

British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Seventh Report of the Committee, consisting of Dr. E. B. TYLOR, Mr. G. W. BLOXAM, Sir DANIEL WILSON, Dr. G. M. DAWSON, and Mr. R. G. HALIBURTON, appointed to investigate the physical characters, languages, and industrial and social condition of the North-Western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada.

INTRODUCTION BY SIR DANIEL WILSON.

THE report here presented is again the result of the work of Dr. Franz Boas in the interesting ethnological field of British Columbia. It consists of two parts, the first being devoted to the Bilqula, a people inhabiting a limited tract in the vicinity of Dean Inlet and Bentinck Arms, the second dealing with the physical characteristics of the tribes of the North-west Coast region.

In connection with the Bilqula it is important to note that they, by reason of their position, have held the most important natural pass and trade route through the Coast Range, from the ocean to the interior, which exists between the Skeena River and the Fraser, a distance exceeding 400 miles. This circumstance has rendered their situation a peculiarly favourable one in some respects. It has induced them to engage in intertribal trade, and evidently also affords a clue to some of the peculiarities which Dr. Boas points out. From time immemorial, as the writer is informed by Dr. Dawson, who has geologically examined that part of the country, a route has been beaten out by way of the Bella Coola River, thence northward to the Salmon River, and then along the north side of the Blackwater River to the Upper Fraser. This is commonly known by the Tinneh of the interior as the 'Grease Trail,' from the fact that the chief article of value received from the coast in early times was the oil of the olachen or candle-fish, though dentalium shells and other things were also brought in. When trading vessels began to visit the coast, besides the natural products of the sea, iron and various kinds of manufactured goods found their way into the interior by the same route; while the fine furs of the inland region were carried back to the coast and sold to the vessels. It was by this same route, well known to the natives, that Sir Alexander Mackenzie was enabled to complete the first traverse of the North American continent from sea to sea and to reach