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The Passes of the Rocky Mountains along the Alberta Boundary

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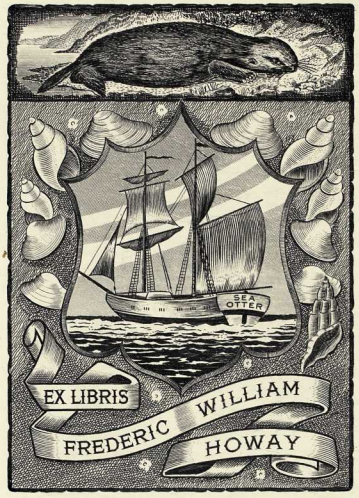

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The Passes of the Rocky Mountains along the Alberta Boundary

THE westerly boundary of Alberta follows the summit of the Rocky Mountains northwesterly from the international boundary until that summit reaches the intersection of the 120th meridian, and the boundary there turns north and follows the meridian. To understand how such a location for the boundary came about, we must go back to the formation of the province of British Columbia, for the boundary was originally established as the easterly limit of that province. The remaining territory to the east was, at that time, left as it was before, wholly unorganized except for the loosely defined districts of the fur trade.

Vancouver Island was the first colony to be formed on the Pacific, and nine years later, in 1858, an Act was passed creating British Columbia as an area on the mainland, quite apart from Vancouver Island. The preamble of the Act recites that certain of Her Majesty's subjects have settled, for mining and other purposes, on certain wild and unoccupied lands on the northwest coast of North America, commonly called New Caledonia, but after the passing of the Act to be known as British Columbia. The boundaries were to extend on the east to the main range of the Rocky Mountains, and on the north to Simpson's River and the Finlay Branch of Peace River. The former river is now called the Skeena.

In 1862 a new district, named the Skeena Territories, was created which extended from the north of British Columbia to latitude 62, and on the east was bounded by the 125th meridian. A year later this new district was contracted in the north to latitude 60, and extended on the east to the 120th meridian, and it was then added to British Columbia. The eastern boundary thus became what it is today, and when the province of Alberta was subsequently formed, it became the western boundary of Alberta. It will be noted that the boundary was the main range of the Rocky Mountains from its earliest mention, not necessarily the continental divide. As a matter of fact these two are the same for some little distance beyond the intersection of the meridian, when the divide leaves the Rocky Mountains, and turns off almost due west, but this separation might have occurred before the meridian was reached.

The distance, in an air line, between the points where the summit of the mountains crosses the international boundary and the 120th meridian is about 430 miles. If we were to draw a wandering line so as to average the sinuosities of the watershed in an approximate way, the distance would be some 600 miles. The eastern slope drains into five principal river systems. Old Man river takes the southerly 110 miles, Bow river 170 miles, North Saskatchewan 70 miles, Athabaska 150 miles and Peace river the remaining 100 miles. The great length drained by the Bow is accounted for by the way that river flows, almost parallel to the mountains, for 70 miles from its source at Bow pass, a local divide, to the Gap near Exshaw. The Athabaska follows much the same procedure in an opposite direction, flowing for 60 miles northwest before it meets its tributary, the Miette, coming down from Yellowhead Pass. The extent to which these two rivers flow along the mountains, in their higher course, is seen by comparing the short distance of 50 miles between their sources, with the 200 miles which separates them from south to north when they finally turn away from the mountains. The gap of 50 miles is drained by the North Saskatchewan, the headwaters of which spread out almost equally on each side of the final main tributary.

On the westerly side of the mountains the main drainage is very markedly parallel to the mountains, until we reach Yellowhead, the courses of Elk, Kootenay, Columbia and Canoe rivers thus forming a great obstacle to the course of a transcontinental railway. The commercial value of a

pass at the head of a river will depend a good deal on the course of the river as it comes down from the mountains. If we have the same grade in the river valley, a river on the easterly slope which flows southeast, like the Bow, affords a better route to a pass than one flowing northwest. In the former case the approach to the pass is gaining to the west, while in the latter case a railway would have to back up, as it were, before it reached the summit, owing to the general northwesterly trend of the mountains. This fact had, no doubt, much to do with the selection of Kicking Horse pass for the Canadian Pacific railway, in preference to Howse pass. The latter is 300 feet lower, and its route would, in any event, have converged on the present route, only ten miles below Golden, but the approach to the summit, from the east, would have been circuitous by way of Rocky Mountain House, and then southwesterly and southeasterly to the pass.

