Bygone Days of British Columbia

Pioneer Mining in Peace River Country

BY R. E. GOSNELL (Copyrighted)

I AM fortunate this week in recording the personal reminiscences of a pioneer miner, farmer, engineer and surveyor, prospector, explorer, trail-builder and legislator. Hon. Edgar Dewdney, who was minister of Her Majesty's government at Ottawa, Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest, and Governor of British Columbia, was a pioneer of the province and served it in many capacities before entering the wider field of Dominion politics. Since retiring from active politics and official positions he has returned to his first love and has devoted himself to various enterprises associated with the development of British Columbia interests. What follows relates to a chapter in his personal experience intimately associated with the opening up of the Peace river as a mining country, preliminary to the Cassiar excitement and indirectly to the Yukon, Atlin and other gold findings. The story is told in his own words and will be read with interest on account of the narrative itself, but more especially at the present time on account of the discovery of gold on the Finlay river and the incipient rush which has taken place:

An Old Interest Revived.

"The interest which is now being taken in reference to the new diggings which are said to have been discovered in the Finlay River District, and the questions of the best route to reach that locality being one upon which there is a diffenence of opinion, has induced me to dot down my recollections of some forty years ago when there was quite a fight over which was the best route to reach what was practically the same district, then known as our Peace River country, where very valuable and extensive alluvial diggings have been discovered. And being one of those who took an active part in 1869 in outfitting a party of miners who made the discovery of what is known as the Peace river mines, I thought it would not be uninteresting to you and your readers if I gave you a little history (somewhat ancient) of the circumstances in connection with the discovery of the mines in that district.

"During the early days of the Cariboo excitement there were rumors that some of the old Californian prospectors had penetrated the country far north of the Cariboo district, and that they had reported most favorably of it as a probable gold-bearing country. So, in the spring of 1869 some of the settlers and business men of Soda Creek and Quesnel met together for the purpose of endeavoring to send into that country

A Well Outfitted Prospecting Party.

The men who took the active part in bringing this about were: P. Dunlevy, of Soda Creek; G. B. Wright, Captain of the steamer which ran between Soda Creek and Quesnel; J. Colbreath and Hawks, farmers of Deep Creek; Bates, of the 150-Mile House; J. Reid, afterwards Senator; E. Dewdney, then farming at Soda Creek and surveying for the local government. I believe that all but the writer are now dead. It was proposed that we get subscriptions towards this expedition, and I was requested to communicate with the then governor, Frederick Musgrave, and ask for assistance from the government. After explaining to the governor what we proposed he at once took a favorable and substantial interest in our request, and said, 'We will give up to $1,000, the amount that you and your friends subscribe.' In a very few days we collected $1,200, and the governor gave us the $1,000.

"We lost no time in getting our party ready. We built a fine boat, picked out fourteen men and placed a man of the name of Kelly in charge. They left quite early in the season, going up the Fraser river to the Giscome Portage, where they hauled the boat over the old Hudson's Bay Company's portage, took the waters on the other side and worked their way into the country they had been instructed to prospect. The summer passed, and we heard nothing of the party until a report came to Soda Creek late in the fall, I think in October, that the party had returned with the boat to Quesnel, that they were very secretive, and would give no information in regard to their season's work. That they were purchasing supplies,

Exhibiting Nuggets of Gold,

and were hurrying to get back and into the country they had been working in before the waters were frozen up. Capt. G. B. Wright and myself hurried up to Quesnel to interview Mr. Kelly, who, after some persuasion, took out his pocketbook, and allowed us to read his diary. From it we found the results of the season's work had quite repaid us, and the governor for the trouble and cost of the expedition, for they had proved that the country was, as had been reported by the old prospectors, a gold country, and although they had only found a couple of creeks, one, Vital creek, called after one of the party who found it produced in a few days' work sufficient gold to induce the whole party to return and pay for a winter's stock of goods, and have a good time while at Quesnel. It was not many hours (and there were no telephones in those days) before the news of this discovery reached Cariboo, when

