

244 Rev. 197

<sup>Received by</sup>  
New Westminster  
August 14<sup>th</sup> 1862

Sir,

I have the honor,  
according to the writer's  
request, to forward the  
enclosed letter from a miner  
of the name of Deffis to  
His Excellency the Governor.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

J. Maudslayi

The Colonial Secretary  
9<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup>

F449

William's Creek, Cariboo District, from 8<sup>th</sup>  
1862.

To His Excellency James Douglas, Esq.,  
Governor of Vancouver Island  
and British Columbia.

Excellency,

The solemn kindness and regard  
intended shown me, in a private interview granted  
me, by your Excellency, and the valuable information  
gained from it, induce me to address, in a humble  
way, a short statement on the natural resources  
of British Columbia and the present condition  
of things here, to Him whom God, in his  
great wisdom, has placed at the helm of this large  
Colony for the good of the many!

I hope that your Excellency will not  
look at this bold step of mine as an impertinent  
interference into the affairs of the Colony, but will  
rather candidly receive it, as coming from an  
unbiased stranger, who has the best interests  
at heart as to see this Country become prosperous!

LIGHT ORIGINAL

From Selkirk, or rather from Fort St. John  
to William's Lake, (for a distance of four or  
hundred miles), in following up the river trail,  
British Columbia seems to be a large set  
of high flats, interspersed with low hills thickly  
timbered. That strip of Country is, according to  
my humble opinion, one of the finest in the  
World for grazing, and if I have no doubt but  
what would grow the most luxuriantly. I must,  
however, say that the Country, upon the whole, seems  
to be deficient in water, for irrigating purposes.  
I should think too that the climate of British  
Columbia has been greatly underrated, as I did not  
meet with a single day rain until I arrived at  
Antler creek, on the 26<sup>th</sup> ult.

The next a sensible traveler expounding  
in passing upon the rich soil of that part of the  
Country is to see that it is now left most a waste  
for the deer to roam in; and to think that  
there are, at the present time, in Europe and America,  
& many millions of people, starving most to death  
for want of room, and are contending every often  
for a small parcel of unprofitable land, whilst  
the gifts of God seem here to run to waste.

On my way up, I discovered the following  
ores, as far as I had the means to ascertain, three  
kinds of iron, grains of Platinum, bitum.  
Sulphurates of Silver, Sulphurated antimonial  
Silver, antimonial Silver, Sulphurates of

mercury (cinnabar), sulphurates and pyrites of copper  
and of pathic iron. Antimony is found very abundantly  
through the country, and such seems to be the case  
with saltpetre. When you judge from colonial  
appearances I should think British Columbia to  
be one of the richest countries in the world, in our most  
valuable kinds.

But it will take a long time, I fear, to  
private energy and enterprise, will be able to make  
us acquainted with the mineral wealth of the  
country. A committee of practical scientific  
men, selected and assisted by the Government  
to explore these mountains, can alone lay open  
to the eye the numberless treasures stowed  
in their bowels.

Cariboo and chiefly William's creek  
(for half a mile) is the richest gold field ever  
heard of. I have never seen anything alike  
during my twelve years of prospects and  
rambles through the mountains of California.  
But it is painful for me to add that very  
few are the ones upon whom Fortune seems  
to bestow its favors; and that wealth and  
misery go here hand in hand. For, indeed,  
everything here appears to work against  
industry. I do not, viz. the inclination of the climate,  
the high prices paid for provisions and supplies,  
the monopoly of trade having fallen in some  
ways into the hands of those who make use of  
such a privilege to run the bright prospect

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the country; the shortness of the mining season, though on average, it may last five months when a claim is properly open, this being about the mean time in California diggings; the difficulty of prospecting, the country being swampy, thickly timbered, and without trails, and hard to be traversed on account of its flatness.

To all these difficulties thrown in the path of the mine by nature, we must add the following grievances which seem to make the digging here as the forbidden fruit for new prospectors. The rules and regulations in the matter of by laws for matters relating to mining, issued by Your Excellency's wisdom, in conformity with the Gold Field Act, are well calculated to attain the aim they were intended to if they would be abided by and applied with the same wisdom which presided to their framing. But, unhappily, such seems not to be the case for instance: It is said by the 10<sup>th</sup> by law regulating bench digging, that no person shall be entitled to hold at one time more than two claims of the legal size. At present this by law is wise seems to be a dead letter. For, there is at Carolina, at this moment, men who make a living by speculating in selling claims, owning as high as ten or more, registered under fictitious names. Such dealings of the law are most injurious to the interests of the country and are a great source of grievance to new prospectors who have no other way left for ascertaining whether a claim has a right owner or not but to go to the books of the court in order to consult the books of Registration of claims. Hence a perpetual cause of strife of law and money to the ones who are already mined.

(5)

The postponement of the date which requires owners of claims to take possession of the same only by the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, instead of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, and which was got up, I hear, on a petition set on foot by the managers of mining ground, under the pretence of the want of provisions, and supplies at Carolina has been a death blow to the hopes of many lease holders men who had already sent through all their money. They had been waiting justly to take the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, in the hope to find their employment or take a parcel of ground (the country being now most all claimed by a few speculators), from the ones who have more than they are allowed to have by law. Their hopes have faded away and now starvation stands them up in the face unless they choose to leave the country.

Your Excellency, in his wisdom, should judge fit to establish a Gold Commissioner who would reside personally in the mines and among miners, & have no doubt but a good deal of injustice would be avoided and an immense amount of good could be done. Such a measure would meet with the greetings of many grateful but now suffering hearts, who would call

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the blessings of God on the head of Your  
Excellency.

Pardon for my pardon from Your  
Excellency, for having thus expressed myself  
so fully (for a stranger) on the ecclesiastical affairs  
of this Country. I shall only plead as my own  
excuse, for having done so, humanity at the sight of  
so much suffering, and consolation on behalf  
of my friends who render justice to the purity  
of Your Excellency's instructions, and who, in their  
present troubles, turn their eyes for advice, towards  
Him whom God has placed so high above any  
one else in this Colony to do good to others and  
who so nobly fulfils the Mission entrusted to  
his hands by Divine Providence.

I am, with the greatest regard and esteem,

of Your Excellency,

The most humble and obedient servant,

B. Deffis, a French  
minister, and a correspondent of Mr. Rogers.

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