

He will travel by steamer along the Canadian Lakes through Sault Ste. Marie to Superior City, situated at the extremity of the "Fond du Lac" or most western extremity of Lake Superior; and he will then be only 70 or 80 miles distant from Crow Wing, on the high road between Saint Pauls and the Red River Settlement.

American squatters and lumberers are rapidly settling up Red River, and the railway communication (now nearly complete to Saint Pauls), will soon be completed to Pembina, in which case the establishment of a branch line to Superior "Fond du Lac" would be a positive certainty, thus easy and rapid communication would be established between Lake Superior and the frontier of Red River Settlement.

Commercial and general prospects of the neighbourhood of the Red River.

In the event of railway communication being extended as far as Pembina, it would not be unreasonable then to entertain the prospect that the Imperial Government might feel justified in encouraging the extension of such railway on the British side of the line to the northward and westward, through the southern portion of "the fertile belt" to the Rocky Mountains; at all events as soon as the country showed symptoms of becoming sufficiently populated to warrant such an effort.

Railway extension.

As the case at present stands all communication with the Colony at Red River is through the States. Soon after the publication of my despatch, declaring the navigability of the Red River for steamers, American enterprise established one there; this, as I now understand, plies the whole way from Lake Winnipeg to Graham's Point, above the forks of the Shienne, and, now that the results of the Expedition lately under my command are known, even the Hudson Bay Company have adopted the route *via* St. Pauls and Pembina, for bringing their merchandise into this country. As for the importation of horses, cows, and any other species of live stock, all such traffic would be impossible either *via* Hudson Bay or by the canoe route. To the westward of the Rocky Mountains the communication is very arduous; no road fit for carts exists north of the boundary line, nor indeed is there a single portion of the territory that could be traversed by the roughest or strongest cart, from the plains at the entrance of the several Rocky Mountain passes in the east until you come to the western slope of the Cascade range. A road from the Kananaskis pass to the Columbia River, in the neighbourhood of the 49th degree, would not be a very arduous undertaking; from this point, however, there would be no further desirable road to the westward by land, without passing through American territory. The present track from Fort Shepherd to the westward follows the Ohailpitku (or Colville) river, crossing and recrossing the boundary line, until it passes the Okanagan Lakes: thence it bears away to the north of west by the valley of the Similkameen and crosses the Cascade range over Mansen's Mountain. This is the trail now used by the Hudson Bay Company for communicating between their posts on either side of the Cascade range. Any attempt to take a road between the Columbia River and Little Okanagan Lake exclusively in British territory, or otherwise than by the valley of the Ohailpitku or Colville River (although not impossible, for I have forced the traverse myself), would be a most formidable and expensive undertaking.

There is, however, another means of proceeding from the Columbia to the westward, in a more northern latitude, which I can advocate upon excellent authority,* although I cannot describe it from personal observation.

Another route to the Pacific.

The Columbia River, north of the boundary line, is navigable by steamers the whole way up the Great Columbia Lakes, and above the most northern one to an extensive plain or table land, along which my informant has taken heavily laden horses with ease round both the northern and the southern shores of the Great Okanagan Lake to the forks of Frasers and Thompsons rivers.

A steamer here would not only serve for effecting communication between the Saskatchewan plains and the west coast of British Columbia, but would also form an additional link to that chain of American steamers already along the Columbia from Astoria on the Pacific coast.

From Astoria, ocean steamers can ascend the Columbia River up to the point where it cuts the Cascade range, a distance of 135 miles; here a boarded portage and tramway, about two miles long, enables the traveller to reach a second steamer which runs up to the Dalles, distant about 48 miles. At this place a steep waggon road, which is kept in good order, takes the traveller on to the Des Chutes, a distance of 12 miles, whence a third steamer runs up as far as old Walla Walla, and when occasion requires up to Priests Rapids, distant from the Des Chutes 180 miles.

* Namely, that of Mr. Angus McDonnell, one of the gentlemen in charge of Fort Hope, and subsequently of Fort Colville; where he had been long resident, and in the constant habit of travelling backwards and forwards through the country.