

Talking with the Major over our proposed journey, he gave us fair warning of what we might expect. He would accompany us over the summit of the Selkirks and as far down the western slope as his most-advanced party had reached, the said party being under the charge of an old friend, Mr. McMillan, a hardy New Brunswick engineer, and from that point he would give as many men as could be spared to carry our dunnage and provisions on their backs to the second crossing of the Columbia, and would also send with us a guide in the person of his nephew, Mr. Albert Rogers, commonly known as Al, who had been over the ground with him in 1881. That was the utmost he could do, and it was all that we could possibly have expected. Indeed he gave us Al because he, being younger, would probably be more useful than himself. But he told us that we would have at least seventeen miles without a trail down the Ille-cille-waut, that there we could not count on making more than three or four miles a day, and that the roughing it would be of such a kind that we should never forget the journey as long as we lived. "And then," he added, "what will you do if there are no Indians from Kamloops to meet you at the Columbia?" We assured him that the Hudson's Bay officials in British Columbia would send them without fail through the Eagle Pass to the point where the Ille-cille-waut flows into the Columbia. "Very good," he answered, "but I have my doubts if they can hire Indians to undertake the job. When I tried to get through from that side on my first expedition in search of a pass across the Selkirks, I had great difficulty in securing any to pack for me and I would have failed had it not been for the Kamloops Mission. Luckily too, the Indians agreed before starting that if they did not bring back a certificate from me to the effect that they had given satisfaction, all their wages were to go to the church, and they were to get a whipping besides." "Yes," chipped in Al, "we had the sinche on them there; and if it had not been for that, they would have deserted us a dozen times before we got through the Gold Range, though they knew at the start that we intended to cross the Selkirks as well. Of course we did not know whether there was a pass, but we thought that we could get across any mountains somehow." "But why did they think of deserting?" I asked. "Because they had agreed to pack 100 pounds apiece, and they could not fill the bill. I don't wonder either, for though I was sure that I could give and take with anybody, I had more than enough of it that time. What with the deep snow just melting, and the underbrush, and the fallen timber, and the precipices, and the heavy packs, I can't begin to tell you what it was like. Many a time I know I wished myself dead. And the Indians were sicker than we, a good deal. When they got home, in my opinion, they'd never volunteer or be pressed again to pack through the Eagle Pass. Besides," added the Major, "I heard that a British Columbia Company proposed to make a road this summer through the Pass, to connect by means of a steamboat on the Columbia with the Kootanie galena mines, and of course they would start from the Kamloops side, and if in connection with their work fires have got into the woods, it might be impossible to get through the Pass just now." "Well, Major, suppose that we get to the Columbia, and find no Kamloops Indians there with supplies for us, what shall we do?" "Take enough provisions with you from here, and then at the worst, you can turn back to MacMillan." "No, we will not do that." "Well, there may possibly be an Indian from Fort Sheppard or Fort Colville hunting near the mouth of the Ille-cille-waut, and if so you are all right. He would run you down the Columbia in his canoe in three or four days to where you could get a stage to the nearest point on the N. P. R. That was the course I had to take in 1881, but not having a canoe we made a raft, and poled slowly along by day and slept on the rocks by night." "And what can we do to secure that there shall be a Colville Indian just where we want him?" "Well," slowly and meditatively rejoined the Major, "you must pray that he may be there." That ended the conversation. It is not becoming to tell to what extent we took the Major's excellent advice, for we are commanded, when we pray or give alms, not to do so that we may be seen of men. But at any rate, we decided, notwithstanding the rather cloudy outlook, to move on, and arrangements were made for an early start on Monday.

Floating down the Columbia in a long cotton-wood "dug-out" at the rate of five miles an hour was a pleasant experience to men who for a week had been content with ten or twelve miles a day. At every turn the river changed; now calm as a lake, then rippling pleasantly over a gravelly bed, and then running almost as strongly as a rapid. The banks were low, and though grassy in a few spots, were generally covered with shrubs and trees; high cranberry bushes, the blueberry, the broad-leaved dewberry, and the dark green, holly-like leaves of the Oregon grape showing clusters of its deep blue fruit. Overhanging their blended green and purple drooped the early autumn-tinged pale golden leaves of white birches,

