

❖ District of Cariboo. ❖

At this time in the history of the Province, in writing of Cariboo one scarcely requires to go into the details of its romantic and picturesque past. Cariboo has for nearly fifty years been a household word not only in British Columbia, but throughout the greater part of the Continent. In Great Britain, and as far off as Australia, in the early sixties the name was quite familiar. In some respects it was better known than British Columbia itself, of which it forms a portion. It was a name that spelled gold. It followed the discoveries and rushes of Australia and California than which since the days of Spanish treasure-finding in Mexico and Peru nothing has so excited the lust of wealth among adventurers. It followed after the excitement in Australia and California had subsided, and the now seasoned miner and prospector were seeking for new worlds to conquer. Within the limits of its auriferous areas it had proved to be even richer than these countries. As British Columbia was known even then to be a "Sea of Mountains," and was vast in extent there seemed to be opened a vista of possibilities never before realized, nor yet dreamed of.

The story has been told so many times that it need not be repeated here, even in outline,—how the gold-seekers toiled and struggled up the Fraser river in canoes, toiled along its precipitous banks, endured all kinds of hardships, packed their grub to sustain them in the nameless wilderness, how they made their first discoveries, and how the news of the rich finds brought the rush of '61-'62. The most memorable event in the history of British Columbia and one that had the most lasting effects in determining its future. The first rush of 1858 to the Fraser River was more or less ephemeral in character, because, of the 15,000 to 20,000 persons who embarked from San Francisco to join it, the greater proportion returned the same season. It may be stated as a fact, that of those who went to Cariboo in the second rush at least ninety per cent remained in the Province to father the present generation of British Columbians, and to found homes and fortunes in this Province.

For a long time Cariboo remained at very much of a standstill, if anything receding, with occasional flutters of anticipation on account of some new mining enterprise. The one thing, however, required to galvanize it into life is railway communication. In anticipation of the building of the G. T. P., business on the Cariboo waggon road last year increased considerably by the going into the interior by that, the natural, route of miners, prospectors, timber cruisers, etc. Incident to that a large number of timber limits was staked, and during the past year or two many new land holdings have been taken up either by pre-emption or purchase from the government.

It is not generally known that in the district of Cariboo here still remains considerable areas of crown lands still unalienated. This is true to a less degree than it was, but there are still opportunities. The late Government agent in Cariboo, Mr. John Bowron, used to say that there was a million acres of good land to be pre-empted.

Now that it has been definitely decided that the Canadian Northern, which enters the province through the Yellowhead Pass, will take the line of the old C. P. R. survey through Cariboo district to Vancouver via the Thompson river, the activity of last year will be increased by fourfold. In other words, all appearances indicate that the hour of Cariboo has struck once more—nevermore so joyously, so merrily, so abundantly rich in streaks as of yore, but with a note clearer and one that denotes larger and more permanent development and prosperity.