

road at Nelson, a typical frontier town of about two hundred people, all of whom are anxious to talk silver to you and to remind you that their prices for corner lots are the same as in San Francisco. They neglect to mention that nobody is paying the price. Imagine paying \$5,000 for a lot where you are liable to find a bear overhauling your garbage barrel when you get up in the morning! But the Nelsonians are quite alive, and they have a mine in the Silver King that the owners refused \$1,200,000 for. The owners are half-breed, however, and as a lawyer and capitalist or two have succeeded in attaching themselves to the mine, it is believed in the town that if they succeed in keeping their clothes and overshoes they will be doing as well as could be expected.

C. M. S. in *Free Press*.

### Discovery of Cariboo.

HOW THE GREAT GOLD COUNTRY WAS DISCOVERED BY SEARCHERS AFTER WEALTH.

Thos. Seward, of Lytton, is one of the pioneers of pioneers of British Columbia, and can tell very interesting tales of the great rush and excitement after gold in the early days. Mr. Seward can claim the honor of being one of the first discoverers of the Cariboo gold district, and his story of its discovery is very interesting. He came to British Columbia from the gold fields of California in 1858, his destination being Big Bar, which was then reported to be fabulously rich diggings. With a number of other miners, he formed a partnership, and left Victoria in June, 1858, in a canoe, loaded with sufficient provisions for a long stay in the undiscovered country. They passed up the Fraser to Yale, through the great canyons, and on to the Lillooet, taking the canoe all the way to the head of navigation on the latter river. Here it was necessary to pack the provisions forty miles to Big Bar, and the owners of the little pack train working between the two points charged 25 cents a pound for packing the goods through. Two packers preferred provisions to gold dust for their trouble, and a bargain was easily struck. Mr. Seward and his companions handed over 25 lbs of beans, 50 lbs of flour and 5 lbs of salt—value \$80.

The party prospected Big Bar thoroughly and made bare pay. Up to this time no one had penetrated the region now called Cariboo, and its hidden millions were not even dreamed of. The party left Big Bar, and, packing their provisions on their backs, prospected the country round about, but the best pay found was \$5 to \$6 per day per man. To men who were expecting to turn up thousands with the next shovelful of gravel, this was not worth bothering with. The party was now divided, one half being sent to Fort Alexander, a Hudson's Bay post, then in charge of Mr. McKenzie, now M.P.P. for Nanaimo district, to prospect the streams in that vicinity. The men returned shortly having found nothing, and so greatly discouraged that they broke up the partnership and left for Victoria. Mr. Seward and a man named J. S. Cunningham still had confidence in the country, formed a partnership and struck pay dirt which returned from \$6 to \$10 per day to each.

While they were working one day, a canoe passed up stream with three men in charge, one was drawing the canoe by a rope attached to it, the second was fending it off the rocks, and the third was steering. They passed on the opposite side of the stream to which Mr. Seward and his partner were working, and did not stop. These three men were the original discoverers of Cariboo, but who they were, where they came from, and what was their fate, has never been ascertained. Mr. Seward afterwards learned that these men went to Fort Alexander. While there an Indian came in and reported that gold was to be found in quantity in the river now known as Quesnelle. They proceeded up the forks of Quesnelle, left their canoe and penetrated the cariboo country. Since then no trace of them has ever been found. They may have been killed by the Indians, or starved to death. In those days the Indians were far from being friendly, and more than one venturesome miner lost his life at their hands. The theory that these men never returned to civilization, and must have met with an untimely death, is well sustained by the fact that none of them have ever turned up to lay claim to the honor of discovering the country out of which nearly \$60,000,000 in gold dust and nuggets have been taken.

A few days after those men passed up the river, Mr. Seward left the diggings and returned to Victoria, which was then little better than a Hudson's Bay post, with a population of only a few hundred. Cunningham returned to Big Bar and mined there for a time. Six weeks after Seward left Big Bar, word reached Victoria of a great strike of gold in the upper country. Shortly afterwards Cunningham abandoned work at Big Bar and returned to Victoria for the winter.

In the spring of 1859, Mr. Seward again crossed the gulf in the same canoe in which he had made the first trip up the Fraser, and proceeded to Port Douglas, at the Head of Harrison Lake. From there the party packed everything to Lillooet, and then to Fort Alexander. Here they met prospectors who said they had prospected the whole country in the vicinity of the Fort and had found nothing, and were returning disappointed.

Mr. Seward paid no attention to these reports, but, with his comrades, proceeded to the Forks of Quesnelle. Hauled up on the bank of the river was the identical canoe which had been taken up by the three men the previous season, and over whose fate a strange mystery still hangs. Here the party put down their rockers, and made \$6 per day to the man. They were without fresh meat, and one day a couple of the men said they would go out and kill something. On crossing the divide, they entered a stretch of country in which the cariboo abounded, and which fact has since given the name to the whole country. They killed one of these animals and furnished the camp with fresh meat. A few days afterwards Mr. Seward crossed the divide and was the first white man to visit what is now known as Grouse Creek. He, with Messrs. Keichly and Harvey, may be called the discoverers of Cariboo, though the honor properly belongs to the men who never returned.

Mr. Seward continued to work with his part-

ners in Cariboo till November 14th, when he started back to Victoria to spend the winter, and never returned to the country, leaving to the miners who followed the next and following years the untold millions of gold which were soon extracted from their hidden depths, and the discovery of which spread a gold fever that drew fully 20,000 miners and fortune seekers to the great Cariboo country. Mr. Seward purchased a piece of land near Lytton, in 1860, and here he has resided constantly ever since—a period of 31 years. He is a hale, hearty, and genial "old timer," well-to-do, and respected by all who know him.—B. C. Exchange.

### A Grand Country.

THE DISTRICT BETWEEN THE HUDSON BAY AND WINNIPEG.

The following letter which appeared in the *Free Press* of February 27th, gives a remarkably clear idea of what the country to be traversed by the Hudson's Bay route is like:—  
*To the editor of the Free Press:—*

SIR,—For many years I have been a strong believer in the feasibility of the Hudson's Bay railway as a short cut to the ocean and thus on to the large markets of the old world, but until this late summer had always thought of that big region east of the Saskatchewan river and between that and the possible harbor on the bay as barren and destitute of any of those requisites which go to make settlement a reality and the maintenance of population a fact, and this had been to me one of the difficulties in the way, that in building a road to the bay there would be the necessity of running through a section country from five to six hundred miles wide, which would make little or no return in help to the enterprise.

However, when down in that same district a few months since, I was agreeably surprised and delighted to find that it was not the barren desert I had supposed it to be, but, on the contrary, a delightful land; that there were hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land, rich in capability to produce, which was amply demonstrated by the rank vegetation and remarkable growth on every hand and by the gardens at the Hudson's Bay posts and mission stations, where we sampled the quality of the vegetables grown from this soil, of which we saw so much in our journey. The native fruits were not only abundant but of a fine quality. Raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, currants and cranberries were everywhere to be found in rich profusion.

Had it not been for extensive forest fires the timber growth would have been a great help in the opening up of the country. As it is now, there are fine groves of this in the myriad islands, which dot the many lakes all through the country, and on the main land there is still considerable which would be useful for settlement purposes.

Another source of wealth is the superabundant supply of fish; large and small lakes, and all rivers and streams, which are almost infinite in number, are full of fish—whitefish, sturgeon, trout, pike, pickerel—are swarming everywhere.

Then the climate was a revelation—cold in winter, hot in summer; here we were from 400