Dept. of Indian Affairs, Ottawa.

Isadore promised that white miners would be allowed to stay in his country, "but they must behave themselves and not teach us evil."

Dr. Powell had of course no authority to make any changes on the spot, all he could do being to promise consideration of their plea when a proper census had been taken. Yet his Report shows where his sympathies lay: he admitted that he thought the St. Mary's reserve inadequate, as so much of it was stony and useless. (1)

One of the greatest causes of friction was a dispute between Isadore and Colonel Baker. The latter had bought a large acreage on Joseph's Prairie from the Galbraiths, including a farm which had belonged to old Chief Joseph, and where Isadore at the time was residing. His title to it was that of inheritance; moreover the Galbraiths had not interfered with his possession, and he had recently gone to the expense of erecting new corrals. Baker, however, wished to work the land as part of the stock ranch he was establishing. He had it surveyed: Isadore promptly had all the stakes pulled out. He was offered compensation for his improvements, but he refused to give up the land on any terms. Dr. Powell tried in vain to effect a compromise, but he was obliged to leave matters in this unsatisfactory state of deadlock.

A few months later an injudicious action on the part of the whites threw more fuel on the smouldering fires of discontent and resentment. In 1885 two miners had been found murdered on the trail between Wild Horse and Golden. There were numbers of loose characters on the trails who might have committed the crime, but, for no definite reason, suspicion rested on two members of the Upper Kootenay band, named Kapla and Young Isadore. No steps were taken, however, to bring them to trial, and the Indians thought the incident had been forgotten when, in March 1887, Constable Anderson of Wild Horse Creek suddenly appeared at the Mission and arrested Kapla, who was in camp there. Warrants had been issued by two local justices of the peace, Mr. Wm. Fernie, and Mr. Michael Phillips. Isadore, ignorant of this fact, was incensed beyond measure at what he considered to be an illegal act (1) Powell's Report, Nov. 18, 1886.

of persecution. At the head of a band of his braves, some of them armed with Winchester rifles, he galloped up the road to Wild Horse and confronting the constable at the jail there, demanded his authority for the arrest. Not satisfied with his explanation about the warrant, he broke open the door of the flimsy little building and made the constable deliver up his prisoner.

The stage seemed to be set for an Indian uprising, and the unlucky settlers, hopelessly outnumbered, begged the government to protect them. Rumours were afloat that Isadore was going to call his American allies to his side and drive out all the white men. The Indians still scorned their reserves, and refused to live on them. They threatened two men, the constable, and the Hon. F. Aylmer, a surveyor, ordering them to leave the country, and the two thought it safer to obey. (1)

The remedy universally suggested was military coercion, and a detachment of mounted police, under Major Steele, was ordered to proceed to the district. Before their arrival, however, the government made an effort at conciliation. A commission composed of Dr. Powell, general superintendent, A.W. Vowell, Gold Commissioner and stipendiary magistrate, and Lt.-Col. Herchmer, were sent up in June 1887 to effect a settlement if possible.

Isadore appeared before the Commission and gave an eloquent defence of his action in rescuing Kapla. He recalled cases of murder of Indians by white men, whom the white man's justice had allowed to go unpunished. The threat of military occupation, however, elicited his promise to deliver Kapla for trial whenever the authorities should be ready to investigate his case. He frankly confessed the trouble he had in maintaining discipline in his tribe, since his young men had "so many associates among Chinese and bad white men that it is difficult to detect any crime. When they do wrong they hide it. . . . My old people are mostly good, the youths . . . are foolish . . . they are often unmanageable." (2)

----- He returned then to the question of lands, saying that his men

(1) Colonist, March 26, 1887.

(2) Powell to Supt.-General of Indian Affairs at Ottawa, July 13, 1887.
Unpublished records of Dept. of Indian Affairs, Ottawa.

would not farm until the matter was settled. All that the Commissioners could do at the moment was to accede to the request for a resident agent by the appointment of Mr. Michael Phillips, an Englishman who had lived for a long time among the Indians, originally in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and who spoke their language fluently.

Dr. Powell recommended to the authorities most emphatically that the reserves should be immediately increased, and that Isadore should not be forced by Colonel Baker to vacate his favourite farm. If this policy were followed he believed it would be unnecessary to incur the expense of stationing police in the district, "and that there would be a contented and progressive band of Indians instead of a discontented and sullen tribe who now believe themselves, not without great reason, the subjects of tyranny and oppression." (1)

The Tobacco Plains Indians had also been extremely restive, and had caused the few settlers in that region great alarm. They were friendly with, and under the influence of roving Indians who went to and fro across the border and were loyal to neither government. In 1887 the United States government stationed a company of infantry at the border to prevent the passage of these renegades, and to stop the illicit traffic in whiskey which a number of them had carried on.

Dr. Powell agreed that it would be as well to bring in the police to supervise Kapla's trial, but he advised that if his recommendations were followed it would be safe to withdraw the police at any time. He had feared that the Indians would only be roused by their presence to a more dangerous pitch of resentment, but as it happened, many flocked to welcome them and sell them vegetables. They arrived at the end of June, and immediately began preparations for a long stay. Steele hired horses for a pack train, leased land from Mr. Galbraith overlooking the Kootenay river at the mouth of Wild Horse Creek, and commenced to build a fort capable of defence. This done, he ordered Isadore to deliver the prisoner, Kapla, with his suspected accomplice. The Chief complied at once, and took (1) Powell's Report, July 13. 1887.

a keen and intelligent interest in the proceedings which were held as soon as soon as the witnesses appeared. The evidence against the accused men was so slight that Steele was convinced of their innocence, and dismissed them with a present of food for their journey home. (1)

The other grievances, concerning the land on Joseph's Prairie, were almost as amicably settled by the joint efforts of Dr. Powell, Mr. O'Reilly, and Major Steele. Isadore was very loth to give up his farm, but he yielded at last, and was prevailed upon to accept in exchange for it another piece of land on the Kootenay river, much larger and more valuable. Additional meadows for hay were also added to the reserves, (2) and the government provided an irrigation ditch, (3) and some ploughs. (4)

All the officials handled the situation with admirable tact; they did their utmost to secure justice for the Indians, and to reconcile them to their lot. There was one man, not an official, who had a great deal to do with the peaceful solution of the difficulties. This was Father Coccoła, the priest at the St. Eugene Mission, and a friend of Major Steele. At first the Indians felt uneasy about his frequent visits to the fort, accusing him of conspiring against them. On one occasion his life was in danger: an Indian named Pierre threatened to shoot him if he did not leave the country, and when he quietly refused, was only withheld from the murder by his awe at the priest's impassive courage.

Father Coccoła was in touch with the wildest plans of the Indians; full of sympathy and pity for them, he laboured at the mission to prove his friendship, and to smooth the way of the inevitable submission. Isadore had been organizing his resistance in a mood of reckless despair, feeling that he "would rather die of a bullet than of starvation." (5) By the arguments of Father Coccoła he was brought to see that no one desired him to starve, and he was persuaded to accept the cash payment offered by Colonel Baker for the improvements that had been made on his land by the Indians who had occupied it since its sale. He was shown that resistance _ _

(1) Steele: Forty Years in Canada, p. 247.

(2) Powell's Report, Nov. 26, 1887. Sessional Papers 1888.

(3) Steele, op. cit., p. 249.

(4) Powell's Report, Nov. 26, 1887.

(5) Nelson: Memoirs of Father Coccoła.

would mean the extermination of his people, that he could not take upon himself so terrible a responsibility. He acquiesced at length, but the long delays and anxiety had left a rankling sense of bitterness. Nor did the missionary's religious teaching altogether help to reconcile them to the white men and their ways. Father Coccoła relates that one day the question was raised as to where white men came from, whether from heaven or hell. "They began to pass in review the white men with whom they had come in contact. Few there were who by their conduct could claim God for their Father, or Heaven for their country." (1)

Dr. Powell had found some of the Indians desirous of a school for their children; arrangements were accordingly made as soon as possible to comply with their request, and in October of 1890 a school was opened at St. Eugene Mission with the Sisters of Providence in charge. (2) The problem then was to attract the children to it, and Father Coccoła devised a little piece of strategy to accomplish his end. Sending to the better affected Indians that he knew among the Shuswaps and Columbia Lake Kootenays, he ordered them to bring certain of their children to the mission. Then, on a Sunday, when all the Indians were at mass, he told them that the school was nearly full, and they must bring their children into it at once or they could not be admitted. Seeing the Columbia camp children marching in, the others followed out of curiosity; once they were inside, the doors were closed behind them, and the parents, who had lingered at the gate, were told to go home. (3)

Colonel Steele, who remained in the district for a year, gives the Kootenays unqualified praise. During that time he heard of no theft and no drunkenness among the Indians. "It was the opinion of the best whites," he wrote, "that the Kootenays were very good. They often packed large quantities of liquor into the district for white merchants . . but none of them were ever known to meddle with any that was placed in their charge. . . Isadore was the most influential chief that I have known." (4)

- (2) Nelson: Memoirs of Father Coccoła.
- (2) Codex Historicus, St. Eugene Mission.
- (3) Nelson: Memoirs of Father Coccoła
- (4) Steele, op. cit., p.247.

