

geographical disabilities or advantages inherent in each. Either line proceeding eastward must reach Edmonton on the North Saskatchewan. From Edmonton westward towards "the most eligible harbor on the Pacific Coast," that line must, if reason rules, be adopted, which, in the immediate future, in continuation of existing settlements, will be the most densely peopled, and that which on the mainland has, north and south of it, the largest extent of country suitable for colonization. Such a railway line can yet by land and water from various points have connections greatly increasing its wayside and export traffic.

From Edmonton, via Lemhi Pass to Fort George, there is not much farming land. Neither can much be found from Edmonton by way of the North Thompson to Kamloops or Savona, most of the productive districts of the mainland up to N. Lat. 51° lying south, east, or west these localities. Nor yet is there much cultivable country from Savona along Route No. 2 to Chilliwack on the lower Fraser.

At page 68 of the Geological Report of Progress, 1875 and '76, occurs the following from the pen of the well-known Mr. Selwyn, F.R.S., Director of the Geological Survey of Canada:—"Taking Edmonton, on the Saskatchewan, and Fort George, on the Fraser, as the initial points, it will, I believe, be found that by Pine River Pass the line could not only be carried almost the whole distance through a magnificent agricultural and pastoral country, but it would actually be shorter than the Leather Pass route, and it would probably not present any greater engineering difficulties!" Mr. Selwyn says much more on this most important matter; but the permissible limits of this letter forbid further quotation. Let Columbians and others feeling more than a passing interest in the subject refer to the report itself, and to all that in their several reports is stated by Professor Macoun, Mr. G. M. Dawson, and others about this vast north and west country in respect of fitness for settlement, its wealth of timber, its wealth of fisheries, and its promise as to metals and minerals.

Commencing beyond the 51st parallel of latitude, or say $51^{\circ} 30'$, it constitutes with the mainland west of the Cascade mountains, Vancouver's and the other islands, about three-fourths of the area of the province. It contains in greatest abundance our three most important resources, namely, those of the mines, the forests and the fisheries, and it will unquestionably always have the preponderance of population and wealth.

Anonymous writers and others uphold the route and terminus No. 2 have erred in assuming the whole mainland to be a unit for the railway line of their choice. There is manifest improbability in such a supposition. The farmers and miners north of Lat. $51^{\circ} 30'$ declare for route No. 6 as best for their own and the general interests.

The adoption of the Edmonton-Fort George line suggested by Mr. Selwyn, besides affording wayside traffic throughout would supply the most direct outlet towards the Fucus Strait and Pacific for the great country of Peace River.

Even connected with Edmonton by the other route, Fort George will be an important centre of farming and pastoral country as well as of water stretches north, west and south, when rendered suitable for light draught steamers.

Improvement of the Fraser for such navigation, perhaps from Boston Bar to above Fort George, would be a natural sequence of the construction of the railway via Bute Inlet. The canyon at Big Bar, two miles long, would perhaps best be passed at first by a rail or tramway. Mr. G. B. Wright has, after careful survey, reported elaborately to the Dominion Government on the obstacles to navigation and supposed cost of their removal. Three hundred and seventy miles of the river, if not more, could be rendered travelable for steamers whereby wayside and export traffic by the railway would be greatly promoted. Mr. Wright states in some valuable notes furnished me that a great proportion of produce from a country bordering the Fraser could at or near Fort George be taken from the deck of the steamer to the railway cars. He says "extensive farming lands near Lillooet would furnish their quota, and even the productions of Bounaparte and Cache Creek valleys would seek this cheap and speedy method of transport to the sea, while the mines of Cariboo and Omineca, rendered profitable by the influx of low-priced food and labor, would again yield their tribute as in former years."

Mr. Wright's own words are given, as he knows the upper country as well as most men. The crushing of quartz in Cariboo, a new industry there, will, if productive, vastly add to the importance of all that northern region. Successful Cariboo may lead to similar and successful ventures at Omineca and Cassiar, which are also permanently habitable, should mining attractions suffice. Several parts of Cassiar abound in summer grass, and that means a good deal.

A gentleman, acting as surveyor for the Western Union Telegraph Company, some ten years ago, and who had previously