

BRITISH
COLUMBIA.

of which they found gold, frequently in pieces ranging from twenty-four grains to half an ounce in weight, and they also observed that the gold was larger in size and coarser the further they ascended the river. Thus, for example, the gold found below the Falls is in thin bright scales or minute particles, while that found at the Great Falls is in pieces ranging, as before said, from twenty-four grains to half an ounce in weight; a circumstance which the miner believes to be indicative of a richer country beyond.

13. The country about the Great Falls has not been closely examined, but the miners generally report its appearance to be promising, and from anything we know to the contrary the whole course of Fraser's River, even to the Rocky Mountains, may be auriferous.

14. Those miners were prevented going further into the country for want of food, which compelled their return to the settlements for supplies. They were very successful about the Great Falls, and made from ten to thirty dollars to the man a day.

15. William C. Johnston, an old California miner, told me that he had prospected Harrison's River, and had travelled from thence to the Great Falls of Fraser's River, and that he had observed in the course of his journey much gold-bearing quartz, and the most promising indications of placer gold. Another old miner assured me that he had found large quantities of gold-bearing quartz in the mountains near Fort Hope, which he thinks will pay better than the California quartz rock; a report which was confirmed by other miners. The miners generally assert that Fraser's River is richer than any "three rivers" in California.

16. Thompson's River and its tributary streams are known to be auriferous, and I have just heard from Mr. M'Lean, one of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, that gold has also been lately discovered on the banks of the Great Okanagan Lake.

17. Mr. Richard Hicks, a respectable miner at Fort Yale, assured me that he had found "flour gold," that is, gold in powder, floating on the waters of Fraser's River during the freshet, and he is of opinion that by means of quicksilver gold will be found in every part of Fraser's River, even to its discharge into the Gulf of Georgia.

18. Evidence is thus obtained of the existence of gold over a vast extent of country situated both north and south of Fraser's River, and the conviction is gradually forcing itself upon my mind, that not only Fraser's River and its tributary streams, but also the whole country situated to the eastward of the Gulf of Georgia, as far north as Johnstone's Straits, is one continued bed of gold of incalculable value and extent.

19. Such being the case, the question arises as to the course of policy in respect to Fraser's River which Her Majesty's Government may deem it advisable in those circumstances to follow.

20. My own opinion is, that the stream of immigration is setting so powerfully towards Fraser's River that it is impossible to arrest its course, and that the population thus formed will occupy the land as squatters, if they cannot obtain a title by legal means.

21. I think it therefore a measure of obvious necessity that the whole country be immediately thrown open for settlement, and that the land be surveyed, and sold at a fixed rate, not to exceed twenty shillings an acre. By that means, together with the imposition of a Customs' duty on imports, a duty on licences to miners, and other taxes, a large revenue might be collected for the service of Government.

22. As the Hudson's Bay Company would in that case have to relinquish their exclusive rights of trade, compensation might be made to them for those rights, by an annual payment out of the public Revenues of the country.

23. Either that plan, or some other better calculated to maintain the rights of the Crown and the authority of the laws, should, in my opinion, be adopted with as little delay as possible, otherwise the country will be filled with lawless crowds, the public lands unlawfully occupied by squatters of every description, and the authority of Government will ultimately be set at naught.

24. In anticipation of your instructions to carry some such plan into effect, I have communicated with Mr. Pemberton, the Surveyor-General of Vancouver's Island, and desired him to make temporary arrangements with any qualified persons he may find in this Colony, for the purpose of increasing the staff of surveying officers, and of engaging actively in an extended survey of the lands of Fraser's River, whenever your instructions to that effect are received from England; and in the meantime they can be usefully employed in laying out allotments for sale on Vancouver's Island, there being at present a very great and increasing demand for land in this Colony.

25. I beg also to remark, that it is my intention to confer on Mr. Pemberton the provisional appointment of Surveyor-General of Fraser's River, as he is a gentleman of great experience, and thoroughly well qualified, by previous training in the forests of Vancouver's Island, and great natural talent, for that responsible office.