

are fully occupied, and by this period the capability of the Peace River District will have been tested. Meanwhile, the character and extent of railway traffic and its requirements will be known. The question will then present itself, how this traffic can best be dealt with: Should it be desirable to construct a branch to Peace River from some point on the main line east or west of Edmonton, the late examinations have established that such a line is perfectly feasible.

In former reports I have contrasted the Canadian Pacific Railway with the line running from New York to San Francisco. I now beg leave to submit a comparison with all the lines projected across the United States. The accompanying diagram (Plate No. 3) prepared from authentic information will establish beyond question, the advantages in respect to the leading engineering features which the line adopted to Burrard Inlet possesses. Of the four lines stretching across the continent, within the limits of the United States, no one is marked by general summits so low or gradients so moderate as the line to Burrard Inlet.

In the Appendix will be found notes on the route of the railway through British Columbia, by Major General Moody, R.E., formerly commanding the Royal Engineers in British Columbia, and forwarded to the Department. They give the views of this distinguished officer on the question of selecting Burrard Inlet as a terminus for the trans-continental railway.*

EXPLORATIONS IN THE PRAIRIE REGION.

In my report of last year I submitted that the location, not only of the main line, but of all the subsidiary lines in the North-West, should be the subject of earnest consideration, and that the location of all lines of communication, whether constructed and worked by private companies or not, should be directly controlled by the Government. I beg leave to repeat the recommendation.

In order that the Government may be in a position wisely to exercise the control over the railway system of the North-West, a broad general scheme should be laid down for future guidance. It may, perhaps, be impossible to adhere, in every respect, to any pre-arranged plan, however carefully it may be conceived, but it should

* *Vide* Appendix No. 10, page 144, Notes on the route of the Pacific Railway through British Columbia, by Major General Moody, R.E.