

It was found, chiefly from the reports of the Palliser expedition, that the great troughs or valleys through which the streams flow, range over a wide extent of country, from 150 to 300 feet and even 400 feet in depth under the level plateau on each side; these great river troughs are at the same time reported, not unfrequently to be about a mile and a mile and three quarters in width.

It appeared, therefore, of the utmost importance to examine further into this subject with the view of finding a route for the railway through the central plains as direct as possible, avoiding as far as practicable, the obstacles referred to, or overcoming them at the least difficult points.

A double expedition was organized to proceed by different routes, between Fort Garry and the two most eligible passes through the Rocky Mountains, viz: The Howse Pass and the Yellow Head Pass.

The instructions given this expedition were such as to elicit the desired information.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS TO THE PACIFIC.

It appeared from all the information that could be gathered from different sources that, of all the passes through the Rocky Mountains, those named the Howse and the Yellow Head Passes, would prove most eligible for the Railway.

Within the Province of British Columbia other most serious obstacles to Railway construction in any desired direction presented themselves, and the selection not only of one of these Passes, but also of a Terminal point on the Pacific Coast, seemed to depend on the success which might attend any attempt to discover the most practicable line for a railway across the interior of the Province.

The survey in British Columbia was divided into Districts, one between Howse Pass and Shuswap Lake, a second between Shuswap Lake and the Straits of Georgia by the Lower Fraser River, a third between Yellow Head Pass and the Upper Fraser River through the Cariboo country.

Engineers were appointed to conduct the surveys in each of these Districts, and six surveying parties were organized, with the view of thoroughly exploring the country, and gaining information which would lead to the selection of the most eligible line for the Railway.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF STAFF.

In a work of such magnitude, beset with difficulties of no ordinary kind and under circumstances which called for as much information as

possible
staff on

TH
great c
that ev
mation
branch

A
connec

A
for ope

G
every

T
connec

referen
of the
detail
presen

Divisio
tr

Divisio
M

Divisio
br

Divisio
Divisio

p
Divisio

Divisio
Divisio

Divisio
Divisio

Divisio
th

Divisio
Divisio
co