

in proportion to the extent of mileage, small engineering expenses would be incurred until the Rocky Mountains are reached.

We now know that this chain does not present any bar to the construction of a railway, as there are several passes which will admit of easy gradients through valleys so wide as to afford great variety in the choice of ground for locating the line.

The mountains proper are not more than 50 to 60 miles broad in the latitude that would be most probably chosen for the line of route, namely between 50° and 52° , when, on crossing them to the west, the gold-bearing valleys of British Columbia are reached. Indeed, within the last few weeks, I have received letters from the Saskatchewan, stating that gold has been discovered in the bed of that river at the Rocky Mountain House, which is 40 miles to the east of the mountains, and quite in the plain country. Two hundred miles further down that river I have seen a few specimens of gold washed out, but I doubt much if it will ever be worked with profit on the east side of the Rocky Mountains within the British territories, as there is no trace on that side of the axis of the ancient rocks from which it must have been derived.

In the rugged country that lies between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Coast, I have no doubt that all the valleys are filled with rich auriferous deposits, and every few months accounts arrive of "diggings" discovered in fresh localities. The most recent of them was in a letter from Lieut. Wilson, who is attached to the Commission at present engaged in surveying the boundary line from the Pacific Coast to the mountains, and who mentions that a rush has taken place to a point on the Kootani River.

In carrying a line of railway through this region of British Columbia, the difficulties to be overcome by the engineer are very great. The surface of the country is broken by low mountain chains that run parallel with the coast, and the narrow valleys by which the rivers break through these are rugged in the extreme, but to develop the mineral wealth of this country will in any case require the construction of roads, and would afford more inducement to the laying out of money on this than on any other part of the route.