

that Victoria became within the short space of a month a populous city, the inhabitants of which in great part lived under canvas. Of the thousands who constituted this population not more than one in a hundred had any intention of remaining in Victoria. The desire of all was to get as speedily as possible to the mines, and every day's delay seemed to place them so much farther away from their anticipated fortune. Notwithstanding their impatience, however, the majority of them were doomed to delay, owing to the insufficiency of the steamboat service from Victoria to the mines. The Hudson's Bay Company had the monopoly of this service, the American steamers being excluded from the river, and as the company's vessels were neither large enough nor numerous enough to accommodate the enormous crowds, thousands had to await their opportunity with what grace they could, or else discover some independent means of getting across the gulf. Early in the month of May some rendered foolhardy by their eagerness decided to cross the gulf in skiffs, and the example of these infecting others, many risked themselves in small boats—which, in the majority of cases, were of their own construction, and were therefore unseaworthy—on unknown and treacherous waters. As might have been expected numbers were never again heard of.

Several efforts were made by the American steamship companies to establish on Puget Sound a rival town to Victoria, the intention being to cut a trail from this point to the mines on the Fraser. It was believed at this time that the river was not navigable by ocean vessels, and the prospects of an overland route were therefore reasonably good. These considerations led to the establishment of Whatcom, at which all the American steamers began to land their passengers, after having first called at Victoria for the necessary mining permits, and for a time this place made rapid progress. The cutting of a trail was also begun, but was abandoned as soon as it was discovered that ships could ascend the Fraser as far as Langley. This discovery also terminated Whatcom's existence for the time being. In June Governor Douglas removed the restrictions against American vessels and allowed them to go up the river on payment of a royalty for each trip. This gave all the transportation facilities required, and by the end of July nearly all the miners had left Victoria. Both banks of the river were speedily lined with eager adventurers, and wherever dust was found in paying quantities a