Today it is a different story. The same degeneration has overtaken the Kootenays that has overtaken other members of their race, a degeneration both moral and physical, concurrent with the settlement of their land by white men, and the education of their children in mission schools. There may be reasons for it unconnected with these two factors, but it is difficult to surmise what they might be.

Mr. Baillie-Grohman, in his "Sport and Life in Western Canada", writing of his experiences in the eighties, declares that "A more unsophisticated and at once attractive race than the Kootenays it would be difficult to find. . . a fine, manly-looking race." (1) But he admits that even then they were "fast losing their artless simplicity." (2) Elsewhere he had given a description of the tribe, winding up with an interesting prophecy which has only too surely been fulfilled: "It will perhaps be hardly credited by those who are acquainted with the Indians . . . when I say that to a great extent I found the Kootenays to be in 1883 just what De Smet described them to be in 1845, the only exception being perhaps that gambling among themselves has increased to a dangerous degree. They are, without exception, the only tribe perfectly untrammelled by white man's presence in close proximity. They have no reserves and no agents, the Government has no relations with them, the forest and stream supply them with all they need. No census has ever been taken of their number; they are perfectly unacquainted with any language but their own, not even Chinook, the universal language of the Pacific slopes, being understood by them. They keep entirely to themselves, and never leave their own district. Intermarriage with other tribes is exceedingly rare, and their tribal number has apparently neither decreased nor increased. They are all devout Catholics, and Father Fouquet, the present missionary, has them seemingly well in hand. . . . But the simple Kootenay days are numbered, for the whites are beginning to invade their isolated realm, and this year they are to have a reserve assigned to them by the Government. It will be an interesting but suggestively sad study to watch the rapid deterioration which will inevitably take place. The evening

(1) Baillie-Grohman: Sport and Life, p.306.

(2) Ibid.p.303.

prayer bell that now sounds in every little Kootenay camp, strangely out of place as it seems, will no longer be heard, while the breech-clout will be replaced by white men's cast-off dress." (1)

In the old days of the gold rush, the Indians kept themselves proudly aloof from the miners. None of their men were seen loitering about the saloons, nor were their women allowed to wander round the little town of Fisherville. Breaches of this rule were severely punished by the chief, whose government resembled that of a very stern parent. Major Steele described the ceremony that took place at Easter and Christmas, when the whole tribe assembled at the mission for a week's religious services. "In the intervals, Isadore and his four sheriffs seized all who had been guilty of any offence, such as gambling, drunkenness, or theft. They were tied down on a robe, hands and feet secured by rawhide thongs to stakes placed in the ground, and soundly flogged regardless of age or sex. By some means or other the chief knew the culprits . . . and they never failed to appear at the church to take their medicine. . ." (2)

This practice was a custom also among the Chilcotins and other tribes of Indians. It was countenanced by the Church, which saw no reason to interfere with the natural form of discipline of these people, but it was finally stopped by public protest in the nineties. A certain Roman Catholic priest was then arrested as responsible for the chastisement of a girl by her chief. This event has made the Church historians ascribe other motives than humanitarian feelings to those whites who complained of the public penances. (3) Be these motives mixed or not, the practice was brought to an end, and the authority of the native chiefs thus cut short. If some other authority had been substituted, there might have been no harm done by the change, and a certain amount of brutality avoided. The intention has been to substitute the authority of the Church and the State, but they do not seem to graft well onto the Indian stem, and young folk are growing up owning no authority and no tradition. Their own morality was in some ways

undermined by the work of the missionaries: Father De Smet, for instance,
(1) Baillie-Grohman: Appendix to W. Barnby's Life and Labour in the Far Far
West, p.420.

(2) Steele, op. cit., p.248.

(3) Morice: History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, p.390.

"acted on the principle that there were no valid marriages among the Indians." (1) The young generation now is adrift at the mercy of instincts half thwarted by their education; it is no wonder their teachers have to watch lest they run away from school, and their parents cannot control them when they return home.

In his "Indian Days in the Rockies," Marius Barbeau finely portrays the spiritual roots of the old native religion. The winding paths of their superstitions led to a truly religious sense, a source of power and purity, but all has now been swept away in the efforts to draw them into the Christian fold. Sir George Simpson, observing pagan offerings hung about outside the fence of a dedicated Christian cemetery for Indians, saw in this a proof that the cross was to them but one more magic sign, on the same level in their minds with all their other magic symbols, and that they did not even faintly grasp the significance of the new (2) religion. Those who have actually taught among Indians and understand the workings of their minds can judge best of the truth of this opinion, and whether the situation has changed greatly in a hundred years. Even the cross was not new to them as a symbol; the Blackfeet sometimes erected crosses to the moon to make her favorable to the success of a hunting or stealing expedition. (3)

Of all the divisions of the Kootenay tribe, the Upper Kootenays have come most into contact with white men, and, whatever the disadvantages of this intercourse, they have undoubtedly benefited from it in some material ways. Dr. Powell was surprised to find the majority of the men extremely poor, while the chief and a few of the notables were quite wealthy. But the majority would have been still poorer without the whites to help them. The first resident agent appointed reported that "at least a fourth of the St. Mary's section of the tribe make a living, either directly or indirectly, from the whites. They hire their horses and do light work. A great number, I regret to say, do little more than subsist

(1)E.V. O'Hara: De Smet in the Oregon Country, Oregon Historical Quarterly, . Sept. 1909.

(2)Simpson: Narrative of a Journey Round the World, p.142.

(3)De Smet: Oregon Missions, p.387.

on the charity of the settlers, miners and Chinese. They trap less and less every year. . . . Those that are working for the whites simply make a hand-to-mouth living, owing to the great cost of buying provisions and goods at the local stores." But their cousins on Tobacco Plains were in a still more penurious condition, as there were no settlers or miners near for whom they could work, and consequently they "suffered more from the loss of the buffalo than any other section of the tribe. . . They have of late years been eating up their cattle and even cows, and now have little left. The failure of the surface berry crop will cause much suffering this year. They usually dry the berries for winter use. . . They have only two gardens this year, one of which belongs to the chief. . ." (1)

The Kootenays at present, if neither particularly progressive nor prosperous, at least seem contented with their lot: Isadore's passions died with him. A superior type is still to be found in the band at the Columbia Lakes, yet the general deterioration which De Smet foresaw, (2) and Baillie-Grohman, cannot be gainsaid. A probable factor in this is the intermarriage between the different groups. The Lower Kootenays were generally adjudged to be "inferior in physique . . honesty and morality to the Upper Kootenays." (3) This inferior strain has now predominated over the other. On the other hand, it is to be hoped that education will eventually result in more hygienic habits, and that the decline of the race will be arrested in this way. The spare diet on which Indians have subsisted through the ages has produced a race of little stamina, although capable at times of great endurance and muscular effort. The benefits of living in a state of nature have been exaggerated in many quarters: the food and habits of the present generation of the Indians, although leaving much to be desired, cannot be so very much worse for them than those of their ancestors, whose life was an alternation of famine and buffalo feasts, whose days were spent in the open but their nights among the dirt and refuse on the floor of their teepees. -----

(1) Michael Phillips' Report, Sessional Papers 1888, p.122.

(2) "L'arrivee en masse des Blancs parmi les Indes a toujours ete funeste a ces derniers." De Smet; Lettres Choiesies, p.91.

(3) Michael Phillips, Report 1888.

VIII

FORT STEELE.



