

S K E T C H  
OF  
THE COUNTRY BETWEEN JERVIS INLET AND  
PORT PEMBERTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

TO CAPTAIN GEORGE H. RICHARDS, R.N., H.M.S. *Plumper*.

H.M.S. *Plumper*, Esquimalt, Vancouver Island,  
July 23rd, 1860.

SIR,

I have the honour to report, that, in compliance with your orders, I left the ship on the 3rd instant with a party of five Indians, and accompanied by Dr. Wood, M.D., to endeavour to penetrate the valley running northward from the head of Jervis Inlet, or at least to ascertain if that valley could be used as a road to the gold-fields of British Columbia. Only landing in the afternoon, we got but a few miles that night, and camped about 5 miles from the beach, the way so far having been through dense woods, with thick undergrowth of raspberry, &c. Next morning, after proceeding about a mile, we came to the Lā-ā-kīne River. Immediately we reached this stream the Indians said we should not be able to get on, as from the depth of the water in it there they knew we could not cross it higher up; and even if we succeeded in crossing this stream, the Squāwmisht and Lilloet rivers would be over our heads, as when there is little or no water in the Lā-ā-kīne these and three other rivers which we should have to cross are waist-deep at the fords. We thought, however, that they might be exaggerating, and pushed on. We crossed the stream with great difficulty, owing to its depth and velocity, three times, and struggled on till four o'clock, when we came to a place where the Indians said we must again cross if we wished to go on. The only means of crossing here was by a single log, 2 feet under water, over which the stream, about 400 yards wide, was rushing in a torrent; and after an effort I gave up the idea of getting along it. We then felled the only tree near which could at all answer our purpose, but with no success; and I decided on relinquishing the attempt to get further, and camping here for the night to retrace our steps in the morning. There is no doubt that had we remained there we should ultimately have been able to cross, though it might not have been for weeks; or by forcing our way higher up, and felling a number of trees, we might have bridged the stream; but this did not appear to me to be your wish or the object of the expedition. You particularly pointed out in my written instructions the futility of proceeding unless the route was such as to be available as a way to the interior, and I was quite convinced that this valley could never be turned to account as such. The Indians never, I find, go this way in summer, but only in winter, when the snow is on the ground, and the bed of the Lā-ā-kīne is dry or nearly so, and the Squāwmisht and Lilloet are much lower. They were very urgent from our first coming on the stream that we should not proceed, and, though not sulky or refusing to go, every time we stopped they endeavoured to impress on me the impossibility of reaching the Fraser.

In making a road the difficulty of crossing the rivers would of course be overcome by bridging, but there is really no ground on which to lay a road, unless by blasting it out of the perpendicular mountain-side, for the valley is completely covered by the water when the river is at its highest. The bed is of sand and shingle, and the semblance of a bank which now exists is a swamp in which a mule would sink to his girths. From our coming on the