

The Oldest Pioneer Miner in British Columbia



THE oldest pioneer miner in British Columbia is the title claimed by Mr. James Moore, of Cariboo, who is at present in Victoria on a visit. Last Monday evening Mr. Moore addressed a meeting called by the Young People's Society at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, on his experiences as a miner in pioneer days. Full of interest as they are from a historical point of view, Mr. Moore's remarks on that occasion are given in the following.

"I am proud to have the honor of being called on to speak to this young generation I see before me, and those old pioneers, the home and sinew of this great province. Those are the men, sir, that made this province what it is today, the greatest province in the Dominion of Canada. In speaking to you tonight, Mr. Chairman, I am speaking from memory in giving you a short resume of the early history of the province. Fifty years is a long time to remember incidents that occurred in those days.

"It may be interesting to know what led up to the first discoveries of mines in the province. The question is still in doubt when the first gold was found in this province. But, sir, I am speaking now from my own recollections. In speaking with Donald McLean, chief trader of the H. B. Co. at Fort Kamloops in 1861, he told me the first gold he received was in 1856 and 1857, from Indians on the Thompson river. This gold he sent down to Fort Victoria, and in February, 1858, the H. B. Co. steamer Otter left Victoria for San Francisco. The purser, having this gold dust, took it to the U. S. mint in San Francisco, and had it coined as the first gold found in New Caledonia. I will speak of this province in future as British Columbia, as this province was made a Crown Colony after we discovered mines on the Fraser river. In those early days in San Francisco it was the correct thing to belong to the Volunteer fire department. At one of our meetings, one evening, the conversation turned on gold excitement. The superintendent of the mint was present and remarked: "Boys, the next excitement will be on the Fraser river. He then told us of the gold brought by the Otter. On the strength of that statement we formed a small party to explore and report on the Fraser river. We left San Francisco the 12th of March, 1858, and entered the Fraser river about the 20th, and discovered and located the first mines on the mainland of British Columbia March 23rd, 1858. When we located this mine we laid the foundation stone of mining in British Columbia, as this was practically the commencement of mining in the Province.

"I may go a little further, and say we laid the foundation stone of British Columbia, and I am proud to have the honor of stating here tonight that I helped to lay that foundation stone. But, sir, I am sorry to say I am the only one left of that little party that discovered those mines on Hill's Bar, as all my associates have crossed the great divide. I trust they have struck it rich and have a claim staked for their old partner.

"In ascending the river we camped one day on a bar to cook lunch when one of our party noticed particles of gold in the moss that was growing on the rocks on the bar. He washed a pan of this moss and got a prospect. After lunch we all prospected and discovered the richest bar on the Fraser or its tributaries. In honor of the man that washed the first pan we named the bar Hill's Bar. In conversation with a Mr. Ladd a few years ago who then owned the bar, he estimated \$200,000 had been recovered from that bar. After our discovering this mine on Hill's Bar we sent some of our party down the river to Fort Langley to replenish our larder, as we had only a prospecting outfit. But in those days the Hudson's Bay Company's stores were not well supplied with groceries. However, they reported our find on Hill's Bar, the news of which soon spread across the Sound. We were not left long in possession, as the whole tribe of Yale Indians, about three hundred men, women and children, moved down the river and camped on our bar. They soon tumbled to our game of mining, and they also commenced washing for gold.

"The next party to arrive was Captain Taylor, with a boat load of whisky. Strange to say, the first supplies most always to arrive in a new mining camp take the form of liquor. When he landed on the bar with his "tangle-foot" he commenced selling to the Indians at \$5 a bottle, taking the real value of the Indians not knowing the value of the mineral. That night all the Indians got drunk, and to save ourselves we offered to buy all the liquor the Captain had. He refused our offer, as he thought this was a case to get rich quick by selling to Indians and helping himself to their gold dust. We then confiscated all the liquor Taylor had. We got an axe and knocked the heads of each barrel in and dumped the whole contents on the bar. We had christened the baby Hill's Bar a few days before. We now baptized the infant. We then gave Taylor half an hour to strike his camp and leave, or if he wished to remain among us we would make him a present of a hempen necktie. He would not accept our present, but left the bar and went down stream.

