

During several years previous to the year 1858 I was intimately acquainted with the celebrated Canadian artist, Mr. Paul Kane, of Toronto, and during the Winters of the years I spent exploring in the Summer months, north of the Great Lakes, I obtained much and very valuable information from Mr. Kane regarding the country west from Lake Superior to Victoria, V. I.

Mr. Kane had, under the auspices of the late Sir George Simpson, then the governor of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company, journeyed from Toronto via Lakes Huron, Superior and thence by the old Hudson's Bay route via Lake Winnipeg, Fort Edmonton, the Athabasca Pass, the Boat Encampment on the Columbia River, and thence to Fort Colville, etc., to Victoria. Mr. Kane returned generally following the same route, and had the opportunity of learning a great deal about the enormous extent and possibilities of the country he had traversed. Mr. Kane published a book entitled "The Wanderings of an Artist," in which he gives a very interesting account of his travels.

Before I left Toronto, Mr. Kane introduced me to Sir George Simpson, and when I explained to the Governor the objects I had in view in going to British Columbia, he very kindly gave me a letter of introduction to the late Sir James Douglas, who was then at the head of the Hudson's Bay Company affairs west of the Rocky Mountains.

At that time the Hudson's Bay Company were lords of the vast territory west of Lake Huron, and Sir George Simpson's letter was invaluable to me, for, on my presenting it to Sir James Douglas he not only received me most kindly, but offered me a position in the Government service, which I declined, as it would interfere with the objects I had in view, and he gave me a letter that would insure me a welcome and assistance at any of the Hudson's Bay forts I might visit. Until the day of his death I always found Sir James Douglas to be

A KIND AND INVALUABLE FRIEND.

To accomplish such a grand object as railway communication through British territory to the Pacific Coast, I decided to devote my time, and as in those days there were no rich railway corporations nor governments to apply to for financial assistance to help me to carry out my proposed explorations through the rugged and formidable western ranges of mountains that form the topographical feature of British Columbia, I sold all my timber limits and what other little property I had to raise money, and early in the year 1858 I left Toronto for New York, and thence, visiting Brazil, Patagonia, Chile, California, Astoria on the Columbia River and Puget Sound, I finally reached Victoria late in the year 1858.

I thought I might meet Captain Palliser in Victoria and learn from him the result of his explorations, but on my arrival Governor Douglas informed me that Captain Palliser's party would not reach Victoria until the following Autumn, and I was unable to get the information I was so desirous to obtain. I left Victoria after a few

days' stay, and sailed for Fort Langley in the H. B. Company's steamer Otter, and arrived the same day at the old and extensive Fort Langley, where I received a hearty welcome from the late Chief Factor, William Yale, and other officers of the company who were then stationed or visiting at that important fort.

I may now say that my explorations for a Canadian transcontinental railway through the mountains of British Columbia fairly commenced on the day I reached Fort Langley, in the year 1858, and in connection with those I had previously made north of Lakes Huron and Superior, the explorations for Canada's first transcontinental railway made by me really began in 1855, or sixteen years before British Columbia was confederated with the provinces east of the Rocky Mountains. Further on in this narrative it will be seen that six years before British Columbia became a province of the Dominion I had made discoveries that insured to Canada a capital line for the present Canadian Pacific Railway through the mountain region of Canada principally at my own expense.

The Winter, cold, dreary and comfortless, had now set in with much snow and rain falling, which made things very discouraging. A large number of miners who had been mining in the neighborhood of Forts Hope and Yale, and on the Lillooet River, were living in shacks about half a mile below Fort Langley, and they gave very gloomy accounts regarding the portion of the country I proposed exploring, and dilated on the very great difficulties that its extremely rugged nature presented, and also that there was war between the miners and Indians going on in the canyons of the Fraser River, and that several miners and a number of Indians had been shot.

As there was a small stern-wheel steamer, named The Enterprise, owned and commanded by a most genial and kind-hearted American—Captain Tom Wright—going up the Fraser to Fort Yale, I proceeded up the river in her. The Enterprise was the pioneer steamer to navigate the Fraser River to Fort Yale. Innumerable old pioneers of the Fraser River experienced much kindness from Captain Wright when they were without means and starving, for he not only gave them free passages, but also fed them when on his steamer, and also at the same time had such a pleasant way that he made them feel that they were not under obligations to him, but that they were conferring a favor on him by travelling in his steamer. Captain Wright was a most amusing character, and would keep the passengers in roars of laughter by spinning yarns and telling amusing anecdotes.

At the mouth of the Harrison River, together with several others, I left the steamer. As rain, intermixed with snow, was falling in torrents, we pulled the goods the steamer had left on the bank of the river into a near-by large Indian house, called in those days

"A RANCHEE,"

and we also found shelter in it, but the smoke and stench in it were very disagreeable.