

Over ... 58

slightly towards the south, and following Swamp river up to its source, 5,828 feet above the sea, near which the Shouswap, the North Thompson, and the Canoe rivers also take their rise; the other northward towards the "Grande Rapide" on the Fraser, a few miles below the Cache. The result was, that the road would not only pass over the point of greatest elevation, whence the above rivers flow north and south; but that it would have to cross three indescribably rugged mountain ridges, running perpendicular to the axis of the line, and separated by the narrowest valleys; one of them 6,444 feet above the sea, and all subject to continual avalanches. Features much the same as those accompanying Howse Pass to the south, and presenting an accumulation of obstacles which render any such line utterly impracticable.

The proposed railroad must therefore necessarily follow the valley of the Fraser to the north; or else take the line travelled by Milton and Cheadle down the Thompson to the south. At the latter, besides continuing for 120 miles below the Cache to run through a mountainous, uninhabitable region, covered with dense forests, and being costly in proportion, would lead to nothing definite beyond the opening up of a small portion of the Colony; since, in spite of every effort, no available line for a railroad between Fort Kamloops and New Westminster has as yet been discovered through the Cascade or Coast range.

The road down the valley of the Fraser, on the contrary, though describing a circuitous route, would *turn* the Cariboo or Gold Mountains, and communicate immediately, either below Westroad river, or lower down at Quesnel-Mouth, with the Chilcoaten or Great Western plain of the Colony; whilst below the mouth of Bear river, the valley opens upon a fine tract of rolling country, with a climate considerably milder than that of Canada, and ready for immediate settlement; instead of the interminable mountains and forests on the Thompson route. The Fraser, moreover, (whatever may have been said or written to the contrary,) offers a valuable water communication, and one immediately available, through the whole of this cultivable district. This route, it is true, would require several considerable bridges; over the North Fork, the Salmon, the Stuart and Westroad rivers on the north-side; or over Bear river, and twice over the Fraser, if carried along the south bank, besides some considerable gradings and cuttings; but it would nowhere present any very serious obstacle.

Following up this line, the road would run nearly due west for the first five miles below the Cache, over easy, open ground along the right bank of the Fraser, which then turns nearly due north. Several miles below this, it would cross an important affluent from the east, called "Rock Creek," and reach the "Rapide des Four-neaux." In all about 10 miles.

The river here takes a north-westerly direction. But in order to

10

Miles ... 68