

of connecting them with any good harbour on the Pacific, having been, moreover, well established ; he came to the conclusion, that the northern route by the Yellow Head Pass, and then over the Chilcoaten Plain to Bute Inlet, was by far the best, and, indeed, the only feasible one for a railroad to the Pacific. His reasons for such an important decision may be very properly inserted here, and summed up as follows :

1.—The arid nature of the country traversed by the South Saskatchewan, the greater part of which is unfit for settlement, its proximity to the Boundary Line, and the hostile disposition of the Indians.

2.—The much greater altitude of the Passes, the sharpness of the grades and curves, and the greater amount of snow.

3.—The circuitous course the route would be obliged to follow through the western portion of the Rocky Mountains, after having crossed the main crest or watershed ; amounting to nearly 250 miles of most expensive if not impossible railroad.

4.—The enormous expense, if not impossibility, of carrying a railroad in this latitude through the Cascade, or Coast Range, and down the Fraser to New Westminster.

5.—The utter worthlessness of the greater part of the mountainous country thus traversed, amounting to at least 450 miles out of the 600 by Howse Pass.

6.—The difficulties of access to the port of New Westminster, which render it totally unfit for the terminus of an overland railroad. (See foot-note to extract B, Appendix, page 32.)

PER CONTRA.

1.—The well-known fertility of the whole country drained by the North Saskatchewan, and commonly called the Fertile Belt.

2.—The greater navigability of the North Branch, and the presence of large seams of coal on several points.

3.—The natural connection of both with the road by Jasper's House, and the Yellow Head Pass, and the facility of the latter, which requires no tunnel. This pass, or rather valley, presents a natural break through the Rocky Mountains; its greatest altitude is only 3,760 feet above the sea ; the Indians cross over it in winter, nor does the snow render it impassable at any time.

4.—The ready and easy communication offered for 280 miles by the Upper Fraser and its valley, through a comparatively open and fertile tract of country.

5.—The opening up of the gold mines in and around Cariboo, which at present can only be reached by 380 miles of wearisome, mountainous waggon road ; so that only the very richest claims have been hitherto worked.

6.—The opening up of the Chilcoaten Plain, the only one of any extent in British Columbia, and which contains millions of acres fit for settlement.