"After this incident some of the worst Indians in the band became discontented and inclined to be rather ugly. One day one of them took a pick belonging to our party and upon his refusing to return it the owner of the pick lost patience and broke a shovel handle over the head of Mr. Indian. Of course this precipitated a row in camp. The Indians

formed by themselves with their muskets, and our party (about twenty), a short distance away, armed for what might occur. The chief of the tribe, being present, got on a stump and made a long speech to his tribe. While he was speaking a barge of the gunboat Satellite hove in sight around the bend in the river, with Governor Douglas, the captain of the Satellite, and a dozen bluejackets on board. If ever visitors were welcome Governor Douglas and his barge load of mariners were welcome to this little party of ours, whom they saved from annihilation. When the Governor landed on the bar we fired a salute in his honor. We then stated our grievances to him, and he persuaded the Indians to leave the bar and go to Fort Yale, where a small Hudson Bay trading post was established, and pacified the Indians by giving them a "blow out" of hard tack and molasses. We had no trouble with the Indians after that on Hill's Bar. About six weeks later Governor Douglas appointed the first justice of the peace on the mainland, George Perrier.

"Our next visitor on Hill's Bar was Billy Ballon, an old California expressman who was well pleased with our prospects. He started the pioneer express of British Columbia. Of course we all gave him letters and samples of gold dust to our friends in the outside world, the receipt of which in California caused great excitement. This was in April, 1858, and in May the river was lined with prospectors from its mouth to Fort Yale, a distance of over 300 miles. When they arrived at Yale they were forced to remain there, as Yale was the head of steamboat navigation and also for small boats, until such time as the river fell to low water. But in these days, no matter how rich a camp we discovered, we could not remain long in it. As we were of a roving disposition we had to explore. I am still of the same disposition sir, and will not remain long in one camp tonight, but will proceed into the interior. But before I do so I would like to say in those days we had no railroads, wagon roads, or pack trails. We had only an Indian trail along the great canyon of the Fraser, and the large chasms were spanned by poles tied with twisted willows from which we could look down several hundred feet to the mighty Fraser rushing below. We had to cross these bridges with our packs or turn back, but I assure you, sir, we did not know what that word meant. Our motto was "onwards and upwards," in the fall and early spring, when the river was at its low stage, we were enabled to take up boats laden with provisions through the canyon of the Fraser from Yale to Lytton.

"When we got to Lytton some of our party continued up the river in their boats, and discovered other rich bars. Others of our party, myself included, got horses and went inland, and discovered the Horsefly river in the Cariboo district, and located what was then known as the celebrated Blue Lead claim. This was in 1859. I paid the Horsefly a visit 40 years after our discovery, and visited the old Discovery claim, and found a company still working that claim. The foreman of the company showed me a pan of gravel he recovered a few days before, but had not yet washed. It looked to me to be as much gold as gravel in that pan, but that claim is now better known as the Ward claim. I could not help noticing the contrast between the present mode of working, which is by hydraulic elevators, the camp being lit up by electricity, and our crude mode of working forty years before with rockers and our camp lit up by camp fires. We were able, though, sir, to declare a dividend every night of \$100 per man.

"The same year, 1859, Charley Snider and two others entered the Quesnel river and discovered a rich bar from which they recovered the first day \$1,700, and many days after paid equally as well. The next year, 1860, we were able to penetrate a little further inland and discovered Duck, Keithley, Goose, Harvey, and Snowshoe creeks. In 1861 we discovered the richest creeks in Cariboo, namely, Antler, William, Lightning, Lowbee and Grouse Creek, and some of the claims on those creeks were fabulously rich. For example, I will state the Diller claim on William Creek, where two men working in the face of the drift with picks took out in twenty-four hours' work 202 lbs. of gold, the day shift recovering 102 lbs. and the night shift 100 lbs. Other claims on the Creek paid in the following order: 50 feet of the Diller claim paid \$240,000, or \$4,800 per foot of channel, 50 feet of the Moffatt claim paid \$90,000, or \$1,800 per foot; 80 feet of the Steele paid \$120,000, or \$1,500 per foot; 120 feet of the Canadian claim paid \$180,000, or \$1,500 per foot; 100 feet of the Watty claim paid \$130,000, or \$1,300 per foot of channel. These are only some of the claims on William Creek that paid. There were a number of other claims that paid equally as well. As regards pan prospects on William Creek, the biggest prospect I now remember was \$1,650 to one pan. I also remember \$6,500 to five pans on the same creek.

"It may also be interesting to know how some of the claims on Lightning Creek paid. The Victoria Company recovered \$451,642, the Van Winkle Company \$363,983, the Vancouver Company \$274,100, the Whitehall Company \$200,000, Lightning Company \$153,962, South Wales Company \$141,531, the Point Company \$136,625, the Dutch and Seigel Company \$130,000, and the Discovery Company \$120,000.

