

streamlet, is, I am convinced, "not half well enough known." The charter prospectus (printed and sent to me) for a waggon road through it, in 1862—thus describes the proposed port, and route thence to Cariboo:—"The North Bentinck Arm possesses an excellent harbour, of sufficient capacity to accommodate the largest fleets at all seasons of the year."

"The country through which the road will pass presents few difficulties of construction, and is studded in every direction with open prairies, lakes and extensive meadows, affording abundant feed for pack animals."

"The town site of Bella Coola is admirably adapted for the formation of a commercial depot for the northern portion of British Columbia, being accessible by steamer from Victoria in forty hours at all seasons of the year. The road would be about 200 miles long, that is to say, from the head of the inlet to the point required on Fraser River—say Alexandria. With the exception of a part of the descent through the Coast Range the trail is decidedly of a level character. This descent, or rather slide, is really the only obstruction, and could easily be overcome or avoided—a fact that must become evident to every one when informed that we passed and returned packed horses over it during our trip last summer" (1861). "From the place where the trail first strikes the Bella Coola River in the Coast Range (that is at the foot of the slide, travelling from the interior to the coast) it runs along its bank the whole way to the head of the Inlet, through a deep gorge or pass in the Mountains, which varies in width from half a mile to five miles."

The report goes on to speak of its practicability, first for "mule trail, ten feet wide," then for waggon road; speaks also of its harbor as "favorably reported on by seafaring men"; of its admirable site for a town, facilities for wharves, docks, &c.; abundant timber; gold, copper, &c.; and fisheries of "cod, halibut, salmon, oulachans, herring, &c., and finally the worthy promoters—one of them (Mr. Ranald McDonald, son of Chief Factor Archibald McDonald), a gentleman born in the country, and thoroughly familiar with it, and the other, John C. Barnston, Esq., barrister, late of Montreal, son of Chief Factor Barnston, Hon. H. B. Co., and now, I believe, a member of the Local Legislature of British Columbia—thus wind up: "So that it appears to us probable enough that the future town

"of Bella Coola will yet be the terminus of the much talked of *Pacific Road* through British Territory."

I do not, of course, give the above as "authority," or as ground for aught than further enquiry towards authentic determination of the questions of fact involved.

In the meantime I purpose to examine what best evidence we, so far, have on the subject, and which Mr. Fleming's report—an exhaustive effort—presents to us. This in my next.

Yours,

M. McLEOD.

Aymer, Q., June, 1874.

LETTER VI.

SIR,—Continuing under this head, I proceed to show what the report of Lieut. Palmer, R.E., of his survey in Autumn, 1862, as given in Mr. Fleming's report, says of it.

Page 219 of Report:—"North Bentinck Arm, a mere water-filled indentation in the mountains, some 25 miles in length, and from 1½ to 2½ miles in breadth, may be taken as a fair type of the other inlets on the coast." "North Bentinck Arm receives at its head the waters of the Bella Coola or Nookhalk River, a rapid mountain stream, 80 miles in length, which rising beyond the principal crest of the Cascade Mountains, flows through and drains a portion of that range and, subsequently, the chasm or valley formed by the continuation of the mountain walls of North Bentinck Arm." "The valley of the Nookhalk for 40 miles from its mouth is undoubtedly of estuary formation, low, and, in many places, swampy throughout, and to the same process by which, for ages past, the land has been gradually forcing back the waters of the ocean, viz., the deposit of vast quantities of alluvium and drift which have been brought down by the Nookhalk, is to be attributed the existence of the large, flat mud-shoal which extends across the head of the Arm. This shoal, composed of black, fetid mud, supports a rank vegetation of long swamp grass for about half its distance outwards; it is bare at low water spring tides for about 700 yards from high water mark, and at a distance of 800 yards from shore terminates abruptly in a steep shelving bank on which soundings rapidly increase to 40 and soon to 70 fathoms." [Note by myself. "A little dredging will easily improve this."] "Another small