A Stampede of Miners

from that district took place, and several hundred more went in that winter and early spring to the new diggings. Some went up the Fraser, following the tracks of the discoverers, others went up via the Telegraph trail to Stuart Lake and by Tache river to Lake Tatla, where, about twelve miles from its head, one of our old enterprising merchants, Elmore, had established a trading post. By the time our prospecting party had returned the creeks were frozen, and it was not until the spring that any mining was done. Then after working for a short time on Vital creek the lead was lost. On the previous year they had been working on bedrock only a few feet from the surface, which was very rich, but it suddenly pitched off and they lost it and their pay dirt. In the meantime other creeks had been discovered—one Silver creek, named on account of the large quantity of native silver being found with gold, some as large as hen's eggs—and there was so much of the native silver that it was divided among the owners the same as the gold. As spring advanced the population increased, and, as is the case in all new excitements, there was a

Large Number of Disappointments,

grub was scarce, and very high, and no new creeks were being found, so, the disgusted and disappointed ones commenced to return, and, of course, those who had been instrumental in sending the first expedition into that country were blamed for inducing anyone to go to such a God-forsaken country. We were much distressed over the situation although knowing that this state of affairs happens nine times out of ten. Disappointed men came month after month until we felt satisfied that very few could be left, but in the middle of November, 1870, a report reached us that a rich creek had been struck by a man called Germansen and "Nigger" Dan. Germansen had been working for me on my farm and was inexperienced as far as mining goes, and "Nigger" Dan was known to be the biggest liar in the country, and a few men who were at Tatla Landing, some twenty-four, among whom were a few of the old-time experienced miners, all broke, and begging Elmore, the merchant, to give them

Enough Grub to Get Out.

Elmore knowing it was a serious matter for him to be left with a supply of goods on hand and everyone leaving the country, said, 'Now, boys, if you will remain here while I send Jim May and Dunc McMartin back to the creek to prospect, and if they on their return will confirm what these two men say, you can have all the grub you want to go to the creek, and in the meantime I will feed you here.' This was agreed to, and Jim May and Dunc McMartin started with Germansen and 'Nigger' Dan. They were away some ten days, when they reported that they had prospected the creek for some four miles and found good prospects all the way, and these they brought back with them. They called the creek Germansen (not Jamieson, as I hear some call it) and if ever there was

A Helter-Skelter Stampede

made it was made by those few men who had awaited the return of May and McMartin. Night and day, some with candles in bottles to give them light by night, each one trying to get on the creek first to locate the best ground. They carried as little food as possible, knowing that Elmore would be on their heels with supplies. This news reached us at Soda Creek about the middle of November, and I suggested to Dunlevy that we start for that country and see for ourselves what this new strike was. I wanting to report to the governor and he wishing to see for himself what he was in a great measure responsible for. We took a riding horse each and a pack horse, and made good time to Stuart's lake. It was on this trip that the ferry incident mentioned by Father Morice in his book happened. From Stuart's lake we took a boat, and in a few days reached Tatla Landing. By this time winter was almost on us and ice was commencing to form on the sides of the lakes. Dunlevy felt he could not risk the trip from there to Germansen creek. He was far from well, and I was glad he was able to get back to Fort St. James, on Stuart's lake by boat before it froze up. I started on alone for Germansen creek, and found on arriving at Hogem, on the Omineca river, into which Germunk creek flows, and where Elmore had

Established a Trading Post,

that it would be impossible to get down the Omineca river uptil the ice had become safe. I was held up there for some ten days. In the meantime others who had heard of the new strike commenced to arrive, and brought word that 500 men at least would be along as fast as the travelling would allow them. I was fortunate in getting from an old Cariboo friend a dugout which he and his chums had brought up the Omineca river from Germansen, making use of the parts of the river open, and hauling it over the part frozen. I succeeded in getting two good boatmen, who were as anxious as myself to get to Germansen creek, to join me. One was called Denis Cane and the other Jim Cane, not relatives and not on speaking terms, both Irishmen, who had had quarrels in Cariboo, but so anxious were they to get down to the new mines that they undertook to sit one in the stern and the other in the bow and pilot the dugout where water was available, and harnessed themselves with straps to haul it over the ice. Of course, I did my share. It would take too much time for me to recount all the amusing little incidents of this trip. How we

