ascent to the height of land is very gradual, and, indeed, hardly per-
ceptible. . . . The descent on the western slope, though more rapid,
is neither steep nor difficult.   From the Cache the road might be
carried in almost a straight line to Richfield, in Cariboo, lying nearly
due west. . . . This part of the country is mountainous and densely
wooded, but the distance is not more than 90 miles, . . . and a road
has already been made from the mouth of Quesnelle, on the Fraser,
to Richfield, through similar country."

Engineering skill has already triumphed over natural obstacles
infinitely more formidable than are here to be encountered, in cutting
paths through the Alleghanies in the United States, the Sœmmering
heights in Austria, and the Bhore Ghauts in India.   The railway
from Kan-Kan to the Deccan, through the last-named mountains,
had to contend with an elevation, in a very short distance, from a
base 196 feet to an altitude 2,627 feet, with a gradient of 1 in 48.
Twelve tunnels were formed, equal to 2,535 yards ; also eight
viaducts, eighteen bridges, and eighteen culverts, at a cost of £41,118
per mile, making a total of £597,222.   In comparison, too, with the
difficulties successfully grappled with by Russia in opening up
internal communications through her sparsely populated and much
more inhospitable territory, and in extending her trade with China
through the interior of Asia, those attaching to our overland enter-
prise are of the most Lilliputian character.

But the grand question remains to be answered.   What would be
the real gain to commerce by the proposed undertaking ?   Would it
be satisfactory as an investment ?   It is the opinion of those fully
competent to deal with this practical bearing of the subject that the
amount of direct traffic which would be created between Australia,
China, India, Japan, and England, by a railway from Halifax to the
Gulf of Georgia, would soon render the work a financial success. The
following table will illustrate the distance and time in the Vancouver
Island, or British Columbian route, from England to Hong-Kong, as
contrasted with the present mail route *riâ* the Isthmus of Suez :—

Distance, overland by Suez, from Southampton to Hong-Kong,
    9,467 miles, 50—60 days.

Distance from Southampton to Halifax, 2,532 miles,   9 days' steam.
Distance from Halifax to Vancouver
    Island . . . . .2,536 miles, 6 days' rail.
Distance from Vancouver Island to
    Hong-Kong . . . . .6,053 miles, 21 days' steam.
                                    ___
                Total . . .11,121 miles, 36 days.

With a clear saving of some twenty days the route now advocated
would combine the advantage of shortening the time now spent at
sea on the voyage *riâ* Suez by the same number of days, and a large