

Branch railway.

With these facts in view as a basis, the question now anxiously canvassed by those interested in the development of the Cariboo District is, whether the time has not already arrived when a railway connection with the lately completed Canadian Pacific line may fairly be considered practicable?

Intermediate country.

With a view of ascertaining the most favourable route, and the nature of the difficulties to be encountered in the construction of such a railway—with which the future of mining enterprise in Cariboo District is so closely connected—it was considered advisable, as a supplement to the work above outlined, to carry out certain examinations to the southward. Explorations were made by way of the valleys of the Quesnelle, Beaver, Horsefly and Bonaparte Rivers; and I am happy to be able to report, touching the question of a railway, that these have disclosed an easy and “natural” route, through an agricultural and stock-raising country and climate, for the entire distance intervening between Cariboo and the railway.

Distance and cost.

The distance from Ashcroft, on the Canadian Pacific at the junction of Bonaparte Valley, to Quesnelle Lake, by this route, would be about 130 miles; and the cost might be limited, or permitted to range, according to the gangs and equipment determined upon, at any figure between one million and two and a half million dollars. Tapping the great Quesnelle Lake near its outlet, such a branch line or feeder of the Canadian Pacific would avail itself of 100 miles of steamboat navigation eight months of the year, in the heart of the metaliferous Cariboo and Selkirk parallels of the Rocky Mountains.

Navigable waters.

To reach Quesnellemouth, the easiest route would be by way of Beaver Lake Valley and lower Quesnelle River. But alternative routes, with excellent grades and an equally good country, though increased side-hill work, are available, either by the valley of Quesnelle River throughout, or by Lac La Hache, San Jose River, and the valley of the Fraser. An extension of 65 miles, or thereabouts, depending on the route followed, to Soda Creek, or to Quesnellemouth, would tap another 150 miles of navigable water on the Upper Fraser, and bring under development the entire sweep of the plateau, as far north as the great bend of the Fraser. Of the value of this great northern interior, in mines, agricultural and grazing lands, the fur trade, and other unthought of industries likely to follow present developments, only the need thereof, and a knowledge of its resources, seem to be wanting to remove the last doubt.

An inland empire.

In brief, the connections have been made with the outside world, and the mining region has been preliminarily surveyed and examined. Thirty-one sheets of plotted surveys, of the diggings on a detail scale, and of the roads and trails to be embodied in a general map, are in hand and remain to be filled and worked up.

Summary of what has been done.

Much material collected, and more to be gotten in one additional season of field work, will have to be prepared for publication, with the necessary delineation of formations, and sections, and studies of mines.

What remains to be done.

In order to do justice to Cariboo District and its resources, it is designed to complete a good map of a limited area, on a sufficiently large scale to be valuable to the miner and prospector. Such a map, comprising the rectangle shown in the accompanying outline sketch, approximately 50 by 75 miles, or 3,700 square miles in superficial area [See the heavy firm line], can be completed in the season of 1886. Owing to the expensiveness of supplies and commodities of every kind, however, should the amount appropriated for this work be reduced below the figure allowed this season, the cost of the work would not be to that extent reduced. The useful part of it would only be cut off. It is believed no one will question the fact that Cariboo is entitled to a fair consideration, in view of its phenomenal yield of gold in the past, and its promise of maintaining a good reputation in the future.