

The objects of the examination were to discover the most favorable route from the coast to the Peace River District, on the eastern side of the mountains, and thence to the line already located near Edmonton; to gain full information with regard to Port Simpson, its advantages and disadvantages as a harbor; to verify the reports as to Wark Inlet being navigable by ocean sailing ships; to ascertain how far the country lying between the head of that sheet of water and the River Skeena, and the Valley of the Skeena itself were suitable for a railway line; and to obtain such definite information respecting the nature of that portion of the line accessible to steamers from the ocean, as would admit of a contract for construction being at once let, in the event of a northern route being chosen.

This examination really involved the determination of the problem whether the choice of the Burrard Inlet route should be sustained or abandoned, and if construction should be immediately commenced on the southern or on a northern line.

The service was consequently one of importance. The instructions to the officers selected, together with their reports, are given in full in the appendix.

As time was an element in the problem, it was arranged that the examinations should be energetically carried out, and that so soon as the information was obtained, a synopsis of it should be sent by telegraph from Edmonton to Ottawa. Before the end of September the information was received and laid before the Government. On the 4th of October, an Order in Council was passed ratifying the adoption of the route *via* the Yellowhead Pass to Burrard Inlet, and I was directed to take steps for immediately placing under contract 125 miles of the most difficult portion, from near Yale to Savona's Ferry.

The examinations made during the past season have established that Port Simpson is a commodious, well-sheltered harbor. It has a large area of smooth water anchorage; it is to some extent exposed to south-west winds, but the roll of the ocean is broken on the reefs which here form a natural breakwater. It has good approaches, and is easy of access at all conditions of the tide. A railway can be carried from Port Simpson, by way of Wark Inlet, to the River Skeena, and thence by the valley of that river, a distance of 180 miles, to Hazelton at the Forks. A trial location of 60 miles of the line has been made from the navigable waters of Wark Inlet, plans and