

*Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, on the 24th December, 1877.*

The Committee have had under consideration the despatch from the Lieut.-Governor of British Columbia of the 9th November, 1877 enclosing copy of a Minute of his Executive Council of the 8th of that month, which had been forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Hon. the Minister of Public Works, to whom the above despatch and enclosure were referred, observes that the Minute in question calls the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the delay the Earl of Carnarvon thought necessary in commencing the construction of the Pacific Railway in his despatch of 18th December, 1876, and 18th February, 1877, and states that the British Columbia Government are anxious to obtain knowledge of the year's surveys as early as possible in order that they may be in a position to convene the Local Legislature at an early date and lay before it "definite information as to the intentions of the Dominion Government to carry out its railway obligations."

The Minister reports that the delay deemed necessary before advertising for tenders was consequent upon the manifest necessity of making a careful instrumental survey of the Fraser Valley route, upon which an exploratory survey only had been made in previous years.

That, as early as the season permitted, a large staff of engineers was sent to perform this work, under the immediate charge of Mr. Cambie.

That the field work was finished about the beginning of November, and in the course of that month the engineers returned to Ottawa, where they are now engaged plotting the results of the season's operations.

That it will take some time to accomplish this and to report in such detail as will enable the Government to come to a decision as to the value of the route.

That it is impossible to venture upon any decided opinion at once of the complete report, maps and profiles of the road which are now in course of preparation.

That the Government also took the necessary steps to obtain accurate information regarding the possibility of a route to the ocean at Port Essington, at the mouth of the Skeena River, as well as to ascertain the feasibility of a better pass through the Rocky Mountains in the vicinity of Lillooet River. That the information on both these points will be embraced in the report of the engineers, and will include the reports of the naval officers upon the harbor at the mouth of the Skeena.

That as far as can be seen at present there would appear to be no necessity for any further explorations in British Columbia with the view of the determination of the best route from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the sea.

That the conclusion reached will be duly communicated to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Committee concur in the foregoing report, and advise that a copy of this Minute be transmitted to Lord Carnarvon and to the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.

Certified, W. A. HIMSWORTH, C.P.C.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, VICTORIA, B.C., 15th January, 1878.

SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch dated 29th December, 1877, enclosing therewith a copy of an Order of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council on the subject of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. N. RICHARDS,

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.

Hon. R. W. SCOTT, Secretary of State.

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