

queror of Gibraltar." Lieutenant Mayne, who travelled over this road soon after its completion, speaks of it as "a waggon road which would be no discredit to many parts of England."

The work in the neighbourhood of Hope this year consisted in commencing a road to the Similkameen. This was in charge of the greatest builder of them all—Captain Grant. The road did not follow the exact line of the trail built the preceding year, although it touched it here and there. By October, Captain Grant with his party of eighty sappers had completed the road to the Skagit Flats twenty-five miles from Hope. From that point to the Similkameen the Engineers simply widened the existing trail. This latter work was divided into three sections: the first under the charge of Sergeant L. F. Bonson; the second in charge of Corporal William Hall; the third in charge of the late Sergeant John McMurphy. The intention of this work was to improve the access to the diggings on Rock Creek and the vicinity; but when their glory waned before the wondrous riches of Williams, Antler, and the other creeks of Cariboo, the road was abandoned.

The success of the work done on the trail along the Fraser from Yale led the Governor to consider the possibility of a waggon road along that route to Lytton. This necessitated a careful survey and examination of those sheer and stupendous shoulders of rock which confine the Fraser as in a straight-jacket for miles along the Little Canyon and the Black Canyon. To whom was this work of examination to be intrusted? To none other than our old friends the Royal Engineers. A party was despatched to examine the route from Yale to Lytton and thence to Cook's Ferry, or Spence's Bridge, as we now call it. Preserved in the archives of this Province will be found the reconnaissance sketch of this survey, together with the specifications drawn by the Engineers for the construction of the road. It was seen as soon as their preliminary reports were made that the waggon road, if built, must cross the Fraser. What point should be selected? To determine this, another party of Engineers under Sergeant McColl was ordered to examine and select the most suitable spot for a suspension bridge. The spot selected was that upon which in 1863 the late Sir Jos. W. Trutch built the Alexandra Suspension Bridge.

It was not at all a case of "all work" with the Royal Engineers. From November till March the corps was gathered together into its home at the camp. This portion of the year saw another phase of the versatile sapper. At the camp a theatre was built, and during each winter the members of the corps presented from time to time light dramatic pieces, comedies, farces, etc. They were not at a loss even when it came to female parts in such theatrical entertainments, and one or two of the beardless youths obtained quite a reputation for acting such parts. The corps had also a social club,

the Royal Engineers' Club, and during each winter it was the scene of many happy gatherings, banquets, and dances.

1862.

The survey made in 1861 determined Governor Douglas to devote the whole strength and force at his disposal to the building of a road from Yale to connect at Clinton with the then existing Lillooet Road. That road had never been popular with the travelling public owing to the delays in making connection with the steamers on Lillooet, Anderson, and Seton Lakes.

In May, 1862, a force of fifty-three sappers under Captain Grant was despatched to Yale to commence at that point the great waggon road—a work which, as British Columbians, we may claim to be the eighth wonder of the world. By November a magnificent road, cut, or at any rate built, out of the solid rock, was constructed to a point six miles from Yale. Of course, in the building of the C. P. R. that roadbed was in many instances destroyed, but sufficient remains unto this day to make us realise the excellent work done by them; and to indorse the words of Hon. John Robson in the "Columbian" of July 18th, 1863, "Some of their work will stand long as the everlasting rocks, an enduring monument of engineering skill and patient toil."

I might add here, parenthetically, that the portion of the Cariboo Waggon Road from the six-mile post to Chapman's Bar (suspension bridge) was built by Thomas Spence in 1862; from Chapman's Bar to Boston Bar by J. W. Trutch in 1863; from Boston Bar to Lytton by Spence and Langvoldt in 1862; from Lytton to Spence's Bridge, the contract was held by Moberly and Oppenheimer, in 1862-3.

In July, 1862, Lieutenant Palmer explored a route from Bentinck Arm to Fort Alexandria, and thence to Williams Creek. His exhaustive report can be found in the files of the "British Columbian" for March and April, 1863. It, like all the reports of these trained men, seems the final word on the subject. His minute examination covering a period of three months made it clear that the road then being constructed to Cariboo through the canyons of the Fraser was the more suitable route. This line showed for a space of fifteen miles a continuous average grade of 182 feet per mile, a great part of which was on loose rock and precipitous mountain slopes. It was carefully examined in 1873 by Marcus Smith to ascertain if it were a feasible line for the C. P. R.; but when it was decided to bring the C. P. R. down the Fraser valley, no further examination was made.

1863.

We now come to the last year of the work of the Royal Engineers as a corps in British Columbia—the year 1863.