Raced Day and Night

with another party who we thought were after the Canon ground on the creek, which we heard was open for location; how we upset our canoe in the last airhole, losing many of our traps; how one of the Canes, who had accidentally upset the canoe, thought the other fellow would kill him if he did not succeed in fishing up a valuable bag of patent medicines and hardware which his enemy had brought along to trade with; and how, after passing the men who had been working on the creek, almost all of whom I knew, and who were amazed at seeing me making this trip, they telling me that everyone had left but Bill Humphrey, who was packing up the beef in snow and storing it away for the winter. He was the last man out. I met him some twenty miles from the mouth of the creek. He also informed me that he was the last man who had left, and that I had better return with him. But, on my telling him that the river was lined with men coming down, and that there would be at least 500 there that winter, he returned with me. He, for he is the Bill Humphrey who so worthily filled the office of alderman for the city of Victoria more than once, will recollect how I pulled him out of

A Hole in the Ice

which he fell through shortly after he joined me.

In order to get the best of the party who had been endeavoring to reach the creek before me I handed my pack to my Cane friends, Humphrey assuring me we could make Geransen creek that evening; and my knowledge that he had innumerable carcases of good beef and the promise of a tenderloin made me very confident that I would make it, and locate the canon before my competitors could get there, but I had my work cut out, for Branagans (that was his name) handed his pack over to his friends, and so we pushed along neck and neck without exchanging a word until we reached the mouth of Germansen creek. The mines, or rather the camp, was five or six miles from this point, and it was getting towards evening. The trail was gravelly and no snow, which made it hard on the feet, even with sound moccasins on, but Branagans, who popped ahead of me as soon as we got to the trail, I found was minus his soles, and his bare heels were visible. I was convinced then that he

Could Not Last Long

at the gait that I intended he should take, and so we arrived on the hill some two hundred feet above the camp with night on us and a very intricate path to geet down to the creek, and which I could not have followed without Humphrey's assistance. After taking cover under a leanto made of cedar bark, which had been used by some miners, we lit a fire and Humphrey started for his beef. He returned with that, some blankets and other dainties, when we made a capital supper, and were talking over old Cariboo days when we heard a howl from the top of the hill. This was

Poor Branagans,

who we could not leave out all night many degrees below zero, so Humphrey undertook to go and pilot him down. The most used-up fellow, I think I have ever seen. We cooked a steak for him with the best we had, and then commenced to find out what he was after. The result being that while I was after the canon he wanted ground below the canon, each thinking we were after the other's ground. So we agreed to do down the next day and help each other to stake the both claims. After a good night's rest we set out and staked our ground. That evening the balance of the two parties arrived. The Canes and myself prospected the canon, sinking a hole through the ice and taking out thirteen (unlucky number) buckets of dirt and piled it on the ice, got from a claim a couple of sluice boxes with riffles, and ran the dirt through, getting about an ounce of gold. This we thought pretty good. I took up the whole canon, eleven feet in length, in friends' names. The following summer we flumed the canon, took up a cut the whole length of the claim, and did not get enough to pay for the timber in the claim.

The Return Home.

"On Christmas day I started on my return trip to Victoria alone; made up a small pack of forty-eight pounds, consisting of one 4-point Hudson's Bay Company blanket, a little tea and sugar in a yeast powder box, an empty fruit can to boil the tea in, a few biscuits, some matches and a small hatchet. I bade farewell to my friends on the creek and made a very good first day's march, some thirty-five miles, on the ice. I was enabled to make 'Hogem' Elmore's store as night came on, and the ice was very treacherous in places. I camped alongside of a big log and put in a good night. I was early at Elmore's, who was surprised to see me back so soon. He persuaded me to stop ocer, as he had some Indians packing in some goods for hire, who he thought would help me back to Tatla lake with my pack. I took his advice, but after three days' waiting, and as they did not turn up, I started on alone after putting in the longest three days I have ever experienced—playing 'crib' with Elmore almost all day and part of the night. I met the Indians about half way to Tatla lake, and numerous stragglers making their way to Germansen creek. Snow was pretty heavy, and when within four miles of Tatla, I having taken the wrong track round a lake instead of across it, gave out and

Could Go no Further.

I was able to gather the tops of long reeds and some grass with which I made a fire and boiled a cup of tea, after which I made another start, and ambout dusk, having got on the right track, met an old Cariboo friend called Joe St. Lawrence, who was about as astonished to see me as I him. On inquiry, I found he had come out from Tatla lake to see if there were any tracks of fur about, as he intended trapping the winter in that locality. He saw I was pretty well used up, and he gave me one of the best lifts I have ever had by relieving me of my pack into Tatla.

