

from the coast into that country, but I think I am drawing a fair conclusion from the reports before us when I say that there are practically only five routes which could be considered debatable at all. The first is what is called the Skagway or White Pass route to Tagish Lake, and thence by the Hootalinqua River, the mileage of which is estimated at about 123 miles.

Mr. FOSTER. Between what points ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. From Skagway through White Pass to the Hootalinqua River.

Mr. FOSTER. How far is it to Tagish Lake ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I do not know exactly. I judge it is probably in the neighbourhood of 80 or 90 miles. The second route which they refer to is through the Chilkat Pass to Fort Selkirk; that route is between 300 and 350 miles long. The third route is through Chilkat Pass to Tagish Lake and the Hootalinqua River, and is about 110 miles long. The fourth route is from the Taku Inlet to Teslin Lake, 145 miles long. The fifth is from Glenora or Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake, 150 miles long. Now, of the five routes which we had before us, we had no hesitation, after fully considering them all, in rejecting the four first which I have named. We rejected them upon various grounds, but one principal ground was applicable to them all. In respect to them all it was necessary that they should cross a portion of the territory from the sea which was claimed, or at all events, was in the possession of a foreign government. We regarded that as a serious objection, as one which would be regarded unfavourably by the people of Canada; we regarded it as an objection which would strongly impress the business men and business interests of Canada, and we therefore rejected those routes. I need not go into all the details with regard to those various routes. Some of them were very expensive. The White Pass route, we believe, would cost a great deal of money; The Chilkat Pass route would cost a great deal of money; probably, among all these four the Chilkat route is, though the longest, the most favourable from a business point of view, and one which, were it not for the national considerations, might be very favourably regarded. But they were all rejected as not coming within the conditions which the Government of Canada concluded ought to exist before we should undertake the construction of a railway into that country. Now, a railway by the Teslin Lake route was decided on, the distance of which is, as I have said, estimated to be about 150 miles. In order to utilize that route, vessels will reach the ocean port in closest proximity to it at Fort Wrangell, a distance probably of not more

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than 150 miles from Telegraph Creek or Glenora.

Mr. FOSTER. In what territory is Fort Wrangell ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I think it is probably in the United States territory; at all events, they claim it, and they are in possession of it, and have a customs port at Fort Wrangell. But the Stikine River, whose waters we propose to use, is a river that, under treaty with that country, we are entitled to use without being subject to any conditions. Navigation upon it is open to us as it is open to them.

Mr. FOSTER. Will my hon. friend allow me to ask another question for information? A vessel starting from Victoria, bound with freight and passengers for Glenora, will it be able to go to Glenora and be able to land its goods on the wharf there for the railway ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Certainly not, unless it is a very shallow craft.

Mr. FOSTER. Where will it have to unship ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. The ocean transit will terminate at or in the immediate neighbourhood of Fort Wrangell, near the mouth of the Stikine River.

Mr. FOSTER. I want to ask the hon. gentleman, for the sake of clearness: Does he mean to say, that such goods starting from Victoria and reshipping at Fort Wrangell, a port in United States territory, and going up to Glenora, even though we have free navigation of the Stikine River, will not be subject to the United States customs ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I think I am quite justified in going that far, and in saying that a ship which is freighted from Victoria or Vancouver, the object of which is to effect a transshipment at or near Fort Wrangell, may do so without encountering any obstacles from customs authorities—I think so. I will show the House why I think so. I presume, that if an ocean steamer proposed to land at Fort Wrangell and tie up at the wharf there, and unload goods at that port, they would be subject to the customs authorities; but I know no reason myself why a craft such as is used, or any other small craft available for the transshipment of this freight by the Stikine River, should not lie alongside a steamer which carries freight from our own ports to Fort Wrangell or to that locality, and transfer the freight from the larger to the smaller vessel, and the latter might then pass on its way. However, whether I am right or not in this, that is the condition that exists.