

THE REMINISCENCES OF A PIONEER PROSPECTOR.

A PROSPECTOR of fifty years standing. How much is expressed in that brief description!

The man who has lived such a life, has lived. To follow the career of a prospector for any lengthy period, one must necessarily be a man. Endurance, perseverance, pluck, self-control, these are the qualities that went to make up that fifty years' record of which Mr. James Moore, the holder, has every reason to be proud—and British Columbia is proud of it, too. As the sole survivors of the party of miner which located the first mine in what was then New Caledonia, and now known as the mainland of British Columbia, in March, 1858, Mr.

Moore figures as the pioneer of the pioneers of the country; but to meet our old friend in ordinary every day life, much less after hearing him at the recent Mining Convention, "spout" most effectively for upwards of an hour, it is difficult to realize that he is over seventy years of age, and that the major part of this long life has been spent at one of the roughest and hardest of callings. But here is his history from his own lips:

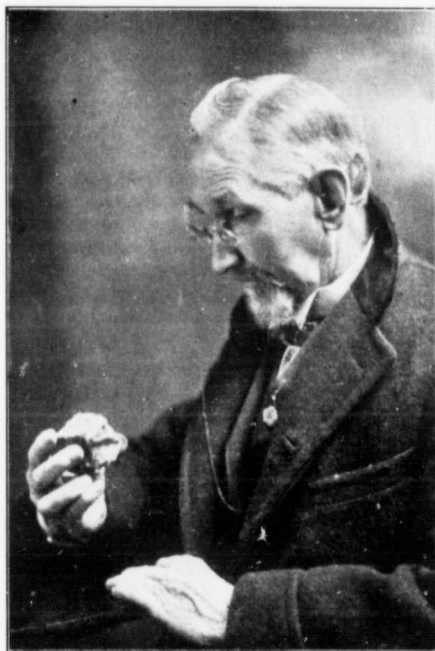
"Tell you my story," he repeated. "Well, all right. I'll try, but I'll just begin at the interesting part and cut out the first chapter or so. In '51 I came out to the Pacific Coast from Ireland, this by-the-way. In San Francisco in those early days, if you wanted any excitement, the proper thing to do was to join the Fire Department. Practically every man in the town was a member of the brigade, and it was at one of our meetings, in February, 1858, to be exact, that I first heard of British Columbia. The news that gold of good quality had been found in the Thompson River was announced to us at that meeting by the purser of the *Otter*, and I well remember his exclaiming with conviction as he concluded his remarks, 'Boys, you may take my word for it, the next big rush will be to the Fraser River.' Well, a few days later a company or syndicate was formed in San Francisco, to equip a party to proceed to the new goldfields and ascertain whether they were as rich as report stated. I was a member of that party, and after arriving at Whatcom we took a small boat and rowed from Point Roberts up the Fraser, prospecting *en route*. We struck nothing

worth while, however, until we reached Hill's Bar, but the prospects here repaid us well for the hard work we had gone through in bucking the swift current of the river, for at the upper end of the bar we made \$100 a day per man with rockers, the lower end yielding about an ounce a day and the middle of the bar, \$50. Meanwhile we ran out of provisions and some of us therefore went back to Fort Langley to replenish our stock and report our find. But all the grub we could get for love or money was some black flour, and I remember how I missed the sugar. Just about this time a sloop came up the river and anchored off our bar. At first we hoped she was laden with provisions, but instead of good food, her hold was full of bad whiskey, which the captain proceeded to sell to

the Indians at the rate of five dollars a bottle, receiving pay in gold dust. This was all very well, but it meant danger to us, and so wishing to be quite fair we proposed to buy the liquor at a fair price, but as our offer was refused, we proceeded to confiscate the spirits, and promised the trader a hempen neck-tie if he did not make himself scarce within ten minutes. He left in less than ten minutes. The Indians, however, were not at all pleased, and we very nearly had some trouble with them, especially after one of our party had broken a shovel handle over the head of a particularly obstreperous buck. But just then the barge of H. M. S. *Satellite* with Governor Douglas on board hove in sight, and the natives were speedily pacified with a 'blow out,' of molasses and hard-tack. Oh, yes, the Governor was a great man.

I remember he appointed George Perrier first J. P. at Yale. Perrier said he felt he was well qualified to act as a magistrate as he 'had read Blackstone.' 'Tut, tut, man,' Douglas replied, 'exercise a little common sense and never mind Blackstone.'

"In April, we gave Billie Ballow, a Californian expressman, a letter to our friends in San Francisco, acquainting them with the news of our discoveries, and then in the fall of '58 a number of us started from Yale with a boat-load of provisions up the Fraser, and the river being at the time at its lowest stage, we had a very hard time indeed in making the ice portages. We ate our first Christmas dinner in British Columbia on Chatman's Bar in company with McArthur, formerly a Hudson's Bay Company's



Mr. James Moore, a pioneer Cariboo prospector.