while higher up the dark green of spruce and fir and Douglas pine extended to the summit of the foot-hills. Occasionally we could see from the canoe a peak with a patch of snow looking down over these, and suggesting the great background of mountains beyond. Long reaches of the river were walled in as I have described, and signs of life redeemed them from the loneliness that we had sometimes felt in the valley of the Kicking Horse. Otter tracks ran down the banks into the river; and along sandbanks were the footmarks of bear and beaver. At one place we landed to see the log-houses built by Moberly's party in 1871 when surveying about the Howse Pass. The buildings with their huge hospitable-looking clay and straw fireplaces looked serviceable as when new. We passed the mouth of the Blueberry, which, running down from the summit of the Rockies, forms the Howse Pass; then the mouth of the Wait-a-bit; and the last four miles of our morning trip to the beginning of the cañon we made in less than twenty minutes. At this point, where a pretty stream rightly called the Bluewaters gives its contribution to the Columbia, our pack train and horses, which had been sent on ahead, were on the bank; and after a hurried lunch we mounted and passed on, anxious to reach the crossing before dark. The road was a repetition on a smaller scale of the Kicking Horse. It ran along the face of the precipices that enclosed the cañon on one side. Opposite were similar precipices of clay and shale, with ledges of limestone, and boulders of granite and quartz, and above these towered the irregularly shaped summits of the Selkirks. Passing the tents of the party to which this section, the crossing included, is assigned, and making free with some tempting looking plum-cake that cook was just taking from the pan, we reached our camp ground, opposite the point where the Beaver flows into the Columbia. By following up the valley of the Beaver we were to find our way into the heart of the Selkirks.

Next morning we crossed the Columbia. There was a leaky little boat, and the steersman dragged the bell-horse after him, while the others were driven in with blows and shouts. They followed the bell till they felt the full sweep of the current. Then they turned right about and swam with it till they could land at a convenient spot, of course on the wrong side. On the broad bosom of the river nothing was seen but horses' heads for a few minutes, and then the poor brutes, touching bottom, soon clambered up the bank, snorting and shaking themselves violently. We had to go for them, and the same kind of operation was repeated three or four times before they all crossed, so that although we breakfasted before five o'clock it was nearly ten when we started up the Beaver. What a misfortune it would be if some grasping capitalist should think of building a scow and establishing a monopoly at the crossing of the Columbia! The trail led through a forest of magnificent cedars, from three to nine feet in diameter, and shooting up straight and branchless to an extraordinary height. At last we were in the Selkirks, and the trees certainly were worthy of any mountains.

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OTTAWA NOTES.

WHATEVER may have precedence in the public discussions in Parliament, the subject foremost in the discussions among members just now is, "Will the session close before Easter?" This year's session, it must be understood, is, in a way, an experiment. Hitherto the general practice has been to call Parliament together in February, and to send the legislators home again some time in May. This year the opening was almost a month earlier than usual. This involved a good deal of hurry on the part of Government Officers all over the country to get the ministers' reports ready in time. To the Government's credit be it said, the reports have been ready at an earlier period of the session than usual. Even the statement of the Department of the Interior, which Sir John Macdonald used to bring down with a smile on the last day of the session, is already before the House. If Parliament can be prorogued at Easter, this session will form a valuable precedent, and we may hope hereafter that the session of the Federal Legislature will be confined to the twelve weeks before Easter instead of extending on into the latter part of May, as last year. The business of the House progresses slowly but surely. One great bone of contention has been taken away by the Government dropping its Franchise Bill. The proposal to give the vote to women is particularly distasteful to the French Canadian mind. Quebec is the great bulwark of Provincial Rights in this Dominion, and if the Reformers of Ontario are still allowed to say who shall and shall not vote, they owe it to the Bleus whom they hate so cordially. The end of the session is in sight when the debate on the Budget is over and the House gets into Committee of Supply. This stage was reached on Thursday night.

From an answer given to a question by Mr. Coursol last night, and from the statements of French Canadian members who are well informed, it is evident that Quebec is to have compensation for the share she gives of the Canadian Pacific loan. A bill will be introduced this session to make some arrangement to refund the Province of Quebec a portion of the cost of the railway from Ottawa to Quebec. This is done on the principle that this road is a part of the great through line, and should be bonussed