"I arrived there quite fresh and took up my abode with Mr. Fitzgerald, who was the gold commissioner for that district lately appointed, and had to remain there until the lakes and rivers froze solid.

Grub Was Very Scarce,

that is, a variety, and the gold commissioner and I lived for two weeks on dried salmon, which we boiled and with a little salt got to enjoy it. As soon as the ice was safe I prepared to start, and was able to get some supplies from Elmore, but could only get a limited amount. Three men, whose names I forget, were at the landing, and most anxious to get below. They had loaded a pack train for the mines in the lower country, hoping to get them through that fall, and had instructed their partners if they were unable to get through to store their goods at Fort St. James, Stuart lake. They implored me to help them down. They had no money and no credit, and promised to outfit me from their supplies as soon as we reached the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort St. James. I bought a canoe to take us over the open water, some sixteen miles, and agreed to help them down. Sylvester, who carried the express, also made one of the party, and we engaged three Indians. After bidding adieu to my old friend Fitzgerald, whom I had known in Cariboo when he was assistant to the gold commissioner there, and who had so kindly shared his dry salmon with me, we left. Getting off late we only made some six miles, and were obliged to camp on account of

The Heavy Wind

which was blowing. This kept up for three days, consequently the grub, which had been carefully calculated would last us a certain number of days, was drawn upon very severely and no progress made. However, we determined to go on, and the wind moderating, got down to solid ice, where we discarded the canoe. We then made up our packs, put on our snowshoes, and off we went, the barometer many degrees below zero. We had not gone many miles before, on looking back at Sylvester, I noticed that his nose was frozen. I advised him of it, when with a little rubbing with snow he got all right, but had not proceeded much further when I saw his ears were white. This he did not know until I told him. He unpacked his bundle, took out a couple of marten skins, tied their tails together and made a muffler of them. He was packing down a fine lot of choice skins. We made good time, had nice camps, plenty of dry wood, and all the party lay under canvas in front with a large fire going all night kept up by the Indians. With one pair of blankets I slept well and comfortably with the barometer some times fifty below zero. When going down the Tachi river, which runs out of Lake Thambly to Stuart lake, I got on to the ice. A couple of us were walking, and I for easy walking got into honey-combed ice and went through. A long pole which I always travelled with on ice, kept me from going under, and I managed to scramble out all right. It was 4 p. m. and we determined to camp so that I could dry out. We intended to have made a camp of Tache Tom's, who, with his family, winters in a 'quequally hole' in the ground every winter. We were almost out of grub and our breakfast in the morning left us with absolutely nothing in the larder.

"The next day, when within some miles of where Tache Tom should be, I fell through the ice again, but determined to go on without stopping to dry. I handed my small packs to the Indians, and made tracks for Tom's camp, which I knew could not be far off. I left my friends behind, and on coming to shore, to my joy, Tom really was there. I saw an old squaw coming down the track for water. She was astonished when she saw a stranger on the river, but more so when she found I was, as far as garments were concerned, solid ice; for it was

Fifty Below Zero.

I had walked at a pretty good gait and was tired. She helped me up the track and down we went into the 'quequally hole.' She was alarmed, thinking I was frozen, and she commenced to take off my moccasins. I always wore two pairs—a light sock and fine pair of moccasins, then a Hudson's Bay Company piece of heavy blanket, and over that a heavy moccasin. She found the first frozen, the blanket pretty solid, but when she got to the second and found it dry she exclaimed in their usual words of delight which I am ignorant of. Just about this time the balance of the party arrived, and we all spent the night in this hole, having two meals which consisted of dried bones, which we made soup of, and dried suckers, and we enjoyed them. We were told that the Tache chief was camped at the mouth of the river, and he had all kinds of food. We were not disappointed, and on arrival the next evening we were most

Hospitably Received.

