

Union Jack flies, excepting the little island of Hong Kong, which territorially is unimportant. I am most concerned with the commercial aspect of the case, and the only references to the naval or military side of it will be incidental. I first draw attention to the fact that the construction of a north and south railway along the coast of the Mainland is a physical impossibility. Rail connection between Vancouver on the south and Prince Rupert, northern British Columbia, and Alaska on the north is only possible by a long detour. The same remark of course, holds true respecting connection between the Pacific coast states and Alaska. Under any conditions that can arise there will always be a great traffic coastwise between the Pacific Coast states and southwestern British Columbia on the one hand and northern British Columbia, Alaska and the Yukon on the other. If it were possible to build a railway on the mainland to handle this traffic (in competition with steamers), it would have been built long ago, but as this is out of the question, the fact that Vancouver Island can be utilized for a very considerable part of the distance for railway construction is a matter of great importance. Time is becoming more important every year in connection with north and south bound coast travel. The development of Alaska is progressing rapidly. The islands of the Queen Charlotte group are certain to become a hive of industry. Northern British Columbia is a country of vast potentialities. Speaking first of the Alaskan railway—I refer now to those being constructed from points west of the 141st Meridian and not to the White Pass and Yukon—connection with them between those railways and Puget Sound ports must necessarily be maintained by steamships. If these run directly to Puget Sound they may to save time take the ocean all the way, and in the winter be exposed to the stormy weather common off Cape Flattery and the delays experienced frequently by incoming ships owing to thick weather. If there was rail to a point near the north end of Vancouver Island the steamers would likely use the inside channels, and the sea voyage would be materially shortened and time would be saved. These advantages would be utilized for passenger, mail and express traffic, even if the steamers carried their heavy freight all the distance from the Puget