

this notice of the half-breed population by observing that an exact counterpart of French political feeling in Manitoba may be found in the Territory of the Saskatchewan, but kept in abeyance both by the isolation of the various settlements, as well as by a certain dread of Indian attack which presses equally upon all classes. The next element of which I would speak is that composed of the white settler, European and American, not being servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. At the present time, this class is numerically insignificant, and were it not that causes might at any moment arise which would rapidly develop it into consequence it would not now claim more than a passing notice. These causes are to be found in the existence of gold throughout a large extent of the Territory lying at the Eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, and in the effect which the discovery of gold fields would have in inducing a rapid movement of miners from the already over worked fields of the Pacific States and British Columbia. For some years back indications of gold, in more or less quantities, have been found in almost every river running East from the Mountains. On the Peace, Athabasca, McLeod, and Pembina Rivers, all of which drain their waters into the Arctic Ocean, as well as on the North Saskatchewan, Red Deer and Bow River, which shed to Lake Winnipeg, gold has been discovered. The obstacles which the miner has to contend with are, however, very great, and preclude anything but the most partial examination of the country. The Blackfeet are especially hostile towards miners and never hesitate to attack them nor is the miner slow to retaliate; indeed he has been too frequently the aggressor and the records of gold discovery are full of horrible atrocities committed upon the red man. It has only been in the neighbourhood of the Forts of the Hudson's Bay Company that continued washing for gold could be carried on. In the neighbourhood of Edmonton from three to twelve dollars of gold have frequently been "washed" in a single day by one man, but the miner is not satisfied with what he calls "dirt washing," and craves for the more exciting work in the dry diggings where, if the "strike" is good, the yield is sometimes enormous. The difficulty of procuring provisions or supplies of any kind has also prevented "Prospecting" parties from examining the head waters of the numerous streams which form the sources of the North and South Saskatchewan. It is not the high price of provisions that deters the miners from penetrating these regions but the absolute impossibility of procuring any. Notwithstanding the many difficulties which I have enumerated a very determined effort will in all probability be made, during the coming summer, to examine the head waters of the north Branch of the Saskatchewan. A party of miners, four in number, crossed the mountains late in the autumn of 1870, and are now wintering between Edmonton and the Mountain House, having laid in large supplies for the coming season. These men speak with confidence of the existence of rich diggings in some portion of the country lying within the outer range of the mountains. From conversations which I have held with these men as well as with others who have partly investigated the country, I am of opinion that there exists a very strong probability of the discovery of gold fields in the Upper Saskatchewan at no distant period. Should this opinion be well founded the effect which it will have upon the whole Western territory will be of the utmost consequence.

Despite the hostility of the Indians inhabiting the neighbourhood of such discoveries, or the plains or passes leading to them, a general influx of miners will take place into the Saskatchewan and in their track will come the waggon or pack horse of the merchant from the towns of Benton or Kootenai, or Helena. It is impossible to say what effect such an influx of strangers would have upon the plain Indians; but of one fact we may rest assured, namely, that should these tribes exhibit their usual spirit of robbery and murder they would quickly be exterminated by the miners.

Everywhere throughout the Pacific States and along the central territories of America, as well as in our own colony of British Columbia, a war of extermination has arisen, under similar circumstances, between the miners and the savages, and there is good reason to suppose that the proverbially hostile tribe of Blackfeet Indians would form no exception to a rule which with more peaceful nations has been of invariable occurrence.