White fish, potatoes, flour, rice, sugar, etc. We fared well and felt quite able to cross the lake to Fort St. James, where we replenished our supplies. It was a very cold trip, 58 below at the Hudson's Bay Company post when we arrived, and that with a wind on the lake which almost closed our eyes with ice. Mr. Gavin Hamilton was then in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post, one of the many fine, open-hearted officials of that company who have in the olden days been of such assistance to prospectors and travellers. He was delighted to see us, took us in and made us as comfortable as she could; but when it came to helping us with supplies to take us on for the balance of our journey we found that the

Stores Were Absolutely Empty,

that the partners of the men whom we had helped down had sold out to the company, and the rush that had followed me up had cleared out the post. All that Hamilton could give us was ten pound of pemican. He advised us to go to Fraser lake, where Mr. Moffatt was in charge, and he thought we might do better there. We took his advice and made for Fraser lake. After some difficulty we got twenty pounds of beef and a little flour. We started with that, hoping if we ran out to be able to get something from Indians. All went well as long as the food lasted but all things come to an end, and before reaching Blackwater we had taken in many holes in our halts. We had had nothing for a couple of days before arriving at Blackwater. The snow was new and we had to track through three feet of it, some days not making over five miles. We scouted round where we thought more Indians might be encamped and to our joy found one family who had come out from Quesnel to hunt rabbits. Two squaws were in camp; we told them how hungry we were and that we wanted to purchase something to eat.

High Priced Provisions.

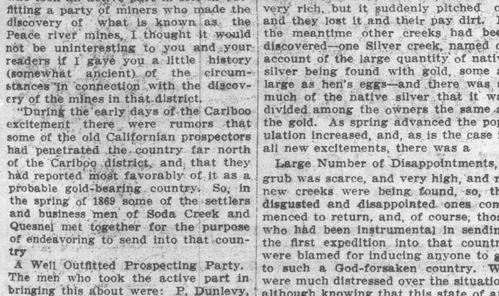
"They said: 'Would you like some beaver?' We answered 'yes,' thinking we were lucky to get such substantial meat. They brought us three or four different sizes. I picked out the largest for $2, when the bucks arrived and complained that the women had not charged enough. We were leaving when one of the women said in Chinook, 'Would you like some flour?' We jumped at that, and she went out and brought it to their tent. On inspecting the flour I found it was middlings, and said it was 'cultus.' She took umbrage at that and slung the sack on her shoulder and walked off and would not give us any. The day before I would have given her $5 for a cupful. The other woman said, "Would you like some rice?' I said yes to get it, if they had any. She brought in a little in a sack, and I dared not question the quality, but said, 'How much?' 'One dollar one cup.' 'All right,' I said, 'four cups.'

"With that we started off and made camp. The beaver was as hard as mahogany and took all night to boil. We, however, made a good supper of the rice. In the morning the beaver was served up, and I was given the tit-bit, the tail. I shall never forget it, or the after effects. I enjoyed it at the time, but about 11 a. m. it appeared to me as if it was commencing to flap, and I fell down in my tracks on the snow completely done up. I thought I would never get up again, and I implored my party to leave me and go on, but instead they remained, built a fire and boiled a little of the rice they had saved, and gave me some of the water to drink hot. This revived me, and I presume the tail settled comfortably, for I was able to travel and made our last camp before reaching Quesnel. We put in a hungry night, but we could start in with

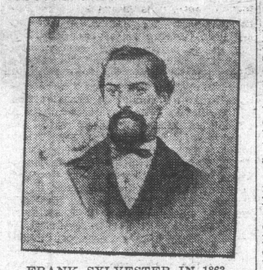
Quesnel in Sight

for to-night. It was very heavy walking the last day in, and had it not been that the Hudson Bay Co. mail party had broken the trail for some twelve miles out of Quesnel en route to Fort George, we could not have made it. As it was, on seeing the snow broken, Sylvester and I started on snowshoes to see if we could make it. It was a race from there on, sometimes on the Fraser and sometimes on the land, and I am sure that neither of us ever made a faster twelve miles. The people of Quesnel, who had been looking for news from the Peace river, saw us coming down the river, and knew we were from the far north. The whole town turned out to receive us, and it took me a week to feel comfortable and fill up gradually. From there it was a pleasant trip to Victoria, where I reported to the governor the state of affairs in the Peace River district. In the spring I was asked to endeavor to get a road into the mines via the Skeena. This I undertook, and it has been and will be the best route into the new mines for those who want to go from the coast and lower mainland.

