

even as high as \$900, were taken out of Williams Creek in a single pan. Large fortunes were thus made very rapidly, and it is estimated that one-third of those who went early in 1860 came out with handsome fortunes, and another third with moderate means. By the end of 1867 over twenty-five million dollars had been shipped from the entire region. A number of towns sprang up during the period between 1861 and 1865, but as they were in most instances situated at some largely paying claim they declined with the claim. Barkerville, on Williams Creek, became recognized as the centre of the mining region, and increased rapidly in population and has since continued to be the capital of the Cariboo country.

In 1863 some excitement was occasioned by the reported discovery of rich diggings on the Kootenay River, and a large number of miners, including not a few fifty-eighters, went to the scene of the reported "finds." By the end of the year about one thousand men were distributed along the river, and were making wages averaging from three to fifty dollars each. During the next year prospectors reached Big Bend, on the Columbia River, and early in the succeeding spring reports were carried to Victoria that discoveries equal to those of Cariboo had been made at this point. These reports were readily believed and a rush thither accordingly took place during the next year. A considerable amount of money was taken out during this and the following year, but nothing was found comparable to the richness of Cariboo. Big Bend was, fortunately, of such easy access that provisions could be brought into the camps in abundance and the miners were, therefore, able to live cheaply. Had this not been the case it would have been impossible for the large number of people, who, during 1866 and 1867 thronged there, to have existed. While some of the claims "panned out" richly the majority of the prospectors got little or nothing and left the mines considerably poorer in pocket than they were on reaching them. These men, of course, had nothing favorable to say of the country and their reports were instrumental in calming the excitement. One drawback to the ordinary prospector in the Big Bend country was that the better claims were not as shallow as had been supposed but required machinery and much labor of an expensive nature which only those having money could afford to pay for. However, those who were in a position to expend considerable sums in opening up good claims made large returns.