Before leaving the general courses of the rivers, an interesting locality may be mentioned. This is the place where the local divide between the North Saskatchewan and the Athabaska meets the continental divide, as from where the water will drain to all three oceans. The meeting place is at the summit of one of the highest mountains, The Snow Dome, 11,340 feet, and in the middle of the greatest icefield of the Rocky Mountains. It is almost exactly half-way between Kicking Horse and Yellowhead passes.

In the entire distance along which the Alberta boundary follows the summit of the Rocky Mountains, the lowest pass is Yellowhead, 3,711 feet. The maps of the Boundary Commission, which recently completed the survey along this part of the summit, show some sixty passes in all, but of these rather more than half are over 6,000 feet altitude. It is not easy to give any general definition of a pass, because the characteristics, which constitute a pass, themselves vary so much according to the use which is to be made of the pass. Thus to a mountaineer a pass may mean little more than an exceptionally easy route in some region, by which he can himself cross from one great watershed to another, and so all down the line until we come to the class of men who require the most exclusive definition of all—railway engineers—to whom a pass means not only a place where the divide can be crossed by a locomotive, but to which there is a feasible approach from each side of the range. There are only five passes below 5,000 feet altitude, two in the watershed of the Old Man river, namely Crow's Nest and Tent Mountain passes, two in that of Athabaska river, Yellowhead and Fortress, and one on the divide between Smoky river and the Fraser. The next lowest, Howse pass, 5,023 feet, is the only low pass in the watershed of the North Saskatchewan. Making comparison with the well known Kicking Horse pass, which is 5,339 feet, there are only eleven passes below its altitude. Six of these have just been named, one is a subsidiary of Crow's Nest, and the remaining four are north of Yellowhead, and in the watershed of Smoky river. The highest well known pass is Kananaskis, 7,439 feet, while Vermilion is 5,376.

While there is no apparent relation between the average altitudes of the mountains in a particular region and the number of passes, except that, where the mountains are continuously high, there are no passes, yet a few facts may be given. The highest mountain actually crossed by the boundary is Mt. Assiniboine, 11,870, and the highest general altitude is encountered along the watershed of the North Saskatchewan. A few miles north of Kicking Horse pass the mountains rise to 10,000 feet, and are almost continuously above that altitude for 70 miles. The only dip is down to Howse pass, so local that within four miles on either side 10,000 feet has again been reached. There are very few mountains on the boundary south of Elk pass, which is due west of High River, which run over 9,000 feet, and such an altitude is equally rare north of Yellowhead.

Coming now to the history of travel over the passes, the outstanding fact is the manner in which they enabled the barrier of the mountains to be overcome, and in this way they are intimately connected with the history of the West. Unfortunately, early travellers record little but their own particular journey, and seldom say anything about the travels of others. The pass in what is now Canadian territory which seems to have been most used by the Indians in the days before any records, is that known as North Kootenay. It is about 18 miles south of Crow's Nest, has an altitude of 6,750 feet, and was used by the Indians from the west as a route to reach the prairie to get buffalo. Palliser says that, while North Kootenay was not the general pass of the Kootenay Indians, as they had a better one in

American territory, yet they travelled it so often that he found the track well defined, and kept clear of obstruction. Blakiston states that Crow's Nest was seldom used, and that the Indians said it was a very bad road, but that sometmes, when their horses were heavily loaded, they used, in addition to North Kootenay, another pass further south, which we now call South Kootenay pass. About the only other information regarding the Indian history of the passes, which occurs in the Palliser report, is Hector's remark that Vermilion pass was an old neglected one which had formerly been used by Cree war parties. North of Bow river it is probable that Howse pass was the only one much used before the advent of the white man.