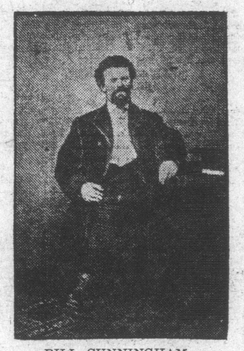
FORT ST. JAMES, FROM A VERY OLD PHOTOGRAPH.



QUESNEL MOUTH, FROM AN OLD PHOTO.



FRANK SYLVESTER IN 1863.



BILL CUNNINGHAM,
A Well Known Old Time Miner.

KING TO ENFORCE THE GAME LAWS

Launch May Be Used Among Islands Next Year.

Gillespie, deputy game warden, been in the Nanaimo district tly. There have been many com- ts of game being shot out of sea- and from all that can be learned is no doubt that many of them rue and that a large amount of is being needlessly slaughtered f season. With so much of it go- on it is to be regretted that some ctions cannot be made. The trou- that there is not an adequate sys- of game protection, although, for matter with 500 game wardens ap- ed the same would still be the to a certain degree. However, the nment, it is understood, is inaug- ng plans that will tend to give better protection. Next year, it id, a fast launch will be supplied trol the coast islands and try and down the numerous poachers oper- there.

SKEENA COUNTRY AGRICULTURAL LANDS

W. E. Scott Reports Upon the Possibilities of Valley.

The department of agriculture have received a report from Wm. E. Scott on the potentialities of the Skeena River district. Mr. Scott was sent north by Hon. R. G. Tatlow with instructions to visit all the farms and make the fullest inquiries so that reliable information might be obtainable.

According to his report there is estimated to be 100,000 acres of good agricultural land in the Kitsumkelum valley, which is situated about 90 miles up the river.

An adverse opinion is passed upon the coast district as a country in which fruit can be successfully raised on account of the heavy rainfall, and the report sets forth that there is no available agricultural land for the first 50 miles up-river. At this point the valley widens out and the climate changes, to much the same climate as is experienced in the Victoria district.

The soil in the Kitsumkelum valley and in the Lekelse Lake valley, on the Kitimaat road, is said to be for the most part a rich sandy loam with gravel sub-soil on the higher benches, and a clay sub-soil on the lower lying ground. There is very little underbrush.

The fruit already produced in these valleys is said to be of excellent quality.

The report goes on to state that similar favorable conditions for horticulture and agriculture were met with in the Little Canyon and Kitsilas districts.

Mr. Scott found it a difficult matter to arrive at a correct estimate of the amount of available land on the Upper Skeena. There were tracks of land stretching for a distance of 50 miles along either side of the river, which he thought ideal for small fruits and garden products.

In his report Mr. Scott draws attention to the taking up of large amounts of land as timber limits, which have practically no merchantable timber on them. If these lands were open to preemptors the country would become more rapidly settled. The people were also hampered in their selection of good land on account of a great deal of the country having not yet been properly surveyed. When the Grand Trunk Pacific is completed Mr. Scott thinks the Upper Skeena will become one of the gardens of British Columbia.

DEATH CLOSES CAREER OF CAPT. JAMES BELL

Was "Captain Kettle" of Real Life and Died in Harness.

(From Friday's Daily.)

The death of Capt. James Bell, manager of the Liverpool Steam Tug Company, at Gibraltar, was announced on Tuesday. He was a sort of "Captain Kettle," and into his fifty-eight years were crowded many stirring incidents.

Capt. Bell was twelve years old when he began his adventures. He started life in a Whitehaven brig, and at twenty he commanded his ship. For years he traded among the remote islands of the Pacific. Then he turned to West Africa—nearly forty years ago.

He had a way with the natives which won their respect, and a tribe near Benin made him their chief. He reigned in tropical splendor, seeing few white men until British ships made their appearance on the Niger.

Then the sea life claimed him again, and he became a pilot. One of his most notable engagements in that capacity was to take the German warships up the Forcados river, when they captured the Cameroons.

Twenty years ago he came back to England, and was appointed manager of the Liverpool Steam Tug Company, the largest undertaking of its kind in the world. He towed the Etruria from the Azores when she broke down six years ago, and he was in charge of the towing of the Suevic's bow from Belfast to Southampton last year.

He died in harness, while on his way to Fiume with a large floating dock, the towing of which he was supervising.

REEVE PAISLEY PARALYSED.

