

to fifty years ago would be very different. These villages are almost all situated on reserves. Some places where Indians live in detached houses have been included under the name of the village nearest to which they are located.

So far as current tradition tells, the tribal boundaries have always been the same as they are at the present day, except that about sixty or more years ago the Shuswap-speaking people extended a few miles farther down Thompson River than now, and the country around Nicola Lake was held by an Athapascan tribe. Both of these have been absorbed by the Thompsons.

POPULATION. — The tribe is at the present day greatly reduced in numbers. The existence of numerous ruins of underground houses might be considered as sufficient proof of the decrease of the tribe, were it not that the same family sometimes constructed several of these houses, and that after the first epidemic of small-pox many of the survivors moved, for protection or support, to larger communities, and constructed new houses there. After the formation of small towns or settlements by the whites, who set up trading-stores in different parts of the country, many Indians removed to their neighborhood for convenience of trading with or working for them. Moreover, the Indians began to see what use the whites made of arable lands, and they obtained "reserves," and gained some knowledge of farming. Then many who had no arable land moved either to more favorably situated places, or to their "reserves" when convenient. By this means the number of old house-sites was considerably increased. Nevertheless, according to the testimony both of the Indians themselves, and of white men long resident in their country, the Thompson Indians were certainly at one time much more numerous than at present.

The old people say that forty or fifty years ago, when travelling along Thompson River, the smoke of Indian camp-fires was always in view. This will be better understood when it is noted that the course of Thompson River is very tortuous, and that in many places one can see but a very short distance up or down the river. The old Indians compare the number of people formerly living in the vicinity of Lytton to "ants about an ant-hill." Although they cannot state the number of inhabitants forty years ago, there are still old men living who can give approximately the number of summer lodges or winter houses along Thompson River at that time, showing clearly the great decrease which has taken place.

In 1858, when white miners first arrived in the country, the Indian population between Spuzzum and Lytton was estimated at not less than two thousand, while at present it is probably not over seven hundred. If that be correct, and assuming that the number in the upper part of the tribe was in about the same proportion to those in the lower as now, the population of the entire tribe would have numbered at least five thousand.

Notwithstanding the fact that a year or two before the arrival of the white miners the tribe had been depopulated by a famine, which infested nearly the whole interior of British Columbia, the actual decrease of the Indians has taken place only since the advent of the whites, in 1858 and 1859.