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By the courtesy of Mr. Galbraith, the name of Galbraith's Ferry was changed before the departure of the police to Fort Steele. The ferry itself had gone by that time, replaced by a bridge. The place as yet could scarcely be termed a hamlet: there were just a few buildings by the river, and now the empty fort and barracks, but it was a point on the map, and here all trails converged. The inhabitants numbered altogether some eleven white men, and a few score Chinese, the latter, with half a dozen of the whites, engaged in making a laborious living ~~living~~ washing gold out of Wild Horse Creek. There were a constable, storekeepers, one or two farmers, and a few grizzly old-timers sticking to their claims on Perry and Weaver Creeks, Palmer's Bar, and Moyie river. Until the Indians were thoroughly pacified, it was hardly to be expected that any more settlers would be bold enough to venture into the valley.

At the head of the river there was for a year or two a lively little construction camp or village of the name of Grohman. Its story adds another episode of futile endeavour to Kootenay history. Mr. Adolph Baillie-Grohman, big game hunter, mountain climber, and promoter of the first Kootenay Lands Reclamation scheme, visited the district in 1882, and became one of the claimants for the famous Blue Bell mine. He narrowly escaped being murdered at the hands of his partner, Sprowle, as the latter was crazed with disappointment when judgment was delivered against them. Mr. Grohman had meanwhile consoled himself by obtaining from the government a concession for the Kootenay bottom lands, a stretch of fine alluvial grass land at the mouth of the Kootenay river. Except for producing swamp hay, however, these lands were useless, as every summer the river overflowed its banks and converted this stretch into a chain of lakes. Here Dewdney's trail had been regularly drowned, and the engineering problems involved in controlling the flood have not been satisfactorily solved even yet. Mr. Grohman, although not an engineer, brought forward a suggestion in 1882. A concession was accordingly granted him with a clause empowering him to carry out his scheme for reclaiming the land.

The plan was to divert the flood water of the Kootenay into the Columbia river by connecting their headwaters, which are only a mile apart. Father De Smet had observed that when the snow melted in the spring some of the Kootenay water flowed northward over this little divide, (1) but since his time its level had been raised slightly by gravel brought down by the creeks. Mr. Grohman proposed to cut out a channel which would allow the flood water to resume its ancient course, and find its outlet through the Columbia valley. He would then sell his lands to the settlers who would flock in to farm on the splendid soil thus reclaimed.

At the time there was not a single settler in the Columbia valley who would have been inconvenienced by the raising of the high water level there, but in 1883, when Mr. Grohman's concession had been granted, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company had just decided to use the Kicking Horse Pass, and were surveying their line across the Columbia valley. In consternation at discovering a scheme was on foot that would necessitate a totally different survey, they immediately caused the proceedings to be stopped. The Provincial government expressed its regret that it had not made a more thorough examination of interests affected, and it also remembered that it had no legal right to sanction this clause in the concession at all, since canal works properly come under the jurisdiction of the Dominion government, which had not been consulted. Mr. Grohman was informed that he would either have to abandon his work or else consent to the supervision of his plans by the Dominion government. A small canal, provided with a lock, was suggested. This would have no effect on the Kootenay bottom lands, but, as he was promised not only his original concession, but thirty thousand acres of picked land in the Upper Kootenay as well, he consented to build the canal. (2)

It was several years before the plans were completed and officially approved, and actual work was not commenced until 1887-88. One of the conditions was that it was to be finished within two years, and in

(1) De Smet: Oregon Missions, p.140.

(2) Baillie-Grohman: op. cit., p.265.

spite of the enormous difficulties in the way of the construction, Mr. Grohman succeeded. The cost of transporting his machinery - sawmill, steam pumps to remove the seepage water- was staggering, but money was no object, and the work was carried on "in defiance of reason and common sense ... its ulterior inutility did not affect us, for thirty thousand acres, and the right to the overflowed land were secured by completion according to plans, and the canal became public property." (1)

Two hundred men were employed, and the camp boasted a post office and a store, the only one between Fort Steele and Golden, and which therefore had all the trade of the Columbia Lake Indians. Of the latter Grohman formed a very high opinion: he also admits making a very high profit on the goods he sold them. They had no craft in bargaining; he mentions their love of gambling, "but as they invariably try conclusions with the wily Kalispels or Spokanes, hailing from more civilization-haunted localities, who visit them bent on regular gambling raids, they are generally fleeced. Many a time have I seen the results of a winter's trapping or a summer's hunting gambled away in one night." (2)

The canal was at last completed, according to the dimensions laid down by the government. It was forty-five feet wide and sixty-seven hundred feet long. Only one boat, however, and that one squeezing through with great difficulty, passed its locks. Twelve months after Mr. Grohman had been granted his land, the government decided that the canal was a danger, since "it was feared that the Kootenay might get the better of the lock in an exceptionally high water." (3) Accordingly, at a cost of twenty-five hundred dollars, they proceeded to close it up. It had served nobody's purpose but that of Mr. Grohman and his Kootenay Valley Lands Company. It was not only too narrow for convenient navigation, but to be of any use it would have had to be supplemented by another and longer canal from Columbia Lake to the head of navigation on the Columbia river. The upper stretches of this river were only navigable in time of very high water, at all other

(1) Grohman, op. cit., p. 265.

(2) Ibid. p. 303.

(3) Ibid. p. 265.

times the channel being barred with sand-banks and snags. Only by dint of colossal labour had Mr. Grohman been able to transport his machinery up the river.

The construction of the railway had brought a miscellaneous population to Golden and its neighbourhood, but the rumours of an Indian rising prevented this from filtering southward down the valley, as in the ordinary course of things would probably have happened. Nevertheless, a few pioneers took up land in the eighties, among them Mr. Hanson, who erected a saw-mill at Wasa, and developed a farm and an orchard; the Fernie brothers, who took up a ranch near Fort Steele, and George Johnston, who took up another near the present site of Windermere. The voters' list for 1885 shows a total of thirty-six in the district of East Kootenay, including eight farmers. Five years later the number of voters had risen to three hundred and fourteen, and the railway population now furnishing a market, this list includes thirty-nine farmers. In 1893 the voters' list shows five hundred and seventy-nine names, and a variety of occupations, ranging from gentleman to boiler-maker, barrister to bar-tender. There were now eighty-five farmers, but only three and one half per cent of the land they had taken up was actually under cultivation. (1)

The farms of Kootenay have never supplied her needs, but the reasons are not far to seek. The greater part of the land is not fit for agriculture, and none of it can be cultivated without irrigation. Originally the trouble and expense of bringing in seeds and implements was enough to give pause to all but the most determined of settlers, and the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway did less to remove this difficulty than might have been expected owing to its caprice in the matter of rates for the first few years. (2) The Government Agent at Fort Steele reported in 1903 that "We have but few farmers who confine themselves to agriculture, and by far the greater part of the grain, hay, and dairy produce used in the district is imported from Alberta. There is, however, very little land available for settlement. The rate of wages prevailing in other _ _ _

(1) B.C. Its Present Resources, etc. Victoria, 1893.

(2) Reports of Minister of Mines, Kootenay District, 1885. Sessional Papers.

industries is higher than farmers can afford to pay. . ." (1) Since that time plenty of crown land has been thrown open for preemption, but the amount of land held by Mr. Baillie-Grohman's company, which had been given the pick of the valley, was for long a grievance with the people of Fort Steele. (2)

It was the revival of mining in the nineties that expanded Fort Steele into a vigorous little town, a centre for outfitting the hundreds of prospectors that were going out to comb the hillsides, looking, not for gold dust, but for gold-bearing quartz, silver, lead, copper, and nickel. A different era had opened, and the day of the free miner, who, with no more capital than his dishpan, a wooden rocker, and a bottle of quicksilver, had a chance to make his fortune, was gone forever. To crush quartz and work silver and lead ores, required mills and expensive machinery, but the poorest prospector hoped to stake claims of such wealth that Eastern capitalists would rush to buy them. The district did not suffer from lack of advertisement; Fort Steele itself did its part, issuing in 1895 a mimeographed paper entitled "The Fort Steele Prospector". What it lacked in bulk it made up by its aggressive determination to make known the riches of the mines and the needs and merits of Fort Steele. The extent of the mineral wealth of the country could not yet be told, and was only vaguely guessed at. The men of the gold rush had not troubled to stake anything but placer claims, for beyond this their knowledge and experience of mining did not go. The next generation of prospectors had then as it were a virgin field in which to work.

