

have had evidences of the existence of gold being found in many places extending over hundreds of miles of the country to which the notice of the world is now attracted, and that both these gentlemen believe this auriferous country to be rich and extensive.

A letter had appeared in the *Times*, signed J. C., not improbably the James Cooper who gave evidence to the same effect before the Committee, dated 31st May, in which the writer, a colonist at Vancouver (the only one, we believe, with one exception, whom the Hudson's Bay Company had attracted there), stated that the company had been aware of the existence of gold for twenty years. This letter must have had just time to go out to Victoria when the *Times* correspondent was 'authorized' to write as above. It is difficult to resist the inference that the Hudson's Bay officials, in their anti-colonizing spirit, kept the discovery quiet till it was blown abroad in England, and then made a merit of necessity and told the whole truth.

Victoria, as the site for a considerable town, would not answer at all. It has no water and no harbour, both indispensable requisites. The site on which the town must be built is the point of land which lies between Esquimalt harbour and Fort Victoria. This promontory is from a mile and a quarter to seventy or eighty yards in width, and possesses good drinking water all the year round. This is not the case in Victoria. Indeed, the latter appears to have been selected by the Company only with reference to the small trade which they keep up there, and without anticipating the great influx of population and tonnage which will eventually belong to it. The harbour of Esquimalt is surrounded on three sides by high rocks, and its shape is so irregular that only a small portion of its full extent can be seen at a time.

It is the more important that, at starting, the proper position for a town and harbour should be at once fixed upon, because from thence to Acapulco, some three thousand miles distant down the Mexican coast, and north as far as Sitka, in

Russian America, no harbour exists with the exception of San Francisco. Many parts of the island are favourable for agriculture, but until a regular survey has been made it is impossible to speak on that point with any precision. The Company, on their arrival, appropriated to themselves ten square miles round Victoria, and sold the coal mines at Nanaimo, some seventy miles to the north, to a Company which is sometimes distinct from the Hudson's Bay Company, and sometimes identical with it, according to the exigencies of the case.

It is difficult to arrive at the truth with respect to this partnership. The evidence appears to prove that a select few of the Hudson's Bay Company form the Puget Sound Company. The charter provided that if the colonizing experiment failed they were to be reimbursed; but they never attempted to settle anybody but themselves; and then, because the settlement which they prevented did not take place, they demand the repayment of a large sum (it was £87,000 and odd in 1856, and must be much larger now), which they have expended upon themselves. Moreover, as the charter provides that the Crown, if it resumes its rights, shall do so 'without prejudice to such dispositions as may have been made in the meantime by the said governor and Company,' the Puget Sound Company, or the Hudson's Bay Company under an alias, will remain in possession of the valuable minerals, and have its expenses paid into the bargain, unless some Parliamentary Don Quixote will break a lance with this mysterious wind-mill.

The coal mines at Nanaimo have been worked more or less ever since 1853. Mr. Fitzwilliam saw them there, and described them as being close to the sea-shore, which was so precipitous and deepened so rapidly that a vessel of five hundred tons could lay alongside. Nobody, he says, could credit the extent and value of the fisheries unless they judged from actual observation. Immense quantities of salted salmon are annually sent down to the Com-