

They are 18 feet wide, the surface being covered with broken stone, where (as in most parts along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers) such material is at hand, or with gravel well cambered up in the centre, with ditches on one or both sides where required.

With the exception of some short pitches as steep as one foot in ten, the sharpest inclines throughout this road are of one foot in twelve, the curves being easy, and the bridges and culverts substantially built of timber.

Loads of seven and eight tons are hauled along them by mules or oxen, at an average draught load of 1,200lbs. or 1,300lbs. to each team animal; and the Mail Coach drawn by six horses travels between Yale and Cariboo at the rate of nine miles an hour.

From the Cariboo terminus of this road, and from Savona's, as well as from intermediate points along the road, various routes may be traced to the different passes of the Rocky Mountains. But before a judicious selection can be made of the line for a waggon road to the territory east of the Rocky Mountains, it will be necessary to determine by more exact and detailed engineering explorations and surveys than have yet been made, which of these passes presents the least obstacles to the construction and maintenance of a road through it, as well as the greatest advantages in its approaches, not only as regards engineering facilities, but with respect also to the character of the country to be passed through on either side of the mountains, its soil, climate, freedom from inroads of hostile Indians, and general capabilities for settlement, and especially in relation to its accessibility from the existing lines of communication in this Colony and to the eastward.

The following remarks embody the most reliable information extant on this subject; and the accompanying opinions and estimates based thereon are advanced in anticipation of the results of such a detailed survey as has just been suggested.

The passes through the Rocky Mountains at present known from the reports of various explorers, commencing with the Leather Pass, the most northerly point by which it would be practicable for a road connecting the Fraser River Valley with the navigable waters of the Saskatchewan to cross this range, and enumerating thence southward to the 49th Parallel, are as follows, with their respective altitudes as far as they have been reliably determined by actual observation:

1. Leather Pass.....	Altitude 3,760 feet.
2. Athabasca.....	" 7,000 "
3. Howse's.....	" 4,500 "
4. Kicking Horse.....	" 5,210 "
5. Vermillion.....	" 4,903 "
6. Kananaski.....	" 5,700 "
7. Crow's Nest.....	" — "
8. Kootenay.....	" 6,300 "
9. Boundary.....	" 6,030 "

Of these the Athabasca Pass, although otherwise very favorably situated, is so elevated, steep, and rugged as to be quite impracticable for a coach road. The six last enumerated passes although generally easy of passage, and in other respects available for road communication, are too far south for the purpose of such a line of connection between the sea-coast of British Columbia and the Canadas as is now under consideration, it having been determined by actual survey that no practicable route exists for a road through the three parallel ranges of mountains lying between the Lower Fraser Valley and the Rocky Mountains, viz: the Cascades immediately east of the Fraser; the Gold Range west of the Columbia; and the Selkirk Range in the Big Bend of the Columbia, and between that river and the Kootenay River, except that on which the road is now built from Yale up the Fraser and Thompson River Valleys to Savona's, thence by Kamloops, through the Eagle Pass, at the upper end of Great Shuswap Lake, to the Columbia River at the Great Eddy below the Little Dalles, and northward along the valley of that river, by The Boat Encampment, and round the Big Bend southward past the mouth of Howse's Pass, of which line a more detailed description will be given further on, in connection with the Howse's Pass Route.

The position of these southern passes is therefore, as regards their accessibility from the west coast, very disadvantageous when compared with that of Howse Pass. But they are still more ineligibly placed in respect to the approaches to them from the eastward; for these passes all dechouch to the east into valleys, the waters of which are tributary to the South Saskatchewan, passing through a region of country beset with predatory Indians, and sterile and unattractive in comparison with the rich belt of land further north, through which the North Saskatchewan flows.

Through this rich district along the North Saskatchewan, a line of communication between British Columbia and the Red River Settlement must pass, by whatever route it may cross the great watershed of the continent; indeed it may safely be taken as an established fact that such a line of communication must intersect the North Saskatchewan at Fort Edmonton, or some point higher up