The first remarkable discovery was made in 1892, when two prospectors (3) staked out the North Star mine. Mr. D. D. Mann, of Montreal, formed the first company to work it. Finding the ore rich in both silver and lead, they built a waggon road from the mine to the Kootenay river, a distance of twenty-one miles, and in 1895, employing twenty-two teams, were able to haul out about thirty tons a day. (4) The Sullivan

(1) Bureau of Provincial Information, Bulletin No. 10.

(2) Fort Steele Prospector, Jan. 11, 1896.

(3) Joe Bourgeois and James Langell - Prospector Nov. 16, 1895.

(4) Ibid.

group of mines, on the opposite side of Mark Creek, had been staked almost immediately after the North Star, but their enormous wealth was not realized for some years.

The third notable discovery was made by an Indian. Father Coccola, scolding the Indians for their laziness and poverty, had held up to them as an example the hardy and persevering white men who were finding fortunes in the rocks of the mountains. Some of them were stung by his reproaches to go out in the hills and prospect for themselves, and one, named Pierre, or Pielle, as they pronounce it, was successful. It was he who had once threatened to shoot Father Coccola, and only desisted from astonishment and awe at the priest's calmness and self-control. Now he came to his house and in silent triumph flung him a piece of pure galena. The delighted Father, after having the specimen examined, and obtaining a miner's license, followed Pierre to the hill above Lake Moyie, and there, with his friend James Cronin, staked the extraordinarily rich St. Eugene mine. With the proceeds of his share in this mine Father Coccola built the new church the mission had long needed. Pierre received a cabin, a life annuity, and a ceremonious funeral when he died, in 1926. A memorial stone recording his discovery is placed on his grave at the mission. (1)

The development of the North Star and the St. Eugene mines in 1895 forced before the government the problem of transportation in the Kootenay, a problem it was loth to tackle. Unless another highway from east to west were provided, the trade of Kootenay would again flow south below the Boundary. The nearest smelters that could treat the ore were at Great Falls, Montana, distant a short rail journey from Jennings, which could be reached by boat from Fort Steele. The river was navigable for a few months in the year, but in the spring and fall the channel was blocked with sand bars. A mass meeting of the citizens of Fort Steele accordingly drew up a petition that was presented to the Dominion government, requesting improvement of the river to facilitate the export of ore, "... it being an utter impossibility to ship ore up the river to connect with the Canadian (1) Denys Nelson, in Cranbrook Courier, May 20, 1926.

Pacific Railway at Golden. . . The natural route to the smelters from East Kootenay is down the river to the Great Northern Railway." But not even the consideration that "the river is tributary to a rich mineral bearing district, consequently when the Crows Nest Railway is built much of the ore in the surrounding country will be transported to the Railroad by means of boats," nor that ". . it is the intention of the American government to improve the river on their side," moved the government to pay any attention to the request. (1) The Crows Nest Railway was on the boards, and patience the order of the day.

Meanwhile Fort Steele grumbled impatiently at the delay: " To the south we have an unlimited market, but are unable to take advantage of this, on account of the Government persisting in refusing to improve the river, so giving us several months more of navigation, for the paltry reason that it also benefits the United States. . . Why should this country be retarded and kept back by Government 'in order not to benefit the States'? . . ." (2) "We have all that is requisite to make a rich and prosperous mining camp. But for want of means of transport all this vast mineral wealth is idle. . ." (3)

The North Star, the St. Eugene, and the Sullivan mines were ready to ship out ore if transportation had been convenient. So rich was the ore from the North Star that its owners even decided to build the waggon road already mentioned and ship by means of the river, improved or not. For three years this one mine kept the Upper Kootenay Navigation Company busy running boats to Jennings. Captain Miller, an old and experienced coast captain, was in charge, with Captain Armstrong and Captain Sanborn. Even when high water covered the gravel bars safely, the channel was not an easy one to navigate. It required such skill that it became a popular saying that "Give a Kootenay river pilot a heavy dew and his boat will arrive on schedule." (4) In 1896 the steamer "Rustler" was wrecked in the canyon near Jennings, the "Annerly" coming to the rescue of her _ _ _

(1) Petition published in Prospector, Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov. 9, 1895.

(2) Prospector, Nov. 23, 1895.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Granbrook Courier, "The World is his Country", Christmas 1926.

passengers just in time. The "Ruth" and the "Gwendolyn" were the other two, running to Fort Steele and the North Star sheds above, and going further, to Canal Flats, connected with the Upper Columbia Navigation Company that linked the service to Golden by means of waggon, water, and tramway.

Captain Armstrong, who piloted a small boat on the Upper Columbia, conceived the idea of keeping the trade on the Canadian side by shipping the ore north to Golden, but such serious difficulties cropped up that the plan was never carried out. In the first place, the journey upstream from the North Star sheds to Canal Flats would have taken quite as long as the trip down stream to Jennings, while from Canal Flats the loads would have had to be transferred by waggon to the Columbia boats, and then, unless the channel of the Columbia could have been cleared and deepened, there would have had to be another transfer to a tramway for a few miles, and then a final trip on the river again to Golden. Even then, after all this labour, it would, unless new smelters were erected at Golden, have been necessary to ship it eventually to the United States. The government did indeed make a grant of land to aid the building of a smelter at Golden. (1) It was intended to treat ore from the Monarch mine at Field, and from the Spillimacheen camp, but, as there was no suitable flux in the neighbourhood, nothing came of the project.

This kept the little paddle steamers running twice a week to Jennings, carrying about a thousand tons of ore a month. Far more could have been shipped had facilities offered, but even so the mine paid most handsomely. In 1897 a rock in a canyon ended the career of both boats, but the Crows' Nest Railway, then under construction, had already spelt the end of their business.

Fort Steele now looked forward to the fulfillment of its proudest boasts. It had at that time a population of over a thousand: it dreamed of multiplying this with the trade the railway would bring. So far the only mine that had actually shipped any quantity of ore was the North Star, but scores of claims lay undeveloped in its immediate neighbourhood, and more on

(1) Statement by Mr. F.J. Armstrong.

Wild Horse Creek and at innumerable points both in the Selkirks and in the Rockies. The future of Fort Steele, "Kootenay's Capital", seemed assured.



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IX

THE CROWS NEST RAILWAY.



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Fort Steele had clamoured long and persistently for the Crows' Nest Railway; her parliamentary representatives had worked for it steadily. Many were the syndicates, in Eastern Canada and England, that applied for a charter, and endless the negotiations. It was felt at last that action would be more quickly forthcoming if the government itself, or the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, undertook the enterprise. Colonel Baker was indefatigable in his efforts to bring matters to a head; also Mr. William Fernie, who had first found the enormous coal deposits in the pass, struggled for years to obtain the railroad which alone could enable them to be developed.

The charter granted to the B.C. Southern Railway was finally, in 1898, acquired by the Canadian Pacific Railway, which was actuated by the desire to compete more successfully with the American roads, particularly the Great Northern, for the Pacific traffic. There was a danger, if they delayed too long in opening branch lines, that the American lines would be running through southern British Columbia. Therefore the line from Dunmore to Lethbridge was first leased and then purchased, and then pushed on to the Crows' Nest Pass. From here to Kootenay Landing it was constructed under the charter of the B.C. Southern Railway Company. The government assisted in all this construction work to the extent of eleven thousand dollars per mile of line, granted under the terms of the famous Crows' Nest Agreement. The Company was thereby bound to take the railway through Macleod, to agree to certain stipulations regarding local rates and tolls, to reduce the general rates on the main line for certain classes of freight, and to submit its rates at all times to revision and control by the Governor-in-Council or a Railway Commission when such should be appointed.

The answer to the question, what have the railways of Canada cost the nation, is so dumbfounding that few other questions are asked, save with regard to their profits and losses. In the case of the Crows' Nest Railway, these, and the working of the famous Agreement, are a part of the general history of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and needs no repetition

here. But the human side of railway construction, that is, the story of the men who worked with pick and shovel, has been less fully treated, and I intend to dwell for a moment on this phase.

Labourers to build the Crows' Nest Line could not be hired in the country through which it was to run: certainly in Kootenay there were none. They had been warned not to come in as there was no employment for anyone but miners or prospectors with capital enough to outfit themselves for a season. Labour had therefore to be found in the East, and there over four thousand were procured on certain conditions. They were largely immigrants from Great Britain and other countries, but included a number of French Canadians. It was probably the latter, who, when they found that the terms on which they had hired themselves were not being adhered to by their employers, were able to use the influence of friends in the East to bring about an investigation. Three Commissioners, C.A. Dugas, F. Pedley, and J. Appleton, were appointed in January 1898 to make inquiry into alleged injustice and harsh treatment of labourers by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, or rather, by the contractors to whom the construction had been delegated.

