

OBJECTIONS TO THE STICKINE ROUTE.

Mr. John F. Smith, of Kamloops, an old Northern prospector, pleads strongly in favor of an all-land all-Canadian route to the Yukon via Kamloops, in preference to that by the Coast and the Stickine River. And although Mr. Smith is doubtless and naturally a little prejudiced in favor of the Kamloops route, the following points which he raises certainly demand some answer on behalf of the route which Vancouver and Victoria men naturally prefer, viz., that via the Stickine River, Telegraph Creek or Glenora, Teslin Lake and the Hootalinqua. Mr. Smith says, writing to the "Inland Sentinel": "It will be remembered, that in my letter which appeared in your issue of Sept. 17th in view of the steps that were being taken to construct and lay rails from Glenora or Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake, which was to be fed by a line of steamers drew public attention to the obstacles that would be encountered in the navigation of the Stickine. I stated that no ocean going steamer could hope to enter the mouth of the river, and more, that it required a peculiarly constructed stern wheeler, and a very powerful one, to ascend the river at all. Again, as the Canadian boundary line was some 15 or 20 miles up the river from its mouth, the point of transfer of people and goods would have to be made on American soil. In substantiation of these facts, in your issue of the 21st of the same month, I gave a detailed description of the Stickine River to the head of navigation. In describing the physical character of the mouth of the river, I intimated that this great steamship line which our coast Canadian cities were so keen in establishing, was simply playing into the hands of their neighbors to the south. These intimations are strikingly borne out by the result of a most startling discovery, that the Hon. Mr. Sifton was deterred from ascending the Stickine River in consequence of the inability of the steamer to enter the mouth. It is seen now, that if we are to have this all-Canadian (?) route, it will create new enterprise for, and make an easy avenue through which American trade would flow. Considerable dredging would have to be done at the mouth of the river to allow boats of much larger draught than any previously used to ascend. Failing this, or during the time of the prosecution of this work, Fort Wrangel, which is in Alaska, will have to be utilised as the point of transfer of freight and passengers, as Fort Simpson is entirely out of the question, being several hundred miles south of Wrangel.

It is to be noted also, that there is a strong American company formed which will act as forwarding agents, with headquarters at Fort Wrangel.

Now just where Canadians come in under these circumstances is a little difficult to define. But this is only the thin edge of the wedge, as the Stickine River can never be dredged so as to allow ocean going boats to ascend it, and there is no place other than Fort Wrangel at which such post for transferring of freight and passengers could be established, therefore Fort Wrangel must continue to be the terminus for the connection of the ocean and river boats. No such undesirable condition can be found in connection with the route we have outlined from Kamloops, North Thompson River, via Cariboo, Peace River, Omineca, Skeena, Naas, Cassiar, to Teslin Lake. This is the route, and really the only one worthy of serious consideration, particularly in face of the necessity for providing transportation facilities for the maintenance of 20,000 to 40,000 people in a mining camp. When we remember that the Stickine River is only open to navigation by steamers four months in the year, it seems ridiculous to think that such means could cope with the demand."

These are arguments and objections worth anxious consideration, and it is to be hoped that they can be shown to be incorrect or exaggerated as regards the difficulties of our Stickine route. Mr. Ogilvie, certainly on the other hand, seems to consider the Stickine River route to be practicable for shallow draft steamers, and presumably the C. P. R. is finding a method of solving the difficulties of the case by alternate use of steamship and rail facilities.

Hence the "Mining Critic" opines that sufficient in favor of the Stickine route can be found to justify Vancouver's hope that it will become the favored Canadian route to the Klondike.

A "MIRROR'S" REFLECTIONS.

The "North Western Mining Mirror," of Seattle, says quoting ourselves, first: There seem to be some finds of rich gold ledges in Whatcom County, Washington, a few miles below the B. C. border. But they are usually situated in high and almost inaccessible places, and will cost enormous sums to work.—"B. C. Critic."

What a difference those "few miles below the B. C. border" make in the way the "Critic" gives the news.

To which the "Mining Critic" rejoins that its brief summary of the Mount Baker district possibilities, and their dangers and difficulties, was largely based on the reports of that noted "boom" paper of the Sound, the Seattle "Post-Intelligencer." Whilst the "P.-I." declared some of the finds to be veritable Monte Cristo's for golden treasure discoveries, it likewise incidentally admitted that some of the ledges were at great heights and most exceptionally difficult of access.



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