

**Transcript, based on the original  
letter from Robert Brown to the VIEC, about the 'Leech River' gold discovery.  
Despatch No. 4 - July 27<sup>th</sup> 1864.**

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Despatch No. 4 <sup>[sic]</sup>

V.I. Exploring Expedition  
Camp No. 24, Clem-clem-alats  
Indian Village, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1864

The V.I. Exploration Committee:  
Gentlemen

I have the honour to announce for your satisfaction the safe arrival of both the detached parties which I sent from Sooke, across country, bringing intelligence the most satisfactory to me, and the result of which cannot fail to prove of the highest importance to the prosperity of the colony and the further up building of the City of Victoria.

2. The formal reports of Lieutenant Leech I shall forward by the first opportunity after its completion, but the intelligence I have to communicate is of too important a nature to bear delay in forwarding to you, even for one hour. Accordingly I have resolved to despatch a special messenger with this letter and the accompanying specimens, and after mature deliberation have selected Corporal Buttle, R.E., as one on whose fidelity and prudence I can place the most implicit reliance. This will necessitate a delay of about three days, but this was rendered necessary at all events to recruit the party after their fatigue, and Mr. Leech, having severely burnt his foot, it will be fully that time before he is again able to take the field. Today I will remove to a convenient place near the Quamichan Indian village, on the Nanaimo trail where wood and water is convenient, and Salmon are caught on the river weir. [next line is crossed trough with the remark - "not for publishing"]. ~~There over the men will then be removed from a too close vicinity to Mr. Bunsters Ale herb Sap.~~

3. The discovery which I have to communicate is the finding of gold on the banks of one of the Forks of the Sooke River, about 12 miles from the sea in a straight line, and in a locality never hitherto reached by white men, in all probability never even by natives. I forward an ~~quarter~~ eighth of an ounce (or thereabouts) of the coarse scale gold, washed out of twelve pans of dirt, in many places 20 feet above the river, and with no tools but a shovel and a gold pan. The lowest prospect obtained was 3 cents to the pan, the highest \$1 to the pan, and work like that with a rocker would yield what pay you can better calculate than I can, and the development of which, with what results to the Colony you may imagine. The diggings extend for fully 25 miles, and would give employment to more than 4000 men. Many of the claims would take 8 to 10 men to work them. The diggings could be wrought with great facility by fluming the bed of the stream. The banks and benches can be sluiced or rocked. The timber on the banks will supply to the whip saw all the timber that can ever be required for the miner's purposes. The country abounds with game and the "honest miner" need never fear but <sup>[sic]</sup> that he can find food enough without much trouble. A saw mill could be erected at the head waters (or say at the Forks of "Leech's River,") and lumber for flumes, pumps, sluices, &c., floated down to the miners and on the whole the value of the diggings cannot be easily overestimated. I may add, that there is any amount of "five cent dirt," and with proper tools the average prospect is about one bit the pan. **The gold will speak for itself.** Corporal Buttle will return to camp No. 24 immediately and I trust that you will deal liberally with the men when the diggings employ the number of people they are calculated to support and that the expedition will not be forgot in the Governor's proclamation anent the discovery of gold-fields. I announce this event with the most lively satisfaction and trust that our labours are meeting with the approval of the colony. I will communicate the discovery at greater length as soon as possible. Lieut. Leech sent a letter to me with an Indian, and I have no doubt but that you have received before this. It announces the discovery and closes a small prospect of gold taken further down the river.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,  
Your very obedient servant,  
Robert Brown  
Commander and Government Agent of the Expedition.

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**Footnote**

- The price paid for 1 gold (troy) ounce these days was about \$17.-