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MR. JOHN JESSOP.

The able and energetic Superintendent of Education for the Province of British Columbia is a native of the County of Norfolk, England, where he was born in 1829. He came to Canada at the age of eighteen, and settled down for a time to a life of toil in what was then the backwoods of the County of Ontario, where he remained till 1858. In that year, compelled by a period of illness to give up physical labour, he attended for one session the Provincial Normal School in Toronto, and having obtained a certificate he commenced teaching in the County of Durham. In 1855, he spent a second session at the Normal School, and afterwards continued to teach till he left the Province. The gold fever had broken out the year before in the Fraser River region, and this circumstance no doubt led to a revival of public interest in the great Northwest. More for the sake of seeing the country than of engaging in the search for gold, Mr. Jessop made up his mind to seek the Pacific coast, and in May, 1859, he commenced the overland journey. The voyage from Collingwood to Fort William was made in the iron steamer *Rescue*, then commanded by Captain Dick; and the route from Fort William to Fort Garry was traversed on foot or in canoes. The journey was made long before the Dawson Road was in existence, and occupied a whole month. The route followed was for the most part coincident with the line of the so-called Dawson Road—up the Kaministiquia, across by portages to Rainy Lake, and down the river of the same name to the Lake of the Woods. From Rat Portage the voyageurs followed the Winnipeg River to its mouth, crossed Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of Red River, and ascended thence to Fort Garry. The site of the now busy and populous city of Winnipeg was then almost free from houses, and though there were many farms along Red River, there were comparatively few settlers up the Assiniboine.

After remaining at Fort Garry a month, to recruit and lay in supplies, Mr. Jessop started for the Pacific with a single companion. When they reached Fort Ellice, however, they fell in with half-a-dozen adventurers of various nationalities from St. Paul. The latter had been swindled by some enterprising colonization agent, and were ready to go anywhere in search of a livelihood. The journey towards the setting sun was made up the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers to the Big Bend of the Saskatchewan, and thence

up the Belly River toward the point where the forty-ninth parallel crosses the Rocky Mountains. For seven weeks the travellers found themselves traversing the buffalo country, and they were thus enabled to save a considerable portion of the flour they had brought with them from Fort Garry. It was fortunate that they did so, for they found the means of subsistence more difficult to procure as they approached the mountains. Falling in with a tribe of Blackfeet near the boundary, they were kindly treated, and a Kootenay Indian, whom they found about to return to his tribe, conducted them through the Boundary Pass to the west side of the mountain range. The party had by this time broken up, and Mr. Jessop and his comrades reached Fort Colville on the fifth of November. This old Hudson Bay Fort is now abandoned, its

place being taken by Fort Shepherd, on the Columbia, just north of the forty-ninth parallel. Fort Colville was 750 miles from the mouth of the Columbia, and the journey from there down to San Francisco, and up to Victoria, occupied the rest of the time till the beginning of 1860.

Arrived at the latter place, Mr. Jessop found employment for three months in the office of the now defunct *Gazette*, before spending a fruitless year in the Cariboo mining region. He returned to Victoria, and entered once more into the journalistic field. The *Daily Press* was started by him, in company with a Mr. McClure, who at a subsequent date immortalized himself in the colony by talking against time in the Legislative Assembly for the larger part of twenty-four hours, the balance of the day having been filled up by one of the present members for Victoria in the House of Commons, Mr. Amor de Cosmos. The object in view



was to prevent the passage of a measure to which they were opposed, and in this they were triumphantly successful. As an illustration of the hardships amidst which the work of publication was carried on, it is only necessary to state that while one of the partners was composing the leading articles in the double sense of the term—that is, composing them mentally and setting them up in type at the same time—the other was doing the same with the news columns. In the autumn of 1861, Mr. Jessop commenced a private school, which he kept in operation for three or four years. In 1866, the Legislature of Vancouver Island, then separate politically from British Columbia, created a rudimentary school system, which subsisted till the union of the Provinces in 1868. During these two years, and down to the entrance of British Columbia into