

the actual dangers were incomparably less. Whatever the dangers might be for canoes the illshaped rafts, though somewhat difficult to control, were found quite safe; for though the waters rolled over them, they rolled off again, doing comparatively little damage. In the afternoon they met the first gold miners—Chinese washing with rockers on the river bank. As they descended they found miners on almost every bar. According to their own stories these Chinese miners were only making five dollars a day each, but the travellers gave no credence to such statements.

On September 11th, they set out early in the morning on their last day's navigation. The weather being foggy, they accidentally ran upon a rock, which could not be seen in time to be avoided. The collision strained the raft greatly, but as the fastenings seemed secure they continued the descent, and about noon reached Cottonwood Canyon. In that narrow channel with its strong current and heavy swells the raft, according to the diary, behaved well, and when it came to the overfall, though the water rolled over it and flooded it as it took the downward plunge, the diarist declares that nothing was injured "where a canoe would undoubtedly swamp."

That day they reached Quesnel, then known as the Mouth of Quesnel to distinguish it from a village higher up the Quesnel river called the Forks of Quesnel. The diarist gives some rather startling prices as prevailing: meals \$1.50, flour \$1, salt \$1, rice 55 cents, bacon 75 cents to \$1, beans, 75 cents, tea \$2, per pound. The day was fine and pleasant, and, he adds: "I got my supper off a table for the first time in four months at Whitehall store for \$1.50."

On the arrival of the other rafts the future movements of the party were discussed at length. As a result the organization was disbanded. Some continued down the river on the rafts; some remained at Quesnel; while others, including our diarist, resolved, even at this advanced season, to go on to the mines at Williams Creek. The latter left Quesnel on September 13th for the Cariboo gold fields. The travelling was very difficult and the trail of the roughest. At the end of a hard and trying day they had only covered thirteen miles. Resuming their journey twelve miles of even worse trail brought them to Cottonwood at the crossing of the river of the same name. As they progressed they met returning miners, each telling a more discouraging tale than his predecessor. It was a real exodus of disappointed men, all striving to reach the coast without delay. They painted conditions at the mines as black and disheartening, prices high, wages low, and work scarce.