"Williams Creek, during the palmy days of '62 and '63, was a lively place. Theatres, dance halls, hurdy-gurdy girls, saloon keepers, and gamblers, reaped a rich reward from the

liberal miners, who never thought the gold in their mines would ever give out, and were as careless of their gold dust as if it had no value. The story of Long Abbott is well known. He had made \$40,000 on Williams Creek, wasted the whole sum in champagne, and crowned his exploit by smashing with \$20 gold pieces a costly mirror hanging in the bar-room. Others who deserved a better fate, and were instrumental through their discoveries in making large fortunes died poorer than the very latest arrivals in the diggings.

"Witness Jim Loring, who had a third interest in the Diller claim that paid \$500,000 in three hundred feet of ground. He died in Victoria without a dollar. I may mention here the fate of two of our explorers, John Rose and his partner Johnson, who was murdered for their grub by Indians on Bear river. Their flesh was burned from their bones, and their bones buried under their camp fire. This occurred in 1862. This statement was afterwards made to Mr. Charles, of the H. B. Co. at Fort George, by a squaw who was present at the time of the murder. The fate of another prospector, whose name I cannot recall, is tragic. He wrote his name and scratched a few broken words on his tin cup, being afterwards found by Sam Kyes and party, dead, in his blankets, at the head of Bear river. They buried him where they found him, and brought the tin cup to Richfield and gave it to Judge O' Riley.

"I now go back to the original party of miners at Hill's Bar in 1858, whose trials and tribulations will make interesting reading to some of the old pioneers and also to those of the present generation to whom the history of the early days of the province must ever form an engrossing study. I have already recorded the incident of Captain Taylor and his boatload of liquor, the appointment of George Perrier first justice of the peace, and Billy Ballon, the pioneer expressman of British Columbia. There were some wonderful characters thrown together in those early days, and I recall most interesting tales of them.

"Among the adventurers was Ned McGowan, who had been a judge in San Francisco and was a man of special ability. He had been run out of California by the Vigilance committee and escaped to New Caledonia. In good society McGowan was perfectly at home, and soon became a leader. He could equally well adapt himself to the society of roughs and be assigned the first place. He thus was able to make all kinds of trouble and carry in to execution practical jokes which helped to relieve the monotony of life. Perrier, the first justice of the peace, appointed a constable on Hill's Bar. One day this constable went to Fort Yale and got drunk, was arrested and lodged in jail. McGowan, ever ready to plot mischief, thereupon persuaded Perrier that his dignity had been trampled on by the arrest of his constable. He induced Perrier to avenge the dignity by appointing himself (McGowan) and some others special constables, and under this authority they proceeded to Fort Yale and took the drunken constable out of jail. The incident was reported to Governor Douglas, who sent a party of marines to deal out justice. But McGowan was prepared. He received the marines in quite an ostentatious manner, had a luncheon ready, and about the festive board explained that the whole thing was a joke, and succeeded in effecting a settlement.

Another eccentric character of those early days was Judge Cox, who left California during the excitement of 1848 for Victoria, and, having no money to pay his passage, shipped as cook on a sailing vessel. Cox went on board with the crew, and the anchor was weighed. The ship proceeded to sea at eight bells (12 o'clock), when the hungry sailors went to the galley for their dinner there was nothing ready for them. Knowing nothing of cooking Cox had been unable to make any preparation for a meal, which, of course, "riled" the crew, who went to the captain with their complaint. Cox was ordered to appear before the captain, when he admitted his complete ignorance of the culinary art, and acknowledged he was broke and had adopted these means to get to Victoria. The ship being then at sea Cox could not be put ashore, and one of the crew had to be pressed into service. The captain found the pseudo-cook was an Irish gentleman in reduced circumstances, so he made the best he could of his bargain and took Cox into the cabin to straighten out the ship's accounts.

"Shortly after Cox arrived in Victoria Governor Douglas appointed him customs house officer at the boundary to collect revenue on goods and animals coming in overland from Oregon. He was afterwards appointed Gold Commissioner at William Creek, which position he filled satisfactorily to all. He had a way of his own of deciding cases. He would generally advise parties not to bring their troubles into court, but settle them outside. On one occasion he decided a case where both parties claimed to be the first locator of a mining claim by ordering that both men start from the court house together, get an axe apiece, run two miles to the ground in dispute, and the man that drove the first stake should be declared the owner. In another trial of disputed rights of ground on Cedar Creek, which took place on Saturday, the judge reserved his decision until Monday, when he decided in favor of the plaintiff, ordering, however, that the successful litigant should pay all costs, including defendant's lawyer. The defendant gave notice that he would appeal from the judge's decision. After the court adjourned the defendant went into the judge's private office on other business, and the judge, thinking he was on the appeal case, said: "On Sat-

urday I intended to decide in your favor, but the plaintiffs invited me to a champagne supper, the effects of which caused me to change my mind."