The Commission held sittings at various parts of the line, and eventually made a large number of recommendations, which might be grouped under the headings of breach of contract by the employers, inadequate medical service, and overcharging for supplies. Responsibility for these rests upon the contractors, of whom there were thirty, under the general supervision of Mr. Haney; many of the acts of petty tyranny were probably due to sub-contractors. Nevertheless the whole matter forms a chapter of railway history that deserves as well as any other to be written.

In the first place, the men were paid less than they had been promised by the employment agencies in the East, and were charged more for their transportation to the scene of the work. A point which the evidence established was "The low rate of wages which left the men in the position of being scarcely able to meet their expenses and charges from the time they left home to the date of their return, many of them never getting out

of debt to the company and being compelled to walk the whole distance home, sometimes nearly two thousand two hundred and fifty miles, and in all cases destitute and exposed to all sorts of hardships." (1) They had been obliged to pay a fare of a cent a mile to Macleod and to furnish their food on the journey, to pay fare and board from Macleod to their point of work, which latter transportation they had expected would be provided. Other charges laid on them without warning were a poll tax of three dollars in each year when they were working in British Columbia, mail fees levied without consent, fees for medical attendance that was never provided, and also board was charged for periods during which the men were kept idle, "whether due to bad weather or to causes uncontrollable by the men, or whether the employer had no work for the time being." (2)

The manner in which the wages were paid was one of the chief grievances. Time cheques were used, in a way that caused the men totally unnecessary inconvenience and loss of money. There was evidence of a contractor having actually stooped to make profit by discounting his own cheque.

The recommendations made by the Commission set a definite scale of wages and board, and specified "That the Company, or chief employer, be responsible, directly and indirectly, for reasonably prompt payment of wages. . . ." The evidence regarding transportation agreements had included complaints by the company of fraud on the part of labourers, therefore, as was only sensible, it was recommended "that regulations be adopted to protect the employers from imposition by men . . . That rules be fixed as to fares, food, cost of supplies, washing and sleeping accomodation, working days, rate of wages, medical attendance, hospitals, etc. . . That bemployment agents in future be subject to government regulation, and a general system adopted to ascertain the physical fitness of men seeking employment. . . ." (3)

----- Whether any of these recommendations were carried out is not -----
(1) (2) (3) Report of Commissioners, Sessional Papers 1898.

clear; complaints had established the fact of general neglect to care for the men, or to provide medical attention when they were ill, but no changes seem to have been made. The evidence for this is the report of Mr. R.C. Clute upon the death of two men, Fraser and Macdonald, who died from exposure to the cold while suffering from diphtheria in January 1898. The report, which was not presented until a year later, reiterates in even more forcible terms the condemnation which had been passed earlier by the other commissioners. Mr. Clute admitted that it was true that the system of caring for the labourers was better than that employed on other lines. Yet conditions worse than he describes can scarcely be imagined. He observed that "The number of men working on the railroad who became ill and were treated by the medical officers, is, I think, abnormally large; with a particularly healthy climate, and sufficiently good food, how does it happen that there should have been in the neighbourhood of fifteen hundred men requiring treatment in a total of two thousand to four thousand, all within less than a year? . . . there must have been an utter disregard of the simplest laws of health. . ." This charge is proven by his indication of the absolute neglect of sanitation and suitable sleeping quarters. "How is it possible sickness can be avoided where fifty or sixty men occupy a bunk house twenty-four feet by forty, with a seven foot ceiling and no ventilation? Is it any wonder that some of the camps were said to be hospitals, and that sometimes twenty men at a time would be unfit for work, meantime paying their board and losing their time?" (1)

The other three commissioners had reported instances of men being forced to sleep in the open air in the winter. Some of the men had not brought blankets, being under the impression that they would be provided. Others were kept till January in tents without stoves, and those who were given shelter were placed in cold and filthy box cars and sheds. Sick men were bullied by the contractors, whose one idea was to rush the work to completion in the promised time. Men who pleaded sickness were sometimes discharged in midwinter, refused meals, and turned out to shift —

(1) Report of Mr. R.C. Clute. Sessional Papers, 1899.

for themselves in the cold. (1)

Such treatment sounds incredibly harsh and callous, but it was exposed again in the investigation into the death of the two men mentioned above. The two were taken ill with severe colds and sore throats, and although it was suspected that they had diphtheria, there was no attempt to send for a doctor or to isolate them. Finally they were sent in an open sleigh drawn through a cold wind to the medical headquarters at Crows' Nest Lake. The doctor was not there, and the hapless men were packed on east to the next doctor, who was brought to them just in time to see them die of pneumonia, lying in a bare box car with the temperature eight degrees below zero and a north-east wind blowing.

The doctors were in no way to blame for the deficiencies of their service; they had too long a line to attend to, and were moreover handicapped by improper supplies and equipment. The unsanitary condition of the camps led to outbreaks of typhoid fever, or mountain fever, as they called it. Mr. Clute recommended that "in large public works of this nature there should be some form of health inspection. . . the government engineer on the works and the chief medical officer should constitute a board of health to enforce reasonable sanitary regulations. . . provision should be made for field hospitals . . that patients might be cared for without endangering their lives till they could with safety be sent to a base hospital." (2)

The only nurses available at that time in the Kootenay were the Sisters of Providence at the St. Eugene mission. In spite of their limited accommodation they had taken care of fever patients sent to them, and they agreed to conduct a hospital if the building were provided. Mr. Cronin of the St. Eugene mine promptly subscribed to the fund, and Mr. Haney contributed five thousand dollars. (3) A new building was erected, with beds for forty patients, but so urgent was the need that at one time there were as many as eighty cases under the care of the nurses. Convalesc-

ents had to live under tents. A year later, in 1899, the hospital was
(1) Report of Commissioners in Re Crows' Nest Complaints, Sessional Papers 1898.
(2) Report of Mr. R.C. Clute, Sessional Papers, 1899.
(3) Codex Historicus, St. Eugene mission.

moved to the new city of Cranbrook, and arrangements were made with the Sisters to remain in charge of it.

For some years before the coming of the railway Father Coccola had been the only doctor in the countryside. He had had some medical training, and had made use of it in his mission work in the construction camps of the main line of the Canadian Pacific. Through lack of proper regulations sanitation had been neglected in these camps also, and medical service badly organized. Father Coccola said that "A good deal of sickness prevailed among the workers, but this was not spoken about much outside. There was a good deal of typhoid . . . and other epidemic diseases." Yet he found the contractors anxious to help him in his efforts to improve conditions. "At my suggestion they laid in stocks of medicines and surgical lotions and bandages required in dressing the hurts of the men. They built at my order temporary huts and detailed men of my choosing to act as orderlies and nurses therein." (1) And yet, after experience of the necessity of such field hospitals, the Crows' Nest line had been undertaken with no provision for hospitals save at the headquarters, Macleod and Lethbridge.

At the time the railway was projected Fort Steele was the only town in East Kootenay, and it was naturally assumed that here would be the most important town on the line west of the Rockies. Great then was the chagrin and disappointment of the residents of Fort Steele when the railway passed them by, curving across Joseph's Prairie and making its divisional point at the Cranbrook estate, which Colonel Baker had put up for sale. The new town that grew up at the station here took the name of Cranbrook, which had been bestowed on the farm after the estate of Colonel Baker's family in Kent. There was a wide level area for a townsite, and a convenient water supply in Joseph's Creek, which ran through the farm. Nevertheless the choice is regretted by those who count among the necessities of their dwelling-place a fine view. The view from any point in Cranbrook is indeed very fine, but as a site it cannot compare with Fort Steele, lying -
(1) Nelson: Memoirs of Father Coccola.

as the latter does between the river and the mountains, and facing out towards the distant blue gap from which the beautiful little St. Mary's river winds down to join the Kootenay.

