

in 1828. Its general features accordingly were to some extent known. The first examination under my direction was made in 1872, when I passed over the line from Lake Superior to the Pacific. In August of that year, when at Fort Edmonton, I detailed Mr. Horetzky and Professor Macoun to proceed by way of Peace River to the Pacific Coast, to investigate as far as practicable the physical character of the region, and to obtain information respecting the nature of the soil, the *flora*, and the climate of the country examined.

A second exploration of portions of the northern district were made in 1877. The River Skeena was followed by Mr. Cambie from its mouth to the country drained by its south branch, the Watsonquah. The examination terminated at Fort George. The mountains themselves were crossed by Mr. Hunter in the same season by the Pine River Pass.

There was this distinction between the examinations of the routes to Bute Inlet and to Burrard Inlet, and the northern Peace and Skeena route. The two former had been surveyed in the usual form in which preliminary and location surveys are carried on, and definite data respecting them had thus been obtained; while the passes of the Peace and Pine Rivers had been explored only in a general way, as a reconnaissance, and the information obtained was consequently limited.

In my former reports I submitted the results of these examinations, and the characteristics of the several routes examined.

My own views on the selection of a route were thus given in 1878:—"Upon carefully viewing the engineering features of each route, and weighing every commercial consideration, I am forced to the conclusion that, if these alone are to govern a selection, if a decision cannot be postponed until further examinations be made, if the construction of the railway must at once be proceeded with, the line to Vancouver Island should, for the present, be rejected, and that the Government should select the route by the Rivers Thompson and Fraser to Burrard Inlet."

The subject was again alluded to in my report of 1879:—

"Much has been said for and against every route that has been projected, but on carefully considering the engineering and commercial features in each case, the con-