

FRASER'S RIVER DISTRICT, in BRITISH NORTH AMERICA. 15

force small, and many temptations to excess in the way of drink, yet they were remarkably quiet and orderly, and there has not been a single committal for rioting or drunkenness since their arrival here.

The merchants and general dealers of Victoria are rejoicing in the increase of wealth and business produced by the arrival of so large a body of people in the colony, and are strongly in favour of making this place a stopping point between San Francisco and the gold mines, which, so far as respects the prosperity of the colony, is evidently an object of the utmost importance, as both in going and returning, the miners would make purchases, and spend a great deal of money; the value of property would be vastly enhanced, while the sale of public land and the colonization of the country would be greatly promoted.

The interests of the empire, if I may use the term, may not, however, be improved to the same extent by the accession of a foreign population, whose sympathies are decidedly anti-British.

From that point of view the question assumes an alarming aspect, and leads us to doubt the policy of permitting foreigners to enter the British territory, *ad libitum*, without taking the oath of allegiance, and otherwise giving security to the government of the country.

In the meantime, the people who have gone into the interior will meet with innumerable difficulties of route in their progress towards the mines, both from the nature of the country and the dangerous state of the rivers.

The principal diggings on Fraser's and Thompson's Rivers are also at present, and will continue, flooded for many months to come; there is moreover a great scarcity of food in the gold districts, so that those united causes will, in all probability, compel many of the ill-provided adventurers to beat a retreat and for the time to relinquish the enterprise.

The licence system has not been yet carried into effect, and it will be difficult to bring it into a general operation. It has since occurred to me that by levying an import duty on goods, the gold districts might be taxed to any desirable extent, without clamour or exciting discontent among the people, an object which might be effected at a moderate expense, by means of a customs station on Fraser's River, and another at the point where the road from the Columbia strikes the ford of the O'Kanagan River, those being the only two commercial avenues of the Couteau country.

I shall soon address Her Majesty's government on the subjects referred to in this communication, and it is also my intention to represent how seriously the peace of the country may be endangered by the presence of so many people wandering over the interior in a vagrant state, especially in the event of the diggings proving unremunerative, and the miners being, as an inevitable consequence, reduced to poverty, and destitute of the common necessities of life.

We have this moment been informed of the arrival of the Pacific Mail Steamer "Columbia," at Port Townsend, with 80 passengers from San Francisco, who are also bound for the Couteau gold district, and we observe by the latest San Francisco papers that several other vessels are advertised for the same destination.

Enclosure 2 in No. 11.

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Extract of a Letter from James Douglas, Esq., to William G. Smith, Esq., Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, dated Victoria, Vancouver's Island, April 19, 1858.

"Mr. George Simpson was the bearer of despatches from Fort Langley of the 14th, and from Chief Trader M'Lean, dated Forks (Thompson's River), the 4th instant, and arrived here by canoe on the 17th instant.

"The tidings from the gold district are of the most flattering description, but are not supported by a large return of gold dust. Mr. Simpson reports that gold is found in more or less abundance on every part of Fraser's River, from Fort Yale to the Forks, but I presume those diggings cannot be very productive, or there would have been a larger return of gold. Chief Trader Yale reports that parties are proceeding up Fraser's River towards the gold diggings almost every day."

Enclosure 3 in No. 11.

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Extract of a Letter from James Douglas, Esq., to W. G. Smith, Esq., Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, dated Victoria, Vancouver's Island, April 30, 1858.

"We have received no official intelligence from the gold mining districts since my letter of the 19th instant.

"Several parties of Americans and Canadians have, however, lately returned from thence disappointed and unsuccessful. They report that the waters of Fraser's River had