

Copy of a Circular from Govr Douglas to the  
Gold Commissioner and Magistrates of British Columbia

[Marginalia: illegible numbers and words.]

Circular [Illegible character] Yale

1<sup>st</sup> October 1859

Sir

In wandering over the Mining Districts from Yale  
to Spuzzem, 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 <sup>10/s</sup> required at a price not exceeding ten shillings per statute acre

5. I beg 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 around 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 limits for

your

[Marginalia: some text from the next page appears on the right side of this page. It is not part of this page of text.]

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.

[Marginalia: some text from the preceding page is visible on this page. It is not part of this page of text.]

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 M<sup>r</sup> Elliott and M<sup>r</sup> Alston both I 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

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 empty trenches of Frasers 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 ~~to~~ [Stricken through in original document] allot a uniform price.

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

the Interior. Profitable Bar diggings have been discovered 150 miles beyond S<sup>t</sup> 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 towns 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 Yale into the Transmountain districts.

14. I beg <sup>^you</sup> 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 Majestys Government, and for the English Public who feel a deep interest in the advancement of this

Country

country.

Wishing you health and prosperity I

I remain Sir,

Your most obedient servant

(S<sup>d</sup>) James Douglas