"Now, Mr. Chairman, I wish to say a few words on our present mining industry and our prospects in Northern British Columbia. I have confined myself so far to placer mining. I will now speak on our future lode mining prospects of the Telegraph Creek division of the Cassiar district. And I may say here that district will be the great lode mining district of this province of British Columbia when properly opened up with railroad transportation. I am speaking now as an explorer and prospector in which capacity I have spent 51 years in British Columbia. I will refer here, sir, to the report of G. M. Dawson in 1878, when he said in his report, "The coast ranges, where traversed by the valley of the Stikine and again where crossed further north by the Chilkoot Pass, are found to consist for the most part of granite and granitoid rocks, almost invariably of gray color and frequently rich in hornblende. With these are occasionally found stratified masses of mica and hornblende schists, and both these and the granites are frequently traversed by pegmatite veins, diabase dykes, and intrusive masses of coarse diorite. There is an abundance of wood and water, matters of great importance in connection with mining, and means of transportation once provided mining operations should be carried on here at less cost than in dry and woodless regions, such as are great portions of Arizona." I may also refer here to the report of H. J. Powers, a mining engineer in the interest of Chicago capitalists, Rosenthal, Kurtz, and Hirschel, made a most flattering report. He said in part: "I have shown what can be done for \$1,500,000 in development work, with railroad communication, and it runs up to \$20,000,000 in six months."

"In his report on the mine he says, with reference to the North Star ore zone, which is covered with seven claims, 'at the north end of the zone it is from 950 to 1,000 feet wide, at the southern end it is concealed, about 350 feet in width. An adit tunnel from the northern end will pass through this great zone, and have a body of ore 2,500 feet to stope from, and now it is not a question of tonnage, as there is in sight one billion tons above the adit tunnel, not to count what may be produced below, which in its nature must be richer than that on the surface. It is almost a certainty that there is no such ore body found in any part of the globe as this for volume carrying, gold, silver, copper, zinc and iron and other rare metals that can be concentrated at a small cost, both for labor and percentage of crude values. While the water power will give no trouble there is plenty of it for power. Dealing with other claims, the Golden Curry mine is an immense reef of gold bearing ore, is over 1,000 feet in width, and is traceable for several miles. As there are millions of tons of ore there can be 1,000 tons a day handled. Reduced to 50 tons of concentrates that would be worth \$50 per ton, at a cost not to exceed one dollar per crude ton of ore. The Belcher, two miles north of the Golden Curry, is a well defined vein 12 feet in width, 8 feet of which is grey copper. This is one of the first mines that should be developed in order to make a shipping mine of it in the absence of railroad facilities. The showing here is very good that will be a large producer of gold, silver, and copper. The Monarch is a great ore body, carrying gold, silver, lead, and zinc, and is a splendid concentrating ore. There is plenty of wood for all purposes in the vicinity for the construction works of flumes, bridges and ties for a railroad, while the water power is all that can be desired."

"In conversation with one of the few prospectors, W. P. Ball, in this section of northern British Columbia, he said, east of Dease Lake and south of Haskin Mountain, for 100 miles in extent the country is practically unexplored, but what is known of it has shown surface croppings of copper, silver and gold ores. He also said the head of the Iskoot river he considered one of the best districts in Cassiar to prospect for copper, gold, silver, nickel and iron. He also considers in this section is a low pass that may be used for railroad construction. Opposite Clear water, on the Stikine river, lives an old man named Kirk, who spends part of his time cutting cordwood for steamboats, and the other part of his time prospecting on Little Salmon River, a short distance back from the Stikine river. I examined samples of ore he gave me that was a rich sample of copper ore. In fact the question may be asked, what extent of mineralized territory exists in this Telegraph Creek division of Cassiar in Northern British Columbia? In answering that question I may say you could send 500 men out in this district prospecting for five years, and the chances are no two would meet in that time. It is impossible to expect the prospectors to do any extent of prospecting at the present rate of transportation, as the rate from Wrangle to Dease Lake and vicinity is from \$100 to \$200 per ton. A prospector may buy \$100 worth of provisions at Dease Lake and put it all on his back and start on a prospecting trip. You will see by that it requires a prospector to be well fixed financially to do any amount of prospecting.