The Canadian Pacific held an interest in the St. Eugene mine, and the railway was therefore built so as to serve it. Father Cocola spoke of a proposal to have the railway pass close to the mission, and to have a smelter on the St. Mary's. He objected to this that "they were in the country for the good of the Indians, that a smelter would ruin the country with its fumes if placed at their doors, and that he would never consent for personal gain to do anything to injure the country for the Indians." (1)

For a few years the government offices remained at Fort Steele, and it boasted also the only bank in the district, the private bank formed in 1897 being succeeded by a branch of the Bank of Commerce the following year. (2) The Kootenay Central running north to Golden in 1903 gave it the consolation prize of a station. But today it is half abandoned, the drab weather-beaten boards of long vacant stores and hotels seeming to wear mourning for their lost importance, and the little bastion of the old police fort standing a forlorn but picturesque monument to its past.

Cranbrook was not the only new townsite that appeared on the map with the advent of the Crows' Nest Railway. Fernie was laid out and named after the discoverer of the great coal seams in the same year. By the time the rails reached this spot there ^{were} ten thousand tons of coal already banked out. (3) Kimberley is the third of these new towns. Many more were laid out, but, except in the coal area, there have not been sufficient industries to maintain them. Wardner, for instance, has not occupied many of the one hundred and forty acres that were laid out for it in town lots. (4) Canadian Pacific Railway pamphlets of twenty-five years ago give the impression that the valley was as full of towns springing up as a field might be of mushrooms, but such was not, and has not been the case.

(1) Nelson: Memoirs of Father Cocola.

(2) Statement by Mr. J.F. Armstrong.

(3) Mining in B.C. Official Bulletin No. 19.

(4) B.C. Mining Record, June 1897.

X

CONCLUSION.



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East Kootenay has both failed and exceeded the hopes of its pioneers. Of the hundreds of mining claims staked all over the countryside, a very small proportion have justified any serious development. Yet these have made it a famous mining region. Even in his least sober moments no prospector can have dreamed of the miles of intricate tunnels and caverns that constitute the great Sullivan mine, the largest underground lead and silver mine in the world. For a few years the difficulty of treating the ore arrested its progress, but the perfection of the flotation process solved the problem, and now a huge concentrator operates at Kimberley, the purified sulphides being sent to Trail for smelting.

Among other important mines in the Selkirks is the Paradise mine, eight thousand and eight hundred feet above sea level. It was discovered in 1899 by two prospectors, Johnny Watson and John Jeffrey, (1) who two years later sold their claim to Randolph Bruce. It also produces silver and lead, in fact, nearly half the provincial output of these two minerals comes from East Kootenay. (2) Again, practically all of this comes from the Selkirk mountains; the Rockies have so far proved a barren field for prospectors. Apart from the Monarch mine, and the Kootenay King, near Field and Fort Steele respectively, there has been no development of claims, and practically no useful minerals have been found, the explanation given by geologists being that the Rocky Mountains are many million years younger than the Selkirks.

Some years ago, instigated by the desire to supply the demand that is certain to arise on the Prairies, when more intensive methods of agriculture are adopted, for chemical fertilizers, the government directed a search for calcium phosphate rock. Large deposits of this valuable mineral exist in the Western States of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, and the same geological horizon being found in the Canadian Rockies at certain points, a survey was undertaken there, with the result that in 1915 deposits were _ _

(1)Cranbrook Courier, Oct. 14, 1926.

(2)Government pamphlet- Lands for Preemption, Cranbrook District, 1915.

found near Banff. This was an event of great importance, since the only other occurrence of the mineral in Canada has been near Ottawa, and the supply was long ago exhausted. Recently further deposits, but of low grade, have been discovered near Fernie.

Fernie is the centre of one of the most important coal regions of the province, a field covering two hundred and thirty square miles. It is really the extreme south-western streak of the great Alberta coal area, hence extends no further west than the basin of the Elk river. Its product is a high grade bituminous coal, with occasional anthracite; a large proportion of it is sold as coke, the remainder as steam coal. It can safely be asserted that if it had not been for these immense coal seams of the Crows Nest region, the silver and lead mines further east would have waited many years longer for their railway service.

Lumbering has come next to mining in importance, but in this industry the East Kootenay does not compare nearly so favourably with other parts of the province as in mining. The resources are still far from exhausted, but the ravages of seasonal fires, and the activities of energetic companies make it impossible for anyone to regard them as inexhaustible. At the same time, very little of the country now being cleared by logging can ever be made to grow anything more useful or more valuable than trees. The possibility of reforestation and the establishment of a new industry in the shape of wood-pulp production therefore presents itself. There are several obstacles in the way of this at present, but these will doubtless be removed in time. In the first place, there has been a temporary over-production of wood-pulp, and consequently a serious fall in prices. Secondly, British Columbia is extremely backward in forestry policies: she sells tree seeds by the ton to more far-sighted governments, but makes no attempt herself at systematic reforestation. It will be recognized in time that this is the logical use to make of areas like the unused stretches of East Kootenay, yet it will probably be carried out first on the Coast, where the valuable pulp varieties, balsam, spruce, and hemlock, grow twice as fast as

in the dryer atmosphere of the interior. Yet it is a possibility for the future, and yellow pine and larch, which grow rapidly in the Kootenay, may perhaps be planted there for tie and construction purposes when existing supplies begin to sink low.

Agriculture is the next industry to be considered. "Practically all the land in the Columbia and Kootenay valleys, up to an altitude of thirty-five hundred feet, and in some cases to four thousand feet, has been alienated for agricultural purposes. It is doubtful, however, whether much of it will be used for farming for a long time to come." (1) The reasons for this doubt, which the last ten years have fully justified, provide the ultimate answer to the query why has not the East Kootenay made more progress since it has received adequate means of communication. The answer is twofold. In the first place, the development of mines is so expensive that it has to wait upon the market; secondly, the soil and climate are not suitable for agriculture on any large scale. Fruit can be grown, but the season is too short to guarantee success, and water is not everywhere available for irrigation. Cattle can be raised, but the snow in winter is too deep to allow of successful grazing. The Commission of Conservation, in its report on the forests of the province, comes to the conclusion that "Much of the land alienated for agricultural purposes is not better suited for producing forest crops and timber-grazing, and probably most of it will be thus utilised." (2)

The reason why agriculture depends on irrigation, and has not been attempted on a large scale, although many isolated experiments have been successful, becomes plain on studying the contour of the province. While the Coast Range, by precipitating on its peaks the moisture of the westerly winds, causes a dry belt in the neighbourhood of Kamloops, the similar action of the Selkirks causes a second dry belt in the Cranbrook district. Hence the rainfall in East Kootenay during the summer months is very little greater than that in the neighbourhood of Kamloops and Vernon;

(1) Commission of Conservation, Report on Forests of B.C., p. 259.

(2) Ibid., p. 256.

moreover, owing to the greater elevation the growing season is shorter.

The conclusion cannot be avoided that the gold rush, which bulks so large in the present sketch, has contributed very little to the permanent development of the country, and the fur trade, which opens the story, still less. Kootenay was not a prime fur region: it never acquired a permanent post. It derived its greatest importance from the facilities offered by its rivers for a swift, if dangerous, passage to the Coast. The name of David Thompson is nowhere preserved save at the little memorial fort erected at Invermere on the ruins of old Kootanae House, in 1922.

A gold rush can do little for a country save draw attention to its other resources, and provide it with at least elementary means of communication. The type of miner who comes in at the time of a rush is apt to rush off somewhere else at the first whispered rumour of richer ground, and is not often disposed to settle down to the drudgery and fixity and isolation of pioneer farm life. At the same time, and partly because of his own reluctance to labour for anything but gold, he is often followed by enterprising settlers who cultivate the most promising spots and take advantage of the market at the mines. Agriculture was thus fostered by placer mines more conspicuously south of the boundary line than anywhere in British Columbia. The farmers of the Walla Walla, Grande Ronde, Payette, Boise, and Galiatin valleys established themselves on the gold dust of the miners and on the roads they had built. By 1866 there were six flour mills in the Walla Walla valley alone, and in the following year five hundred tons of flour were shipped out. (1) Cattle-raising flourished even more speedily, and the American cattlemen supplied the whole of the Kootenay market. Their vegetables and dairy produce came in also, for until the coming of the Chinese there were scarcely any gardens at Wild Horse Creek.

Under favourable conditions, then, the gold washed out by the mobs at the shallow diggings served indirectly as capital to set up the basic industry of agriculture, and to provide it with a few main arteries of transportation. But these favourable conditions did not exist in the (1) Trimble, op. cit., p. 106.

