

Toronto, 15th December, 1897.

The Hon. Clifford Sifton,
Minister of the Interior,
Ottawa.

Sir,—In accordance with your desire for an interim report, covering the examination of country made by me for a highway or railway route between the Stikine River and Teslin Lake, B.C., I have the honour to report that I proceeded from Ottawa to Vancouver, thence up the coast in the Government steamer "Quadra" to Wrangel, Alaska, and by a small steamer from the latter point, via the River Stikine to Glenora, and on by canoe for ten miles to Telegraph Creek at the head of steam navigation, and distant from Wrangel 150 miles, and at an elevation of 540 feet above sea level.

Some ten days' delay was here occasioned through various unavoidable causes arising out of the hurried nature of the trip and the consequent want of a prearranged plan for transport. However, the assistants and outfit having arrived, and pack animals secured, I directed Mr. A. B. Ross to proceed to Glenora and seek a pass to the north by way of Shakes Creek or by the Clearwater River, in the hope of finding a shorter and more direct route with a lower summit than that via Telegraph Creek.

On the 25th September, accompanied by Messrs. Saint-Cyr and Morley Ogilvie as assistants, the journey to Teslin Lake was commenced, the course for the first 15 miles being up the Stikine trail over a series of high gravel benches and easy sloping and lightly wooded country to the Tahltan River, where a descent was made and the river crossed (at an elevation of 600 feet), near its confluence with the Stikine, which occurs in a canyon with almost vertical walls of basalt. A sharp climb of 200 feet again brought us to the top level of the escarpment, thence we continued over an old (Hudson's Bay Company's) trail along the slopes on the left side of the Tahltan valley for 28 miles, to the forks of the river, the ground passed over being generally irregular and indicating in many places that clay and gravel slides were of frequent occurrence, particularly about the lower portion of the valley; on the contrary, the right slope, while not so flat, is more regular and the benches are of firmer material. From the forks to the divide between this stream and the Koketsi River the valley expands, having a bottom width of from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 mile, with pine and spruce-clad hills to the south, and easy hillocks and broken benches to the crest of Level Mountain, a high, gravel-covered basaltic plateau extending to the north. Some seven miles from the forks the course of this branch of the Tahltan turns to the north and north-west, terminating in Level Mountain, and where it enters the valley occurs the divide between the Tahltan and Koketsi formed by the detritus brought down from Level Mountain during the flood periods. This divide is almost imperceptible and that it is apparent at no distant date water flowed from the North Tahltan in both directions. The valley hereabouts is at an elevation of 2,200 feet and is covered with a healthy growth of small pine, poplar and spruce.

Immediately after passing the divide, Koketsi Lake or Taku head-water is reached; it is some two miles in length and one in width, the shores at the eastern and western extremities of the lake being marshy; on the south a mountain with easy foot slopes extends to the lakeside,