

and the north branch of the Thompson frequently spreads out into an even greater size, and after being joined by the southwestern branch, an equally large stream, and a great number of other rivers of considerable importance, empties itself into the Fraser at Lytton; the latter below the junction, being the only outlet for the enormous volume of water thus collected, becomes an apparently insignificant stream of not more than fifty or sixty yards wide; and this is so very striking that it has attracted the notice of the Indians, who explain it by supposing that the water percolates through the bed of the river. It is, however, I imagine, sufficiently accounted for by the increased depth of water and rapidity of the current.

In conclusion, I must venture a few general observations upon the nature of the country through which we passed, from Fort Edmonton on the eastern side, to Kamloops on the west of the mountains. With regard to the practicability of a road or railway being taken across by that route—our party being, I believe, the only one which has passed through this region entirely by land—the testimony has some value, as being all that is known of a very considerable portion of the distance. In the first place, then, I may safely state that, with the exception of one or two rocky and precipitous bluffs—few and trifling obstructions compared with those which have already been so successfully overcome in making the road along the Fraser River—there are no engineering difficulties of any importance. On the other hand, however, for almost the whole distance, the road would require to be *made*, there being no open country until reaching the lower portion of the valley of the North Thompson. From Edmonton to Jasper House the surface is slightly undulating; the lower ground universally swampy, and everywhere covered with thick forest. From Jasper House to Tête Jaune's Cache—the pass through the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains—the valley is for the most part wide and unobstructed, except by timber, which is generally of large size; the rivers small and mostly fordable, even at their highest. The ascent to the height of land is very gradual, and, indeed,