Kootenay, on account of its location, and the comparative poverty of its soil. Hence the early gold-diggers left little behind them but unsightly mounds of earth; their breweries and saw-mills vanished with them. They developed no new industry, discovered no minerals even but the one they had come seeking. "Any man of ordinary intelligence can become an expert placer miner," said Dr. Dawson, (1) and perhaps the average had no more than they needed. Certainly they had not enough knowledge of minerals to enable them to become prospectors, nor had they the capital to test and work underground mines. With the exception of some thousands of dollars which were expended on building ditches for sluicing and for hydraulic mining, most of the gold from Wild Horse was carried into the United States and dissipated in San Francisco and other favoured haunts of the miners. There was a larger proportion of American miners in Kootenay than at any other of the British Columbia mines. But even had they all been trained experienced mining engineers, able to spy out all the wealth that escaped the eyes of the poor, improvident, excitable gold-diggers, they could not have hastened the development of the district. They would have grown grey with age and weariness waiting for the government to build railways to their mines, and for capitalists to take an interest in them.

The first cheapening of transport into Kootenay came from the building of an American railway, the ^{Northern Pacific} ~~Great Northern~~, which touched Sand Point, and the first capital that was invested at the revival of mining in the eighties and nineties was largely American. A government pamphlet printed in 1893 states that there was two million of American capital already invested there, and laments the great difficulty in enlisting English capital. "The Americans provide every facility for cheap transport to the Montana smelters." (2)

British Columbia seemed to recover with difficulty from its great disappointment at the failure to secure the original trade of Kootenay for the Coast merchants. News of the first discovery of gold had aroused the wildest excitement and anticipations of a well-shared prosperity. It

(1) Appendix to "B.C. Its Present Resources, etc." 1893.
(2) Ibid.

had even lent one more motive to the desire of the Island for union with the Mainland. Under the heading, "Shall we Share the Kootenay Trade?", the editor of the "Colonist" wrote, "Shall we unite with British Columbia and secure our share of the rush of passengers and traffic which will flow this way from San Francisco, Portland, and Boise, or shall we remain separate, and see all the trade go by our doors on a direct line to New Westminster?" (1)

Had the Dewdney trail been more successful, what trade there was to Kootenay in the seventies would at least have been partly with the Coast. But since the freight rates in 1869 were from ten and twelve cents from Walla Walla, and sixteen cents from Hope, it can easily be seen in which direction the trade went. (2)

The high cost of living in the Kootenay, resulting from the expense of pack-train transport added to the tariff, undoubtedly retarded progress and settlement. The building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and of a waggon road from Golden, brought prices down, but did not immediately bring an increase in the population. Mr. Sproat reported on the situation thus, "It is to be regretted that the abnormal trade which it was expected would be created for a couple of years or so, by the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, will not benefit the district much. This might have been useful to the Kootenay, in giving it that start, which to young districts, as to young men, is so important. But Kootenay was not ready for the trade, and . . . the continued neglect in adjusting the Indian Land question repulsed incoming settlers and capital and crushed her hopes." (3)

The Indian question focussed upon Kootenay more attention from the government than it had ever received before, and its final peaceful solution removed one great bar to progress, the completion of the Crows' Nest Railway removing the other. Between the years 1901 and 1904 the population actually doubled. (4) Five public schools are mentioned as being conducted in the latter year. The Church had been active for some years:

the schoolhouse at Fort Steele was converted into the Anglican church of
(1) Colonist, Feb. 11, 1865.

(2) H.M. Ball to Colonial Secretary, Oct. 21, 1869.

(3) Sproat, Report, 1883.

(4) Bulletin No. 10, Provincial Bureau of Information, 1904.

St. John the Divine as early as 1894, and the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians built churches there in 1897 and 1898. In the next year the first church was built at Fernie, an Anglican church, other denominations following. At Windermere the Anglican church bears the unique distinction of being called the "Stolen Church". When Donald was abandoned as a divisional point on the railway, and dismantled, this church was assigned to Golden, but zealous members of the congregation, who were settling at Windermere, conveyed it on a raft up the river with them, and erected it by the lake at Windermere.

Furs, gold, silver, lead, coal, and railways - these words epitomize the history of East Kootenay, all its human story being the quest for these material objects. One of the most important mining regions in the Dominion, it has not, nor can it be expected for a long time to come, that it ever will have a large population, because so little labour is required in this age of mining by machinery, and because of its lack of other industries. If the onward rush of invention and discovery should ever enable the latter handicap to be overcome, if Canada should ever check the gravitation of her people to the cities, and decide to build her civilization on a wider basis, with a better equilibrium between urban and rural industry, then perhaps the citizens of that freer day may be drawn by the attraction of its climate and the beauty of its mountains to make their homes in Kootenay in greater numbers. But prophecy lies outside the bounds of history. Suffice it to say, that a community needs traditions: if there are none to hand, stories will be manufactured. It was in the belief that truth is the best basis for tradition that this sketch was undertaken.

APPENDIX A.

PLACE-NAMES.

Athalmer - named after the old spelling, Athylmer, of the name of the Hon. Fred Aylmer, who was the owner of the town site.

Mt. Baker - named after Col. Baker. Col. Baker was one of the ablest men who has served in provincial politics. Born in London in 1830, he was the son of Samuel Baker of Gloucester, and younger brother of Sir Samuel Baker and Baker Pasha. In 1844 he entered the navy as a midshipman. He served in the Crimean War. He took his degree at Cambridge, and then travelled a great deal in the East. In 1884 he settled in East Kootenay with his two sons, and bought the Cranbrooke Estate. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1886, re-elected in 1890, and in 1892 entered the Cabinet as Minister of Mines, Education and Immigration, and Provincial Secretary. He was a man of wide knowledge and progressive views. In 1894 he enacted legislation to provide for a Bureau of Labour Statistics and an Arbitration and Conciliation Board, but the measure was premature and did not gain support. He also tried to establish a Bureau of Mines, and desired to introduce industrial and technical education in the public schools.

Blaeberry Creek = Thompson's old Portage Creek. Named by Dr. Hector, of Captain Palliser's party.

Brisco range - named by Dr. Hector, after a fellow-traveller, Capt. Brisco, of the 11th Hussars.

Brewery Creek - a tributary of Wild Horse, where the town brewery was situated.

Cranbrook = named after an estate of the Baker family in Kent.

Fernie - named after William Fernie.

Mt. Fisher - named after Jack Fisher, miner of the sixties.

Hell Roaring Creek - said to have been named so by an Indian lest the priest should name all the creeks after saints.

Howse Pass - named by Dr. Hector, after Joseph Howse, who crossed it in 1810.

Invermere - the name means "at the mouth of a lake", and was given by the Hon. R. Randolph Bruce.

Joseph's Prairie and Creek - named after Chief Joseph of the Kootenays, who was predecessor and step-father of Isadore.

Kananaskis Pass - named by Capt. Palliser.

Kicking Horse river and Pass - named by Dr. Hector.

Luke Creek, and Mark Creek - named by Father Fouquet.

Maus Creek - named after H.P.Maus, a prospector who took up land and sold it to the Galbraiths.

Michel - mining town, named after old Chief Michel of the Kootenays, superior chief to Joseph.

Moyie - river, lake, and town - named by Simpson Grand Quete, by Palliser Choe-Coos; the name Moyie is supposed to be a corruption of the French word "Mouille".

Perry Creek - after Francois Perrier, half-breed who discovered gold there.

Fort Steele - after Major Steele of the Mounted Police.

The Steeples - named by Capt. Blackiston, of Palliser's party.

St. Mary's river - named by Father Fouquet.

Wilmer was named after the first name of the Hon. Wilmer Cleveland Wells, who was, at that time, Minister of Public Works. It was first named "Peterboro", but on account of the confusion resulting to mails was changed to Wilmer.

Windermere - was named by Mr. Sproat on account of its resemblance to Lake Windermere in the Old Country. There are three lakes: the Lower Columbia Lake, now known as Lake Windermere, Mud Lake, and Upper Columbia Lake, now known simply as Columbia Lake.

APPENDIX B.

Information from Mr. N.A. Wallinger, of Cranbrook, B.C.

June 7, 1928.

