

and easy inland communication by steam to Victoria, distant 185 nautical miles. Both these inlets terminate in a valley of some extent; and as attempts have been made to open both of them, it becomes necessary to explain why the writer gave a decided preference to Bute Inlet, for a wagon road and *a fortiori* for a railroad, over Bentinck Arm or any other line.

SUPERIORITY OF THE BUTE INLET ROUTE.

The advantages of the Bute Inlet Route consist: In its central position; fine townsite and harbour; or rather two harbours, accessible at all seasons of the year; its easy and safe connection with Victoria and the ocean, and the proximity of the coal mines at Nanaimo.

The harbour at Bella Coola, on the Bentinck Arm trail [the only other feasible route to the mines], is situated 435 miles futher to the north, and has been pronounced totally unworthy; presenting no shelter, no good anchorage, no good landing place; but a vast mud flat, with a mile of swamp, intersected by a shallow river barely navigable for canoes. Or to quote the words of Lieut. Palmer, of the Royal Engineers, in his official report on the Bentinck Arm Trail: "A large flat shoal, extending across the Head of the Arm, composed of black fetid mud, supporting a rank vegetation; bare at low spring tides for about 700 yards from high water mark, and covered at high tide with from 1 to 8 feet of water, and at a distance of 800 yards from shore, terminating abruptly in a steep shelving bank, on which soundings rapidly increase to 40, and soon 70 fathoms." The whole is, moreover, subject to violent winds and powerful tides.

On the Bute Inlet Route the snow, owing to the more moderate elevation, and its more southern latitude and aspect, melts fully three weeks sooner than on the Bentinck Arm Trail; and the road is dry, entirely exempt from snow-slides, and level the whole way through. Unlike the endless mountains on the Fraser route, or the steep, unavoidable ascent from the sea, and numerous swamps by that of Bentinck Arm. The Bute Inlet Trail *cuts through* the Cascade Mountains by a deep valley studded with rich bottoms, affording plentiful pasture, and rising imperceptibly for 80 miles, when it nearly attains its greatest height (2,500 feet); from which point forward in the plain, it was free from snow for 25 miles in February, 1862. The Bentinck Arm Trail, on the contrary, is obliged to *climb over* the range, owing to the valley, when 35 miles from the Inlet, turning abruptly to the S.S.E. and running longitudinally with the range, instead of cutting through it; so that the trail attains, in the course of a very few miles from that point, a height of 3,840 feet, as will be better shown by the following table compiled from Lieutenant Palmer's report:—

	Gradients.			
	Miles.	Per Mile.	One in	Rise. Altitude
From the Inlet to Shtooiht, at the turn of the valley	35			say Feet. 500
Thence to Cokelin, "by a narrow gorge, hemmed in by steep and continuous cliffs."	14	Feet 43·6	121·1	Feet 610 1110
From Cokelin to the Great Slide	5	356·0	14·8	1780 2390
From the Great Slide to the Precipice	11	86·3	61·2	950 3840
Or supposing it possible to equalize these grades (a thing next to impracticable) we should have	30	111·3	47·4	3340