

COLUMBIA RIVER EXPLORATION, 1866.

No. 1.—MR. MOBERLY TO CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF LANDS AND WORKS.

New Westminster,
November 15th, 1866.

SIR,—In accordance with your letter of instructions, dated March 26th, 1866, directing me "to repair to Seymour by the first opportunity, for the purpose of resuming the duties of exploration and construction of trails in the Columbia River District, &c., &c.," I left New Westminster on the 28th of the same month, with the party appointed to accompany me, and proceeded without delay to the foot of Little Shuswap Lake, inspecting the Savona's Ferry Waggon Road and other public works on my way up. At this point my party was detained for a short time, the lake still being covered with ice. On the return of the boat that brought most of my party up from Kamloops, to which place she had returned for another load, we started for Seymour; but on reaching a point about 15 miles below that town, we were again obliged to stop, as the N. W. arm of the Great Shuswap Lake was completely blocked up with ice. After the delay of a few days I, however, succeeded in hiring two canoes with which we broke a passage through the ice, and reached Seymour on the 19th of April. On my arrival there, I found we had started much too early in the season, as the snow was still deep in the woods, even in the vicinity of the Shuswap Lake. I at once took steps to obtain the best and earliest information from the Columbia River, in order to ascertain when I would be able to commence operations on the trail from Kirby's Landing to French Creek.

On the 24th of April, I sent Mr. Hick out on the trail with a party to complete the two bridges left unfinished the previous year, and at the same time instructed him to increase his party and put in the necessary corduroys as soon as it would be possible to get to work. At that time, owing to the snow, it would have been a waste of money to attempt to put them in. The rest of my party, with the exception of Mr. Layton, I employed on the survey of the town site at Seymour.

A portion of the supplies contracted for by you to be delivered at Seymour for my use having arrived, I endeavoured to make arrangements to have them packed to the Columbia, but found that the few white men and Indians then at Seymour, willing to pack, asked such exorbitant rates that it was quite out of the question to employ them; I therefore sent Mr. Layton back to Lytton to employ a gang of Indians by the month, to pack for me between Shuswap Lake and the Columbia River.

Having completed the survey of the town site on the 3rd of May, I left with the rest of my party on the 4th, at noon, and reached the Columbia on the 9th, at 9 a.m., having laid over a day (Sunday) at the 21 mile house, to rest the men that were packing my supplies and instruments. Mr. Turnbull took the latitude of this point, which he made $51^{\circ} 23' 45''$ N. We found there was but little snow on the trail from Seymour to a point about six miles from it, but from that point the snow extended all the distance to the Columbia River, varying from two to four feet on the low ground, and on the mountain from six to fifteen feet.

The day after I reached Kirby's Landing, on the Columbia River, I sent Messrs. Howell and Perry down to the pass, *via* Eagle River, explored by me last year, with orders to cross the divide and ascertain if there was any snow on it. They crossed that divide on the 12th of May, and reported that there was not then any snow on it, and that it was their opinion it had disappeared there at least a month before their arrival.

The day after sending off Messrs. Howell and Perry, I left, with Mr. Turnbull, to locate a line for a trail from Kirby's Landing to French Creek. We were employed on this work until the 21st of May, on which date we returned to La Porte (the steamboat landing at the present head of navigation on the Columbia