In the sixties, all supplies came up by pack trains, (burros) from Walla Walla and after the railway came through, from Sand Point in Idaho; it was not until '96 that the boats ran on the Kootenay from Jennings Montana to the North Star Landing above Fort Steele; these boats brought supplies in and took the galena ore from the North Star Mine to the railway at Jennings on the way to the Great Falls Smelter. Mr. Miller was the first captain; he was followed by a Capt. Sanborn who is still alive at Portland. The following year Capt. Armstrong brought a smaller boat from the Columbia river run, through the canal on to the Kootenay; in '98 both the bigger boats were wrecked in the canon below the mouth of Elk River during high water, and Armstrong took his boat back to the Columbia. The next year the Crows Nest line was through and no river navigation was attempted; the government did not make any improvements in the river, it not being necessary. Both Miller and Armstrong are dead.

The smelter at Golden was built by English money to handle chiefly ore from the Monarch mine at Field and what ore came from the Spillimacheen camp; I do not think it was ever blown in, as S.S. Fowler (now living at Riondel in W. Kootenay) was a first class man and knew the impossibility of smelting the very refractory zinc ore from the Monarch, without adequate fluxing ores which were too expensive in those days to get hold of.

The trouble in shipping ore north to Golden from Fort Steele was the cost of the long waggon haul to the boat landing at Windermere; this would eat up practically all the profit. There were no export duties in those days and of course no import duty to the United States on raw materials, and the southern route was much cheaper.

No ores were shipped from this district in the '90's except the North Star and Sullivan ores and a five -ton shipment from the Dibble mine,

south of Fort Steele. The Rocky Mountains have not developed any large ore body up to the present; the reason given is that it is about twelve million years younger than the Selkirks.

The B.C. Southern was the result of Col. Baker's efforts to obtain transportation for the coal fields in the C.N. Pass; he spent thousands of dollars going to Europe trying to interest capital but failed. The first right of way of the C.N. Pass was cut in 1894, but construction did not commence until three or four years later, when the short line from Medicine Hat to Lethbridge (the coal town) was continued through; this was done through a subsidiary company sponsored by the C.P.R. The shares of the Coal Company, par value \$2.00, went up to over \$100.00, and many people made small fortunes.

APPENDIX C.

Information from Mrs. S.L. Galbraith, of Portland, Ore.

Nov. 1, 1928.

I spent four years on the banks of the green waters of the Kootenay, at John T. Galbraith's Ferry. That was the year of 1869, Oct. 10, I crossed the river in the Uncle Sam Ferry boat. James Galbraith, a fine-looking man was captain, and Michael Phillips was assistant. I was a young woman of nineteen, John's bride. How the Indians did look at me and say that John's young bride was a "Sooknen pulca", meaning she was nice or good.

Well, those were the good old times of the gold-diggers. Packers would come along with the buckskin bags of gold dust and hand them to me to look after till they were ready for the trail for Walla Walla, Wash., as that was the place where the men would head for in November for the winter months and most of them would return in the spring for the summer mining in Wild Horse Creek. Across the Wild Horse Creek was the Nip and Tuck claim that was very rich in gold. Where the Old Town was was called Fisherville.

John T. Galbraith was a pioneer merchant of the Galbraith Kootenay Ferry. He had two pack trains - one mule and one horse train- that packed in goods from Walla Walla. Mr. Galbraith was there in 1864. The first years there were over three thousand people, and quite a lot of women, but the winter I was there in 1869 all had left for the South. - - -

I lived on the banks of the Kootenay river in the little log cabin, which I am glad to say is still standing there in good shape, an old land-mark of the good old days of the gold digging. My husband built this cabin. In 1870 Mr. Galbraith's brother Robert came out, quite a delicate young man. He went into business with his brother John at the Ferry, to keep the store and run the Ferry boat. Times on the river were bad then for the Ferry boat as the waters were very high and rough to handle the boat with oars and the mosquitoes were thicker than hairs on a dog's back, and it was

awfully hot.. . . .

As I loved outdoor exercise I was on horseback most of the time - that was the only way one could get about in the mountains. . . I knew all the old Kootenay chiefs and loved to hear them talk. I got so that I could understand them very well.

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Sarah La Rue Leeper.

I was born in Henty Town, Taylor County, West Virginia, June 16, 1849. I was five years old when my father Capt. John Leeper sold out his tavern or hotel, of Penty Town, and moved his large family to Missouri, in 1854. My dear mother, Sarah Davidson Leeper, came along wither her children, eight of us, and it was a long, hard journey, by railroad, water, and by land. She could not bring her coloured man and woman, as it was not safe at that time, although Celia begged Mother to bring her along. She left them with her brother, John Davidson, a Baptist preacher. When Father arrived in Missouri, he bought wild land, and with his four sons commenced to improve the land and build a home. It was pretty well cleared when the Civil War broke out. The boys went to war, and Father was killed. We were Southern folk: we had to leave our farm and everything we had. We crossed the plains in 1865, the time the war ended. We were on the plains at Plat river when we heard that President Lincoln was killed. When we got to ^{an} Sun river my mother died; she was buried on the plains.

We had two waggons, three yoke of oxen and yoke of cows. We were six months on the trip to Walla Walla, Wash.; I drove one team and my brother Charles the other.. . . .

I have had a wonderful life in the Rocky Mountains, Kootenay, B.C. My husband and his brother R.L.T. Galbraith traded with the Indians for the furs. They bought out the Hudson's Bay Company store near where the Indian Agency is now, or was a few years ago, had a store at the Ferry, one at Perry Creek, and one at the old camp at Wild Horse Creek. . In a few years after I was there Mr. Galbraith had a large rope to run the boat on. He also blazed the trail to the Kootenay Ferry from Bonner's Ferry.

I went to the Ferry from Walla Walla, Wash., on horseback, four hundred miles. My husband, John Thompson Galbraith, was a J.P. of the province of British Columbia. He was a very clever man and loved and respected by all who knew him. He passed away in 1887, Nov. 9, in Victoria, B.C. We had only lived near Victoria a few years, and he was ill for only a short time. I remember Father Coccoła very well; he is a good man. The sisters and Father Coccoła would come to the agency and then over to Menlo Park, my home near the agency to visit with me, with the Indian boys and girls from the Mission on the St. Mary's river.

Sarah La Rue Galbraith.

Dec. 3, 1928.

The Indians lived on wild meat - geese and duck in the early fall, and in 1869 and the seventies they would go over the Rocky Mountains to the Blackfoot country in January on their snow shoes, old and young, kill the buffalo, and dry the meat. The feet and trunk they would bring home with them in "pafleshis", a bag made out of raw-hide and laced up so the meat would not fall out. They would carry it back to their lodges on the banks of the Kootenay river. They had plenty of wild mountain sheep meat, deer, bear, and cariboo, and in those days there were plenty of mountain trout. They did not have much clothing - moccasins and leggings and a belt and a buffalo robe tied with buckskin strings under the chin. The Indian men were tall and very good-looking, so straight, and with pretty white teeth. The women were not so tall but were pretty. I am sorry to say that after the past twenty years of living with the white people they do not look so healthy and fresh-looking as when they lived out of doors and in those large buffalo lodges. Then they were never sick: as soon as they went to live in the houses, it was not good for them. I never felt afraid of the Indians: they seemed so pleased to see me and teach me to talk to them... Michael Phillips was a clerk in the Hudson Bay store a mile up from the Ferry. . . He was just married to a very pretty Indian girl. Mr. Phillips was a tall good-looking man from a fine old English family.

S.L.G.

APPENDIX D.

Information from H.S. Mather.

Wild Horse Creek, struck in 1864, created a mad rush of miners from Walla Walla, Wash., and promised well for a period of ten years, when it began to decline. Two old-timers remaining in the old camp up to the year of 1886 were Laura Mannigan and Dutch Jake, blacksmith. The old-timers who arrived in the early sixties and remained after settling down to farming, were Rodger Moore, Wm. Goodrich, Peter Boyle, and Patrick Quirk. . . . In 1896 a London syndicate under the management of Mr. Young began operations on the Invicta Mine, continuing work for a few years. In the year 1898 the Dupont Mine started operations under the management of Mr. Hannington, continuing development for a couple of years. In 1899 the Big Chief got under way, the management of which was under Ed. Egan. It was worked for a few years. In the year of 1897 Fort Steele developed into a lively little mining town, with a floating population in the vicinity of three thousand. Steamboats were plying the river from Jennings, Montana, also from Golden. The supplies in early days were brought in from Walla Walla, by pack trains; two trains were in operation, one belonging to R.L.T. Galbraith, and the other to R.D. Mather. The former ran a store in Galbraith's Ferry, the latter ran a store on Wild Horse Creek.

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