Vancouver, Aug. 26.—Reeve Paisley, of Chilliwack, was stricken with paralysis yesterday, and is now in a serious condition.

URGES CLAIMS OF THE NORTH

NITSULIN COUNTRY REPORTED TO BE RICH

Capt. Moore Has Strong Faith in That District.

Capt. William Moore has great faith in the northern portion of this province and particularly that part contiguous to the Nisutlin river. Speaking of that district Capt. Moore says that when he was prospecting for a railway right of way, he took occasion to gather all the information he could on the country. The result of his inquiries showed the following:

Chas. Hauser and party of eight men, who prospected up the Nisutlin river some years ago, before the discovery of the Klondike, reported to me that the Nisutlin was navigable for boats of light draught for about 50 miles from where it empties into Nisutlin bay, and that they occupied 12 days going up, and 4 days in coming down the stream, and they could take out $8 to $10 a day on the bars as far up the stream as they had gone, but they did not get to the head of it.

Another party that went up the Nisutlin since Mr. Hauser's party was there, was Captain Jack McCormack, and Mr. Gray, the brewer of Juneau, who went in by way of the Big Salmon river, Quiet lake, and then made a portage over from the latter lake to the Nitsulin. They confirmed the report of Mr. Hauser as to the existence of gold along the bars of the Nisutlin, and said they could take out on an average of $8 to $10 a day, with ordinary methods.

Mr. Hauser was prospecting up the Nisutlin river some years ago, and reports that the stream is navigable for light boats for about 50 miles from where it empties into Nisutlin bay; there has been no prospecting done up the Nisutlin since Mr. Hauser and the Gray party were there, owing to the discovery of coarse gold in the creeks of the Klondike. The attention of prospectors and miners was mostly centered around that vicinity. Further information in regard to the Nisutlin is found in the report of A. St. Cyr, D. L. L. to department of interior 1900.

Early in the year Capt. Moore impressed with the great opportunities presenting themselves in that country, wrote to Premier McBride, urging an appropriation for the purpose of exploring and opening up that section of the province tributary to Dease lake and the Stikine river, along the lines suggested in a former letter of July 1, 1907. In this letter he stated:

"I have endeavored from time to time to press the importance of this matter on the attention of the government, but, I regret to say, without succeeding in getting anything done of a practical nature. As matters now stand, it does not appear likely that the present generation will derive any benefit from the immense dormant wealth of that section of the province, unless the government comes to the aid of the prospector and miner, by constructing trails and roads so that the latter may be enabled to find his way in there. It does not require a large outlay to do this, but there is an alternative course which the government may adopt, if it chooses, as I have already pointed out, and for which it has legislative authority, viz., by granting concessions to private enterprise in the matter, a policy which was adopted many years ago with great advantage to the general prosperity of the province. I think it is now high time some action should be taken, and I have gone to the trouble of communicating with certain picked men who have had long years of experience in the northern part of the province, with a view of organizing them into a party and equipping them with a light draught barge, two large-sized Peterboro canoes, and a supply of tools and provisions enough to last them two years, and sending them in to thoroughly prospect the unexplored country in the vicinity of the headwaters of the Nisutlin river and tributaries, where I confidently expect to find very extensive paying placer ground, from information I gathered from reliable source, many years ago, about this section of the province.

"I shall be pleased to hear from you soon in the matter, and in the meantime hope it will receive favorable consideration at your hands."

PLANNING PROGRAMME FOR VISITING CHIEFS

How Delegates to Fire Chief's Convention In Victoria Will Be Entertained.

(From Friday's Daily.)

Chief Watson, of the fire department, has been very busy lately making arrangements for the annual convention of the Pacific Coast convention of fire chiefs, which will be held in this city from September 28th to October 1st, and at which, it is expected there will be 150 delegates.

The association will hold three sessions daily, but ample time will be afforded the delegates for amusing themselves.

On Tuesday, September 29th a concert will be provided at the Victoria theatre, where the Watson children, assisted by local artists, will perform. The proceeds of the concert will be devoted to the firemen's benevolent fund. On Wednesday evening Chief and Mrs. Watson will hold a reception and dance at the central fire hall.

Arrangements are being made for a trip around the city. A demonstration of the B. C. Electric Company's high pressure system of fire-protection will be given and visits will be paid to the Smith's Hill reservoir and the Elk Lake waterworks plant.