"If capital once gets interested in this northern section of British Columbia and opens up this section with railroad communication, they will open up the richest mineral district known in the province, there are millions here

to be made by the first enterprising financiers who will stretch out their hand to receive it. Another great disadvantage the people of Telegraph Creek suffer from is mail communication in winter. They get three letter mails in winter but no papers or magazines, and in summer steamboat communication is supplied for only about two months, so you see, sir, this rich section of our province is shut off from the outside world.

"I would like Mr. Chairman, if possible, to get all the old-timers now left in the province together and have one more reunion, the object being to try and get the early history of the province written up in book form. There are a great many instances occurred in those days which has slipped our memory, but one speaking may then refresh the memory of the other, by that way, and having a short-hand reporter present to take down notes, we may then get some very interesting reading. If this is not done soon there will be no one left to tell the tale."

STAMFORD SAVES ITS "VILLAGE GREEN"

A unique and laudable public movement has just been carried to a successful issue at Stamford. Anticipating the possible loss to the public use of the "village green," the villagers raised a fund and purchased the land and have made it a public park forever, the title being vested in a board of trustees. The land was owned by the Dece family, who have given it to public use for three-quarters of a century, and finally sold it at a fraction of its real market value.

Stamford is an old English village—"green" and all—set down in the midst of the garden of Canada. The "green" is the village playground, and here in old days famous athletic contests, political meetings, holiday celebrations and militia assemblies were held.

Stamford's story is full of history. Its "green" lies in the forks of the famous old Portage road around Niagara Falls and the St. David's ravine road, both pioneer highways. In days of war and rebellion it was an important strategic point. Here in the early twenties Sir Peregrine Maitland, Governor of Upper Canada, built his "cottage" (of twenty-two rooms), and held vice-regal court. Round him settled old brother officers and friends—Dees, Ottleys, Mewburns, and others.

The Church of St. John was erected in 1825 by Sir Peregrine and his friends, each contributing to the fund and also making a special gift of furnishings. The list of donors is a list of the military, civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of Canada at that day. The quaint old church has been modernized to some extent, but, with its memorial tablets and windows, is still most interesting. In the churchyard lie the founders of some of Canada's oldest English families, and many a soldier, including young Herman Mewburn, a Fenian raid martyr. The original Presbyterian church, which was older than St. John's, has disappeared. Its cemetery is filled with graves of pioneers.

Stamford of old was ambitious. A viceregal residence, an aristocratic populace, important as a point on old routes of travel and transportation, the assembling place of a regiment of the famous Lincoln militia—had it not cause for pride? When Welland county was created fifty years ago Stamford decided to be the county town, and timber was prepared for the court house.

But Stamford's ambition is long dead, and its quaintness disappearing fast before the electric light and other modernizing influences. A few old buildings, some ruins, the "green," the old cemeteries and many traditions remain, and Stamford is well worth visiting.—Toronto Globe.

FLYING MACHINE AS WAR ENGINE

Some terrible things have been predicted for the flying machine as a war engine. Many a sanguine inventor has claimed that with the advent of his flying machine, battleships, coast fortifications and cities could be utterly destroyed by dropping dynamite from the air. It is comforting to know that no very great loss of life or property would result from dynamite dropped from flying machines, for the reasons that dynamite requires confinement to work very wide destruction. . . . The flying machine will have very great use in war as a scouting craft for the purpose of locating an enemy and inspecting his position; but the enemy will have his aerial pickets out, too, and there will be many a tilt in the air between the warring craft. Then it will be that speed rivalry between the nations in the production of flying machines that will fly fast and fly high, for those able to fly the highest will have a tremendous advantage over their enemies.—Hudson Maxim, in Science.

One of the objections urged against turbine-engines has been their inability to run backward as well as forward. John Ogg, of Aberdeen, has invented a form of turbine which avoids this difficulty. The steam enters the machine through a hollow axle, and thence acts upon the wings of the rotating disks mounted upon the axle. When it is desired to reverse the motion, a new set of disks, having their wings set at a reverse angle, are brought into play, and by means of grooved valves the steam is projected against them, thus producing a backward motion. The reversal of motion can be produced instantaneously.

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only when I had taken nearly two boxes that I commenced to experience relief. I kept up the treatment, however, and after taking five boxes I was cured, and when I appeared on the street my friends said, "The dead has come to life." And this seemed literally true because I certainly was at death's door. But now I can work almost as well as ever I could and go camping and berry-picking with the girls.

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