

400 miles. Mr. Arrowsmith computes its area of square miles, including Queen Charlotte's Island, at somewhat more than 200,000 miles. Of its two gold-bearing rivers, one, the Frazer, rises in the northern boundary, and, flowing south, falls into the sea at the southwestern extremity of the territory, opposite the southern end of Vancouver Island, and within a few miles of the American boundary; the other, the Thompson River, rises in the Rocky Mountains, and, flowing westward, joins the Frazer about 150 miles from the coast. It is on these two rivers, and chiefly at their confluence, that the gold discoveries have been made. Hon. gentlemen who look at the map may imagine this new colony at an immeasurable distance from England, but we have already received overtures from no less eminent a person than Mr. Cunard for a line of postal steam-vessels for letters, goods, and passengers, by which it is calculated that a passenger starting from Liverpool may reach this colony in about thirty-five days by way of New York and Panama. With regard to the soil, there is said to be some tolerable land on the lower part of Frazer River. But the Thompson River district is described as one of the finest countries in the British dominions, with a climate far superior to that of countries in the same latitude on the other side of the mountains. Mr. Cooper, who gave valuable evidence before our committee on this district, with which he is thoroughly acquainted, recently addressed to me a letter, in which he states that 'its fisheries are most valuable, its timber the finest in the world for marine purposes. It abounds with bituminous coal, well fitted for the generation of steam. From Thompson's River and Colville districts to the Rocky Mountains, and from the forty-ninth parallel some 350 miles north, a more beautiful country does not exist. It is in every way suitable for colonisation.'

"Therefore, apart from the gold fields, this country affords every promise of a flourishing and important colony. In Charlotte's Island, which we include in this new colony, gold was discovered in

1850, but only in small quantities. Here I may, perhaps, correct a popular misconception. In Vancouver Island itself no gold has been yet discovered. The discovery of gold on the mainland was first reported to the Colonial Office by a despatch from the Governor of Vancouver Island, dated April 16th, 1856. The governor had received a report from a clerk in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Colville, on the Upper Columbia River. Further reports followed in October, 1856, testifying to the importance of the discovery. From experiments made in the tributaries of Frazer River there was reason to believe that the gold region was extensive: the similarity in the geological formation of the mountains in the territory to those of California induced the governor to believe that these would prove equally auriferous. Subsequent accounts, in 1857, varied as to the quantity of gold obtained, but confirmed generally the opinion of the richness of the mines, especially above the confluence of the Frazer and Thompson rivers. The governor writes on the 16th of July, 1857, that gold was being discovered on the right bank of the Columbia, and the table land between that river and Frazer's. On December 29th he ascribed the small quantity found to the want of skill and tools on the part of the natives, who opposed any white men digging. The Indians were especially hostile to the Americans, and opposed their entrance into the country. Great excitement now prevailed in Oregon and Washington territory. An influx of adventurers might be expected in the spring, in which case collisions between the whites and the natives might be expected to occur. As far back as the first discovery in April, 1856, the governor had suggested the system of granting digging licenses, on payment of fees of 10s., which, on the 1st of January, 1858, he raised to 20s.; and prohibiting persons from digging without authority from the colonial Government. But this proclamation has virtually proved a dead letter; for, in point of fact, the Government had no legal power to issue the proclamation, or cause it to be respected, he having no

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