

taking to shorten this line by some seventy-nine miles, probably by considerable increase of the expense of construction over that which would be involved by passing through the Yellow Head Pass. The importance of making that saving of seventy-nine miles is evidently considered so great by the Company that, as they state, they would be prepared to take it even at an expense that would ordinarily be considered quite impracticable. The engineers of my Department—those who have any knowledge of the subject—concur in the opinion that if this shorter line is obtained by piercing the Selkirk Range, it will have to be done at a very great cost indeed. The line, I presume, would be considerably shortened by going through the Kicking Horse Pass, and round what is called the big bend of the Columbia River; but there is not sufficient information to enable one to speak with any certainty as to how the distance would compare with the Yellow Head Pass. The section of country opened would not be quite as favorable in that case as in the other. I will now read the memorandum which Mr. Smellie, who is Engineer in Chief at the Company's headquarters in Montreal, has placed in my hands with reference to this matter, as I told him there was a desire on the part of the House to get the fullest, latest, and most authentic information that could be given on that point. He says in the memorandum, which is dated the 15th of April:

"From the report of Mr. A. B. Rogers, who conducted the surveys in British Columbia during the season of 1881, I obtain the following particulars.

"That a thorough preliminary survey of the country was made between the Kicking Horse Creek and Mount Back, including the Vermilion and White Man's Pass routes, and a partial survey of the route from the head of Bow River to the summit of Howse Pass, and also of the Kananaskis route. The time occupied on these surveys extended only from the 1st of August to the 1st of October, the parties not having arrived as early as was expected.

"The route selected for location passes up the Bow River to its junction with Bath Creek, thence up Bath Creek westerly about five miles, thence south-westerly about one mile to Summit Lake, about one mile long, and from which the waters flow in both directions. This lake lies from four to five miles farther east than is shown on the maps as the summit of the Rocky Mountains. At this point, the line will thence follow down the east branch of the Kicking Horse Creek to the Columbia River.

"From the results of the surveys, as far as made, Mr. Rogers is sanguine that the descent from the Kicking Horse summit to the Columbia River will not exceed eighty feet per mile; and that the gradients from Bow River to the summit will be raised.

"Mr. Rogers also made a reconnaissance from Kamloops easterly to the summit of the Selkirk Range, and from general observation and barometric readings he states that gradients will be obtained not exceeding sixty-six feet per mile between Kamloops and the north fork of the Illi-cille West River, and from thence to the summit of the Selkirk Range the gradient will not exceed eighty feet to the mile.

"In consequence of difficulties which beset Mr. Rogers, arising from a scarcity of supplies, he was unable to specially examine the country