

since 1864, and have been passed through, summer and winter, since that period, so that a fair estimate can reasonably be made of the character of snow and land slides, which might be supposed to take place in such a locality. It is quite safe to say that no trouble need be apprehended from this source.

The snowfall in these canons never exceeds three feet at a time, and such falls do not occur more than twice or thrice through the worst seasons. During the remainder of the winter the falls are but light, and from the nature of country, and the total absence of wind there are no drifts.

A snow plough could easily clear the track, as there would be but few deep cuts, the track for the most part running along side the river, into which the snow could easily be thrown.

These remarks as to fall of snow extend only to Boston Bar, a distance of 25 miles above Yale. For two seasons only, I remember heavy falls of snow between Boston Bar and Lytton. Above the latter point wheeling, and not sleighing, is the rule. As for land slides either in the canons or beyond, they never occur.

I leave it to you, therefore, whether you have or can possibly expect to have such evidence as this concerning any route you may finally select away in the distant north.

I am aware that your Engineers report unfavorably of the Fraser Route. I am also aware that Mr. Smith was caught in a snow storm in the canons in the latter part of November, 1874, and that he was compelled to take it on foot for 40 miles. I am free to confess that all this was the case and ask you not to be guided by a single circumstance of the kind, and would refer you to the schedule time table made in the conveyance of the mails through from Yale to Cariboo, covering a term of, say, 10 years. This will give you a much better idea of the terrors of the canons, than can the experience of a single trip in the winter season.

In addition I may add, that hundreds of tons of goods were in the early days of the Colony, carried on Indians' backs at all seasons of the year, and in canoes in early spring,

and I do not collect that a single life or cargo has been lost through slides, whether of snow or land.

I am aware that it has been advanced as an argument against the full survey of these canons, that the Deputy Engineer-in-Chief has passed them often enough to be able to form correct conclusions as to the practicability of the route for railway purposes. But I respectfully submit whether such argument as that is of any value or not. If judgment can be passed on a piece of work which, it is acknowledged, presents the greatest engineering difficulties, by an Engineer travelling on one side of a valley and looking over at the other, why was not the whole country surveyed in the same economical manner? Why if the mere passing through the canons is sufficient to justify an opinion of the value of a route—is it that the country was put to the enormous expense of \$2,000,000 for Surveys?

So far from admitting that anything like a correct estimate can be made by the eye of the cost of construction through these canons, I contend that not only one but a number of the most careful surveys should be made, before the shortest route to the best harbour should be abandoned.

I cannot but take it for granted that you regard the Bute Inlet Route as practically abandoned, if for no other reason (and there are other and strong reasons) than that you estimate the cost of the line from the head of Bute Inlet to Esquimalt (the natural and only harbor of that route) at \$27,500,000.

However, for the purpose of argument, I will ask. Have you any testimony respecting the winter difficulties to be faced on the Bute Inlet, the Gardiner Channel, or the Dean Canal route? I fear you have not.

I have been told, with how much truth I cannot say, that even last year land-slides occurred on the Homathco, carrying thousands of tons of rock and earth, snapping great trees as if they were but pipe stems. How much more likely are these liable to occur in a locality where immense glaciers exist, thousands of feet above where the line would be carried.

The canons of the Fraser, we know,