

“One cannot fail to observe the general similarity between the Columbia and Fraser rivers, in their course, nature of obstructions, and source, as well as in the fact that both plow through the Cascade Range of mountains in their passage to the sea. The upper waters of both are sluggish and well adapted to steamboat navigation. In the Columbia, the first serious obstacle occurs at the Cascades, where a railway five miles in length has been built, to avoid rapids, considered incapable of improvement. Another portage occurs forty miles above this point, from the Dalles to Cilito, a distance of thirteen miles. A railway has been built here. From this point the river is navigable at all stages of waters to Wallula, a distance of 140 miles. At high water, steamers ascend 160 miles further, to the town of Lewiston. Large sums of money have been, and are still being, expended in blasting and removing rocky obstructions from this river. Prior to the improvement of the navigation of the river and the construction of the two railways before mentioned, freight was carried from Portland up to Wallula at \$100 per ton. There was no freight downwards, as the rates were prohibitory, although the country was admirably adapted for raising wheat. The rates now on upward freight is \$20 per ton, and on downward freight \$5 per ton. The effect of the improvement to navigation is shown by the tonnage, chiefly wheat, shipped during the last three years :

1872 .....	1,500 Tons.
1873 .....	6,200 “
1874 .....	9,600 “

Lately I applied to the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, and they have sent me the following returns, which brings the statement down to date :

1875 .....	10,600 Tons.
1876 .....	18,700 “
1877 .....	30,000 “
1878 .....	29,500 “
1879 .....	44,800 “

It will be noticed that the quantity of freight offering has gradually increased since the improvements referred to have been made. Here we have a country lying to the east of the Cascades fit for the produce of cereals, but the produce of which, up to 1872, could not be utilised on account of the difficulty of forwarding it to the front. That is precisely the position we occupy in British Columbia to day. We have a grain-growing country to the east of the Cascades, and have not, so far, been able to move one bushel to the front, and there they have been compelled to use foreign grain up to the present. The Report goes on to say with reference to the improvement of the Fraser :

“These improvements would open up the

principal grain-producing region of the interior, which may be estimated at not less than 200,000 acres, capable of producing 300,000 tons of wheat per annum. Now it is a desert, owing to its inaccessibility, and the exorbitant rate of freight.”

Thus we find that a comparatively small sum expended in improving the Fraser River, above Lytton, would not only enable the farmers of Lilloet district, who are already large producers, to reach a market, but the whole line of the Fraser River up to the Quesnelle would furnish freight and become a feeder to the Railway. Thus, from Lytton, we have a river running 260 miles through a territory, on each side of which there are grain-growing lands. I know, from my own observation, the area of good land is much greater than reports and accounts of travellers estimate it. The report to the hon. the Minister of Public Works, from which I have already quoted, comes much nearer doing justice to the value of that section of British Columbia than those of casual travellers. From Savona's Ferry, the northern terminus of the present contract, we have a water stretch. We have navigation up North Thompson's River, for 100 miles on each side of which we have considerable tracts of land fit for cultivation. Then we go in a south-easterly direction another 100 miles, where we have another very good grain-growing section of country, on each side of the South River. Quite a quantity of grain can also be raised along the valley of the Spallumcheen, which stretches out in a southerly direction towards Lake Okanagan. This valley is very low, scarcely above the water-level of the lakes, between which it lies. A very few thousand dollars will suffice to clear out that stream, and enable steamers of two feet draught of water to reach Lake Okanagan, thus opening up another seventy miles in the direction of the southern boundary. Thus we see that the location of this Railway gives us the advantage of opening up our country 260 miles in one direction, 100 in another, and 100 in a third direction. We are too much in the habit, if I may use the vulgar term, of crying stinking fish. I have heard gentlemen on the other side decry our country in their ignorance, and, notwithstanding what they might read in the various reports, never giving us credit for what good does exist in that country. Taking