

claims in all directions near it, and test the ground in every way; but nothing farther could be found, except in the one spot, about 70 feet in length, running south-east and north-west: on being worked about 15 feet it gave out. Before work commenced I have blown the sand off a vein of pure gold.

I now proposed to test the island farther, and started for the Skidegate Channel. At a village of the Crosswer Indians, where we were windbound, the appearances were more favourable. Talcose slate, quartz, and red earth were seen. We tried to discover gold, but without success. Sulphuret of iron was found in abundance, and we discovered traces of previous prospectings. The Indians understand the search for gold well, and detect it in the rocks quicker even than I can.

The coast from the Casswer Indian village to Skidegate Channel is wilder than any I have ever before travelled; and we did not care to hunt for gold in such a place. Five Indians were drowned here to-day while fishing.

At the Skidegate Channel we found black slate and quartz prevailing; farther north granite appears, and then sandstone and conglomerate; and as we were now in a coal country, it was of no use to look for gold.

We saw coal here, but I cannot speak as to its quality, not being a judge of it. The formation is similar to that of Nanaimo. From this we returned to Gold Harbour, where a party which had remained behind to prospect inland had met with no better success than ourselves. We then consulted what was the best thing to do. I did not wish to return to Victoria, as your Excellency had desired me to explore some of the inlets on the mainland; and I left Gold Harbour with a party of fourteen men for Fort Simpson, where we arrived in eight days. The north-west coast of Queen Charlotte Islands is a low sand and gravel flat, having no resemblance to a gold country.

I left Fort Simpson for the Skeena River on the 31st August. From Fort Simpson to Fort Essington is about 40 miles. The salt water here is of a light-blue colour, like the mouth of Fraser River, and runs inland about 30 miles. The coarse-grained quartz of Fort Simpson is no longer seen here, and granite appears; and the banks of the river are low, and covered with small hard wood and cotton-trees, with some good-sized white oaks, the first I have seen west of Fraser River.

Vessels drawing upwards of 4 feet of water cannot go more than 20 miles up the Skeena River; and it is very unlike the deep inlets to the southward. At our camp here some Indians visited us, and told us that they were honest; but next morning the absence of my coat rather negatived their statement. Next day we found the river shoal for loaded canoes, as it had fallen much. At our next camp I went up a small river called Scenatoys, and the Indians showed me some crystallized quartz, and to my surprise a small piece with gold in it, being the first I had seen in this part. The Indian took me to a granite slide, whence, as he asserted, the piece of quartz had come. I found some thin crusts of fine quartz, but no gold. From the river Scenatoys to Fort Essington, at the mouth of the Skeena River, is 75 miles. A little below the Scenatoys an Indian trail leads to Fort Simpson, through a low pass; and the distance is not great.