

been informed of the arrival of the Pacific mail-steamer *Columbia*, at Port Townsend, with eighty passengers from San Francisco, who are also bound for the Couteau gold-district; and we observe by the latest San Francisco papers that several other vessels are advertised for the same destination.

About the same time, in a letter to the secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, Governor Douglas says: 'The tidings from the gold-district are of the most flattering description, but are not supported by a large return of gold-dust. Mr Simpson reports that gold is found in more or less abundance on every part of Fraser River, from Fort Yale to the Forks; but I presume those diggings cannot be very productive, or there would have been a larger return of gold. Chief-trader Yale reports that parties are proceeding up Fraser River towards the gold-diggings almost every day.' Subsequent communications in the Blue-book whence we make these extracts shew that the flocking of Americans to the new diggings continued to excite serious apprehensions; but in these fears the home authorities did not participate; nor would the people of the United Kingdom sanction any plan to exclude foreigners from settling among, and working the mines within a British territory. Accordingly, on the 1st of July, the colonial secretary, now roused to the importance of the discoveries, wrote to Mr Douglas, stating that her Majesty's government, while determined on preserving the rights both of government and commerce which belong to this country, and while having it in contemplation to furnish such a force as will preserve law and order, declare it to be 'no part of their policy to exclude Americans and other foreigners from the gold-fields. On the contrary, the governor is distinctly instructed to oppose no obstacle whatever to their resort thither for the purpose of digging in those fields, so long as they submit themselves, in common with the subjects of her Majesty, to the recognition of her authority, and conform to such rules of police as it may be thought proper to establish.' Douglas is further instructed to exercise caution and delicacy in dealing with those manifold cases of international relationship and feeling which are certain to arise. By these concessions, the liberal policy of the Americans in freely admitting British subjects to a participation in the mineral wealth of California is gracefully reciprocated, and, along with other explanations on the subject, have been received in a becoming manner by the citizens of the United States.

It being necessary, in the strange position of affairs which had evolved, to adopt measures for governing the country of the new diggings as a free crown-colony, the subject, as newspaper readers know, was lately brought before parliament; the result being that a distinct colony was formed with a constitution to last for five years. And here we may be allowed to express surprise at the paucity of invention which from first to last has been demonstrated in giving a name to this portion of British America. At first, when the matter came before parliament, the appellation of New Caledonia was fixed upon—a name not only bad in itself, as every name embracing the word *new* is acknowledged to be, but bad as being a repetition of the title given to an island in the Pacific which was lately settled by the French. Dropping New Caledonia, the Colonial Office at length fixed on British Columbia, which is about as clumsy as its predecessor, and will no doubt have afterwards to be abandoned for something shorter and more pointed. British Columbia, as it seems we must call it, is legally defined to comprise 'all such territories within the dominion of her Majesty as are bounded to the south by the frontier of the United States of America, to the east by the watershed between the streams which flow into the Pacific Ocean and those which flow into the Atlantic and

Icy Oceans, to the north by the 59th parallel of north latitude, and to the west by the Pacific Ocean; and shall include Queen Charlotte's Island and all other islands adjacent, excepting Vancouver's Island'—this last being a settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company, according to a special grant which expires a year or two hence. The frontier of the United States being on the 49th parallel of north latitude, the new colony of British Columbia lies within ten degrees from north to south, and so far may be described as a block of 200,000 square miles stretching westward from the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Pacific.*

In making regular settlements in Vancouver's Island, the Hudson's Bay Company engaged to dispose of crown-lands to immigrants; and thus Victoria has latterly increased in size and population. Extending gradually as a resort for traders, it experienced an extraordinary accession of inhabitants, and land in its environs came rapidly into demand as soon as the tide of gold-seekers fairly set in. The accounts of its sales of town-lots remind us of similar affairs in San Francisco and Melbourne. The land-office is beset from early morning, and such was the amount of business done that there were not means for making out titles fast enough.

The following letter from Victoria, dated June 20, appears in the *San Francisco Bulletin*: 'There are two beautiful harbours here; the lesser one is where the city of Victoria has been commenced, and three miles to the north-west of Esquimalt Bay, where the largest ships in the world may safely enter and lie. This harbour, however, will admit ships drawing sixteen feet of water at low tide; and such boats as the *Pacific*, *Commodore*, or *Columbia*, may come readily to the town. Victoria has been the fort and principal trading-post of the Hudson's Bay Company for a number of years, and a careful examination of the geography of the country at once shews their wisdom and foresight. The site of the town is beautiful, rising gently from the banks of the harbour, extending back and spreading out into a plateau, forming a beautiful site for a city. Already buildings have been commenced to accommodate the rush of people. Stores go up as fast as the material can be furnished.

'The people here had not anticipated so sudden an influx of population, and consequently no preparation in the way of lumber for buildings, or provisions for the people had been prepared, so these things are now scarce and very high. The supply of provisions was so small—people were coming from many points around the Sound, daily increasing the numbers—that several small vessels were despatched to Bellingham Bay, and forthwith cargoes of their surplus supplies were brought in; and with them, within the two weeks past, some eighteen traders and merchants have changed their places from that point, bought lots, and commenced the sale of their goods here. Arrangements are already perfected to send the steamers *Surprise* and *Sea-bird* up Fraser River to Fort Hope. Three trips have already been made. The time occupied is three days, up and back. The river—which interested scribblers for paper-towns have represented as a wild mountain-torrent—is beautiful, and its navigation not only practicable, but perfectly

* The governor appointed to this new and hopeful colony is, we believe, Colonel R. C. Moody, R.E., at present commanding the Royal Engineers in Scotland, in which capacity he has conducted the structural alterations on Edinburgh Castle. Both as regards accomplishments and general experience, no one could better fill this important post. Colonel Moody was formerly lieutenant-governor of the Falkland Islands, which he with a party of his corps prepared for colonisation, between 1841 and 1844. According to the newspapers, the gallant colonel will shortly proceed to assume the duties of the new government, embarking at Southampton, and proceeding to the colony *via* Chagres and Panama.