

Copy of a Circular from Lord Dufferin to the
Sold Commissioners and Magistrates of British Columbia

*Aspirants
S. B. 1857
H. G. 1857*
Circular

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1 October 1857

Sir,

In wandering over the Mining Districts from Jule
to Spuzzum, my attention has been forcibly attracted
to many objects of a Public nature, to which I wish
to draw your earnest and immediate attention

2. In the first place I find that not a few
British Subjects, who are desirous of settling in
the country, cannot accomplish their object in
consequence of not being able to get land either
by purchase or pre-emption as the Public Land
is not yet surveyed, and the surveys cannot be
completed for some time to come.

3. As delays of that nature will have the effect
of compelling useful settlers, whom we are desirous of
encouraging, to leave the country, and will be in
many other ways injurious, and greatly retard
the settlement, I have decided on introducing a
Preemption Law for the purpose of enabling such
persons to settle at once on any unoccupied Crown
Land, which may suit their purpose, on condition

of

and immediate improvement

4. You will therefore permit all such persons being British subjects or registering their intention of becoming British subjects, to occupy and improve sections of Country Land not exceeding 160 acres in extent, on the condition moreover that they will not be required to make any payment till the Land is surveyed, and then payment will be required at a price not exceeding ten shillings per statute acre

5. They you however to bear in mind that the proposed Law will not apply to Town or suburban Land or to Rural Land immediately beyond the suburban Lots contiguous to Towns, all of which will be reserved for government purposes and for the purpose of raising an immediate revenue to meet the wants of the country.

6. You will also cause to be reserved, the sites of all Indian villages, and the Land they have been accustomed to cultivate, to the extent of several hundred acres round each village for their especial use and benefit.

7. I will hereafter address you more in detail in respect to the proposed pre-emption Law, and now send you these hints for

Yours

direction, and that no time may be lost in carrying out this plan and in permitting British Subjects to occupy sections of Land as soon as they arrive in the Country.

8. I feel an especial interest in the success of two young gentlemen from England, who have lately applied for Land, and propose starting for Lytton or Cayoosh District in a few days. I have desired them to apply to you for Land immediately on their arrival. The two gentlemen referred to, are Mr Elliott and Mr Alston both believe connected with the English Bar.

9. It may be as well further to communicate for your information, that various sites have already been selected for Towns, one of these being the level land near the mouth of Anderson River and Boston Bar. another at or near Cayoosh. Lytton is already known to you, and in every district wherever there may be a centre of Trade it should be reserved as a site for a Town.

10. The scarcity of water in the interior appears to be one of the greatest impediments to the proper development of the gold Districts and it will require both skill and capital to supply the want from distant sources. I

would therefore earnestly impress on you, the great importance of encouraging experienced and enterprising men to invest their capital in bringing in supplies of water to sluice the lofty benches of Fraser's River; for this purpose you must allow them, not only a full supply of water for their ditches, but also permit them to dispose of the same to miners according to the Provisions of the "Gold Fields Act" of which a copy has been sent to you.

11. A ditch owner should not be restricted to one or two sluice heads of water, as I am informed has been heretofore the practice in the Lytton District, he ought to be allowed his ditch full, otherwise men will have no inducement to invest their capital and the country will in consequence suffer much loss. The "Gold Fields Act" guards sufficiently against the evils of Monopoly by providing that ditch owners, shall be bound to furnish water to every "Free Miner" and to ~~at~~ all at a uniform price.

12. The accounts from New Caledonia which I have received from returning miners, indicate the great wealth and extent of the Gold Fields of the

The Indians. Profitable Bar diggings have been discovered, 150 miles beyond Ft. George, and Gold-Bearing Quartz with the bright colored earth, peculiarly indicative of the existence of gold, have been seen on the Western Slopes of the Rocky Mountains, near the sources of the South Fraser by a party of settlers who wintered there last year.

13. When these facts are generally known in England, there will be a great and rapid increase of population, and my great anxiety at present is to improve the communication by opening good roads from Douglas and Jolo into the Transmontane districts.

14. I ^{you} hope to address me as often as convenient and in great detail, respecting the state and prospects of the Country, especially on the subject of the discoveries now being rapidly made in the Gold Districts. Such information being peculiarly valuable for transmission to Her Majesty's Government, and for the English Public who feel a deep interest in the advancement of this Country.

Country

Wishing you health and prosperity

I remain Sir,

Your most obedient servant

(sd) James Douglas

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