

the precise configuration of the locality in which they live. Hence, if it be a laborious and tedious task to decide on the line which offers fewest obstacles in a cleared and settled country, how much more so when the region to be traversed has never been trodden by the foot of civilized man, and is a mountainous wild, clad with dense forest. For three years the surveying parties of the Canadian Pacific Railroad have been in the field. Their duty is to find a practicable railroad route from the Ottawa to the Pacific, a distance of nearly three thousand miles, of which, in round numbers, one thousand miles may be said to be through forest alternating with lake and morass, where there is not generally even an Indian trail to follow; and another thousand through a labyrinth of mountain ranges dissected by river courses and narrow tortuous lakes, upon whose banks a white man has in many cases never stood. Under such circumstances the wonder is, not that a desirable route remains still to be decided on, but that so near an approach has been made in so short a time to the solution of so difficult a riddle. The terms British Columbia imposed on the Dominion on joining the Confederation were, that a railway should be completed from the Atlantic to the Pacific within ten years. More than three years have already elapsed, and despite every effort of a first-rate chief, and eight hundred assistants of all grades, an eligible line has not yet been found.

There has been lately issued the Report of Progress on the Explorations and Surveys, up to January, 1874, accompanied by sixteen maps and sections, by Sandford Fleming, Engineer-in-Chief. We had good reason to complain, in criticising the former report, of the printing and bad paper, which might, at least, have been good, however desultory the information the report conveyed. The same fault cannot be found with the present documents. They contain, as the results of another year's survey, a large augmentation to our knowledge. This, although not yet

complete enough to justify the formation of a decisive opinion as to the route, has lifted the subject out of the almost utter darkness in which it was enveloped.

The additional exploratory work has been concentrated on the east and west sections, the middle section, composing the plains between Fort Garry and Edmonton, having been found in the first cursory examination to present no engineering difficulties; but the volume contains the report of Mr. Horetzky, of an expedition to the Lesser Slave Lake and the Peace River, and a very valuable supplement to the same, by Mr. Macoun, who accompanied Mr. Horetzky, and whose botanical observations throw more light upon the climate of that far north zone than any memoir that has been yet published. Further details of this reconnaissance, and of his trip along the coast of British Columbia, were given by Mr. Horetzky in his book—"Canada on the Pacific."

In describing the present position of the survey, we shall follow the natural subdivisions of the route which have guided the Chief in laying out the work for his subordinates, viz, into—

1. The Eastern or Woodland Region, from the Ottawa or Lake Nipissing to Fort Garry.
2. The Central or Prairie Region, from Fort Garry to the base of the Rocky Mountains.
3. The Western or Mountain Region.

1. The Eastern Section, varying in length according to route, from 1048 miles to 1197 miles, is the least inviting, though not the most costly feature of the whole scheme, but it looks less repulsive than it did two years ago, and perseverance may succeed in yet making it even comely. In the report of 1872, little hope was held out that a route touching Lake Superior could be found, and the proposed line lay, therefore, 120 miles to the south, with a branch connecting it with navigation. Now, a feasible deviation from this objectionable course has been found possible, and a main line has been surveyed touching navigable water to the

south
tion r
labyri
shallo
north
way n
shorte
closel
Weste
contin
and m
later th
that de
a more
propos
The
an islan
apex th
Lawren
by the L
direction
Ottawa,
and Fre
nel with
direction
the trian
Clair, an
the Geo
the agri
these lin
populatio
prise is r
distant p
ernment
which pr
courageo
beyond
Hudson's
Ottawa a
rivers and
disappear
birch, and
so rich n
tempt the
zones. C
enter at
which ski