

THE WESTERN ROUTE AND TERMINUS
— OF THE —
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

A VOICE FROM THE OCCIDENT.

Canadian Pacific Railway Routes.

The Bute Inlet and Esquimalt Route (No. 6) and the Fraser Valley and Burrard Inlet Route (No. 4) compared as to the advantages offered by each to the Dominion and to the Empire.

No. 1.

[June 30th, 1877.]

EDITOR COLONIST:—I have for some time past thought of writing on the railway routes and have been induced to offer the present communication to your widely read paper, by perusal of the speech of Mr. Dewdney, M. P., at Ottawa, 24th April last, correctly produced, it is presumable, in your issue of the 24th inst. It may be inferred that when Mr. Dewdney had the floor at Ottawa his fellow-members from Columbia, having previously taken part in the debate, were precluded from reply.

Alluding to a recent contention in the House between himself and the member for Victoria, Mr. DeCosmos, as to whether the population along the Fraser route exceeded or not that on the Bute line, and in which the Victoria member read from the voters' list in proof that the larger population was on the latter route, Mr. Dewdney did not attempt contradiction; but, in military parlance, manœuvred into a new position—to a certain extent, "changed the subject"—and adroitly avoided the real issue by an elaborate showing in figures that in 1875 the number of records under the Land Act of 1870 was on the Bute line, including Vancouver Island, 89, "while on the Fraser River route, the number was 551, out of which there were in the New Westminster and Yale districts through which the line ran 479." "In 1876 (according to Mr. D.) there were on Vancouver Island and Bute Inlet route 42 records; and on the Mainland 378, of which 312 were in the districts of Yale and New Westminster. Mr. Dewdney claimed a triumph from these showings. I have not verified, neither do I call in question his figures as presented, nor yet have I been at the Land Office to find how

many of the records mentioned are those of absentee land speculators who may not yet have paid up. I shall presently submit to Mr. Dewdney, and to your other readers everywhere, facts and figures "galore" on the matter of present relative Mainland and Island populations, to which, although the Island has the preponderance in number more importance seems to be attached at Ottawa than it merits as a factor in the great questions of route and terminus.

Mr. Dewdney, who, I will say, is an able and untiring advocate of what he considers Mainland interests, at the outset of his speech claims to be a "British Columbian knowing his province thoroughly, probably as well as any man in it." He nevertheless showed lack of knowledge or political suariness—it is for himself to say which—in omitting mention of the fact—all important in connection with his figures—that, since the summer of 1873 the best and most attractive lands on the Bute Inlet line and those nearest the already existing settlements, have been out of the market. I do think that in the heat of debate Mr. Dewdney must have overlooked this. As others besides himself may have forgotten, or do not know the fact, I will now mention that when in 1873 the Macdonald administration, not without knowledge or in any haphazard fashion, but with the surveys of 1871 and 1872, and correct information about harbors, before them, decided to locate a railway line from Esquimalt harbor to Seymour Narrows, "a belt of public land between these points and along the East Coast of Vancouver, twenty miles wide was reserved from "sale or alienation." What sort of land this is, I will let the geologist, Mr. James Richardson, say. Mr. Richardson in his able report on the coal measures of the Island examined by him contained in the report of Progress of the Geological Survey of Canada under A. R. Selwyn, Esq., for 1871-72, speaks of the coal deposits of this district as extending from the vicinity of Cape Mudge (near Seymour Narrows T.) on the north-west, to within fifteen miles of Victoria on the south-east, with a length of about