

South America or Bust

For some time certain citizens of Medford have been much interested in Bolivia and the Republic of Colombia, South America through the receipt of letters from friends engaged in mining and other pursuits in that country and from printed information published about those countries.

The copy of a letter recently received has added much to the enthusiasm of these citizens. A number of Alaska miners under the leadership of Swift Water Bill, it is reported are getting up an expedition for the South American gold fields as well as a party from San Francisco under the leadership of George Wingfield.

Owing to the reputed richness of the placer mines there and the representation that those countries are making liberal inducements to get miners and immigrants there; through the offer of cheap lands and liberal concessions; cheap labor and a temperate climate from an elevation of 5000 feet and upwards; thus permitting mining and other operations every month in the year, there is likely to be quite a stampede of miners and others to that country in the near future.

It is proposed to organize a company and raise money for the purpose first; of selecting two reliable men to go to South America and investigate the mining and other resources of that country.

Second, if their report is favorable, then to get concessions and purchase cheap lands as an investment or operate same as determined by the company in the future.

All those interested in South America or desiring information about that country are invited to meet at the Holland Hotel, Monday evening 8 p. m., April 15th.

South American Committee.
Tipuani River, State of Bolivia, S. A. March 4th, 1912.

Mr. Jim McCormick, Opher, Alaska.
Friend Jim: Yours received and contents noted, was glad to know that you were doing well in that country section, with regard to the following questions you ask me I have to say that Bolivia government is ready to extend every courtesy in their power to Americans. They wish to encourage them to cast their lots in their midst as they know them to be good or the best miners on earth and good citizens. You can take up as much land as you wish to survey and survey it yourself and from the time you commence working you must pay the

government \$2.50 per acre royalty, as long as you work the ground, per annum.

With regard to the climatic conditions you will no doubt be surprised. December, January and February it is constantly raining and the rest of the year it is almost like southern Oregon. There is no extreme heat at any time.

Now Jim, I will tell you how to find me or this section. My partner and I arrived here on the river eight months ago, we were almost broke when we got here. We had no tools such as whip-saws, we had to hew lumber out with axes to build a rock-er with. We commenced working on the point of a bar, we got out 240 ounces; we then returned to Sorata where we disposed of our dust at \$19.00 per oz., to a trader; we then left to the coast where I received some belting and returned with engine tools I could get hold of, built a china pump, we put it in a shaft 8 feet by 8 feet and got down 14 feet and struck it with a rich streak where we got as high as \$25.00 to one pan and 25c pans were quite common but belt broke and we found it so rotten we could not patch it up and returned to work on the surface until we get money enough ahead to go out and get proper machinery to handle the water. The river is so flat that it is impossible to make a bed-rock drain, so a pump is the only thing to get down with, we prospected the river for a distance of 25 miles and found the dirt to average the same and this distance down we ran into a box canyon we worked most. I would not advise less than two persons to go together in this country and they should not think of starting with less than \$2000.00 each and as much more capital as you can bring. You can take up lots of ground and work lots of men. Natives and Indians are very friendly and glad to receive wages, they are good workers and can be hired for seventy-five cents to \$1.50 pr. day, native money and board, which would be 35c to 50c in United States money.

The Tipuani River is situated in the Republic of Bolivia, department of La Paz, about 15 degrees So. Latitude and about 600 miles from the Pacific Coast and on the eastern slope of the Andes. The port on the coast is Mollendo in the southern part of Peru. The railroad from Mollendo to Puno on Lake Titicaca is about 300 miles, stage from Puno to Lampara is 125 miles, from Lampara to Sorata by mule back transportation is

about 200 miles and takes nine days to make the trip.

At Sorata or Sorato you will find a merchant by name of J. B. Souther, who will give you all the needed information as to my correct locality on the river Tipuani. You had better outfit at Sorato. The tools are of native manufacture and are made of iron. Do not fail to take a whip saw, as you will need it the first thing when you get here. With regards to machinery you no doubt have a better knowledge of what is best fitted for this kind of work and you should have it properly tested before you leave San Francisco, with extra fittings for your weak parts as none can be purchased here. Now Jim, the proper time to leave the States for this point is about March 1st, this will bring you to your final destination about May 1st, which season the rain will have fallen and make prospecting easy.

From our experience on the river (Tipuani) one month's work on the river will be enough to convince anyone of the fact that a vast amount of money can be made. We know that it will be necessary to spend a life time to make a fortune out of placers. These placers are situated at an altitude of 5000 to 6000 and at the foot of the Andes which are covered with perpetual snow which keeps the climate cool and pleasant. There is an abundance of timber for fuel and mining purposes and native labor cheap. Advise all your friends to stay away who have only bare enough money to get here with as there are a great many things to take into consideration on a trip of this kind, but for a good energetic man there is open a great field for a sure fortune awaiting him. As yet the lodes or veins in this section have not been thought of. There is good drinking water and water power in abundance. I would advise you to bring plenty of rubber boots and light rubber clothing, light rubber coats and light rubber clothes. Now, Jim, I have tried to make everything plain to you and don't be afraid to come down with all the money you can get so that you can operate on a large scale, there is room for thousands of people and I would dearly love to see bed-rock on this stream. I think it will out rival anything ever discovered. You can make good wages on the surface ground and at 12 feet down it looks good to me; and at 14 feet down it was rich, we might have been close to bedrock, that is our opinion. All the money you take from the United States should be in gold coin and it will be readily exchanged for Bolivian money at the rate of \$2.30 for every dollar of United States money. No

doubt when sufficient people get here and mining is opened up there will be no doubt river steamers put into service, that will bring everything to our doors at moderate prices, at present flour is \$25.00 per one hundred pounds, meat one dollar per pound and everything in proportion. Game is scarce and hard to get. All this talk about bad natives is a falsehood, they are very kind and they will protect your interest from all intruders. For Christ sake get out of that frozen country and come to a climate that cannot be duplicated outside of California.

Now, Jim, what I have told you in this letter I stand ready to back up when you arrive here. Hoping to see you next May or June 1st, I remain as ever,

Your Friend and Chum,
JOHN FERGUSON.
Sorato, State of La Paz, Bolivia, S.A.
Care J. B. Souther,
Trading Post, Sorato.

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