

The Island may be traversed from east to west by routes apparently favorable to a line of railway in several places. Of these the most southerly is from Victoria to Sarita or Banfield creek at the southern side of Barkley Sound. The next route towards the north, is by way of the Cowichan river and lake to Alberni Canal. The next is from Nanoose Bay to the head of Alberni Canal, which is that adopted by the E. & N. Railway for its extension to Alberni. The next in order are from Comox to Alberni Canal; from Chatham Point to Nootka Sound; from Alert Bay to Tashish Arm; from Hardy Bay to Rupert Arm; from Hardy Bay around the head of West Arm to Winter Harbor at the outlet of Quatsino Sound. Other routes may exist through the mountain chain, but these are sufficient to show that there is nothing like an insurmountable barrier separating the two coasts of the Island. The East Coast of the Island is easily traversible by a railway for its entire length; the West Coast is impassable. It is possible that a feasible route can be found longitudinally through the centre, or near the centre, but of this more will be said when the question of railway construction is specifically discussed.

It will be seen from what has been said that the whole Island, with all its great stores of natural wealth, can be readily made accessible by both land and water transportation. This seems to be one of the first and most important points to be settled.

### **A Strong Strategic Position.**

Vancouver Island's position off the western coast of British Columbia is a very strong one strategically. It forms very nearly one-half of the entire western frontier of Canada. Our western coast is, measured without regard to its sinuosities, about 520 miles long, and about one-half of it is formed by the coast of the island, which therefore is part of what may be called an Imperial frontier, and I venture to think that, whether it is regarded from the standpoint of war or commerce, it is the most important part of the British Columbia coast and ranks foremost among the frontiers of Greater Britain. The coast of this province is the only land along the whole circuit of the Pacific ocean, from Singapore to Cape Horn, over which the