

**THE DOMINION AT THE WEST. A
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,
ITS CLIMATE AND RESOURCES. THE
GOVERNMENT PRIZE ESSAY, 1872**

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The Dominion at the West. A Brief Description of the Province of British Columbia, Its Climate and Resources. The Government Prize Essay, 1872 by Alexander Caulfield Anderson

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ALEXANDER CAULFIELD ANDERSON

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GOVERNMENT PRIZE ESSAY, 1872**

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A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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CLIMATE AND RESOURCES.

THE GOVERNMENT PRIZE ESSAY, 1872.

BY ALEXANDER CAULFIELD ANDERSON, Esq., J. P.

* * * * *

Tendimus in Latium—

Virg.

We are all aboard for the West—

Sir George E. Cartier's Version.



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From



*315 California St
W. P. H. Adams*

CHAPTER I.

Agent

BOUNDARIES, AND GENERAL GEOGRAPHY.

BRITISH COLUMBIA sprang into existence, as a Colony, only in 1858, consequently on the gold-discoveries, the rumours of which in that year suddenly attracted numbers to its shores. Previously it had been traversed and partially occupied only by the Fur-traders, first of the North-West, and afterwards of the Hudson's Bay, Companies; by whom its various divisions were distinguished by different names, most of which are still retained for local designation. The adjacent Island of Vancouver, separated from the mainland by a narrow channel, in its narrowest part scarcely exceeding a few thousand yards, had been partially colonized some years before; and it might have been reasonably supposed that these two adjacent and almost contiguous lands, with interests so closely united, would have been incorporated under one Government. But the wisdom of Downing Street willed it otherwise. Established as separate Colonies, each enjoyed for some years the honor of paying its own highly-salaried Governor, under the Imperial auspices; with the dignity of enacting its own special laws, not always in strict observance of the interests of its neighbour. Of course this could not last; and in 1866 the common-sense of the two Colonies, though reluctantly elicited, brought about a union. Subsequently, on the 20th July, 1871, the united Colony became confederated as a Province of the Dominion of Canada.

It is as a sequel to this last-named event, and in view of the rapid advance of the most important interests of the country under its new connexion, that the Provincial Government has judged it expedient to invite the production of

such information as may meet the enquiries of the industrious settler whose views tend hitherward. It will, then, be the object of the following treatise to present, in a brief and compendious form, such general account of the country and its resources as may seem appropriate to the end in view.

The limits of the Province may be thus broadly indicated. Co-terminous on the South with the United States Territory of Washington, the 49th Parallel of North Latitude forms the boundary from the Gulf of Georgia to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, which it intersects in Longitude 114° West, there touching on the Dominion territory of the North-West. Thence along the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the parallel of Mount St. Elias, in about Latitude 62° . Thence Southward as far as $54^{\circ} 40'$, along the strip of coast-line, ten marine leagues in width, formerly occupied by Russia, recently purchased by the United States, and now forming part of the Territory of Alaska. Thence Southward to the entrance of the Strait of Fuca, including Queen Charlotte and Vancouver Island, and the vast archipelago connected therewith.

The three principal streams of British Columbia are, the Columbia, the Fraser, and the Peace. The last-mentioned, rising in the angle formed by the Peak Range with the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Range, after receiving the important gold-bearing tributary, Findlay's Branch, breaks through the main line of the Rocky Mountains, and, passing onwards, joins the great River Mackenzie: the united flood, after a course of some two thousand miles, eventually falling into the Frozen Ocean.

The Columbia, rising in the Rocky Mountains, pursues a Southerly course, and, after receiving several important tributaries, and feeding the two extensive sheets of water called the Arrow Lakes, enters the United States Territory in Latitude 49° ; and after a course of nearly a thousand miles, falls into the Pacific in Latitude $46^{\circ} 20'$.

Fraser River, comparatively the smallest, but in its relation to the Province by far the most important, flows entirely through British Columbia, entering the Gulf of Georgia a few miles North of the Boundary Line of 49° , and in about $122^{\circ} 40'$ West Longitude; its course throughout being nearly parallel with that of the Columbia. The main, or central, branch takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains in Lat. $53^{\circ} 45''$ N., Long. 118 W., there heading with the Rivière de Miette, a tributary of the Athabasca, which afterwards unites with Peace River in its course towards the Frozen Ocean. Fraser River was first discovered by Sir Alexander Mackenzie of the North-West Company, who, designating it as the *Tâ-cout-ché Tesse*, or River of the Tacully nation, descended it for some distance on his way to the Western Coast in 1793. Afterwards, in 1808, it was navigated to its mouth by Mr. Simon Fraser and Mr. John Stuart of the North-West Company; from the former of whom it has its present name. Fraser River, a few miles from its source, flows into a lake some miles in length called Cow-dung Lake, below which, considerably increased by a tributary from the north, it enters Moose Lake, a beautiful sheet of water some nine miles in length. Thence the river continues rapidly to Tête Jaune's Cache, being joined midway by a second feeder, likewise from the North.

Tête Jaune's Cache,* distant about 70 miles from the summit of the Rocky Mountains and 780 from the sea, is the limit of canoe navigation on the Fraser. About three miles lower down, the stream is joined by the Cranberry Fork, a tributary flowing from the South, which heads in with the North Branch of the Thompson, to be presently noticed, and the Canoe Fork of the Columbia.

Between Tête Jaune's Cache and Thle-et-leh, where there is a post of the Hudson's Bay Company called Fort George,

* Named after an Iroquois trapper attached to the North-West Company, who formerly frequented this neighbourhood—called the Tête Jaune from the lightness of his hair.