The first white man to cross the Rocky Mountains was, of course, Alexander Mackenzie, during his journey to the Pacific in 1793. Strictly speaking, he passed through the northerly part of the range, rather than crossed it, for he travelled by the gash through which Peace river flows. Turning up Parsnip river, he crossed the continental divide at its head-waters, at a place about 70 miles to the west of the Alberta boundary, and some 40 miles east of Giscombe portage, for the divide there runs almost west from the place where it had left the Rocky Mountains. It may be well to explain that the name Rocky Mountains is restricted to the easterly range, and that this range continues northwesterly from Yellowhead to, and across, Peace river, the range crossing that river about 20 miles east of the sharp angle where Parsnip river joins. Further Parsnip river flows northwest along the west side of the Rocky Mountains, and then turns suddenly to the east, and, under the name Peace river, flows right through the Rocky Mountains. The continental watershed thus occurs at the southerly head of Parsnip river, and on the west side of the range, and it was there Mackenzie crossed the great divide.

The union of the North West Company and the X. Y. Company, which took place in 1804, led to greatly increased activity, and within a short time the fur trade crossed the divide in two widely separated places. One of these was at the head of the North Saskatchewan river. Peter Pangman, a fore-runner, had gone up that river, as early as 1790, beyond the subsequent Rocky Mountain House, and had seen the mountains in the distance. By 1800 that post was firmly established, and naturally the traders would hear from the Indians about any pass at the head-waters, especially as the Indians came from the west side, and down to Kootenay Plains. The Hudson's Bay Co. tok no part in the advance across the mountains. In 1807 Thompson went up from Rocky Mountain House, crossed Howse pass, and made his way southerly up Columbia river to Windermere, and there established the first post in that part of the world. Two years earlier, however, Fraser and Macdougall had followed Mackenzie's route, and had established Fort McLeod, near the head of Parsnip river, and in 1806 went over the divide, and established Fort St. James on Stuart lake, the first post on the Pacific slope.

We see, then, that Thompson was the first to cross a pass on that part of the continental divide which forms part of the Alberta boundary, but that a post had previously been established in the Pacific watershed.

For three years Thompson travelled back and forth by Howse pass, until, in 1810, the Peigan Indians on the east side came to the conclusion that he was disturbing the balance of power by supplying their enemies, the Kootenays, with guns and ammunition. They were not long, therefore, in forcibly stopping Thompson's further use of the pass. Curiously enough, that was the very season in which Howse came, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Co., to find out what Thompson had been doing, and still more curious, Thompson himself names the pass, Howse pass, on his map.

In order to circumvent the Indians, Thompson backed down the North Saskatchewan to the sharp angle where it turns easterly towards Edmonton, and from there boldly struck out northwesterly to the vicinity of Jasper. This journey was undertaken in the depth of winter, and in January 1811, he went up Whirlpool river, and at its source crossed Athabaska pass, 5,724 feet, and went down to the most northerly point of the great bend of the Columbia. It must be understood that in almost every case when white men crossed any pass for the first time, they had previously been told of its existence by the Indians, and Athabaska was no exception. Thompson himself says it had been crossed a few years previously by a party of Nipissing Indians, and mentions that he saw their tracks.

We see that up to the year 1811, only two passes, Howse and Athabaska, in addition to the Peace River route, had been used by white men.

The Athabaskt pass became the great highway of the fur trade. The approach from the east was up North Saskatchewan river to Edmonton, then northwesterly overland to Fort Assiniboine on Athabaska river, and up that river to the pass. Occasionally when coming down the river easterly, they did not turn off at Fort Assiniboine, but went on to La Biche river, and up to Lac La Biche. There was a short portage then to the head-waters of Beaver river, and down that river they travelled to the Churchill. Hundreds and thousands travelled by these routes, and over Athabaska pass, in the seventy years which elapsed before the first railway went across the continent.

Travel through Yellowhead pass seems to have just grown, and to have had no definite beginning, as was the case with the other three routes over the mountains which have been mentioned. In a report made in 1823 by John McLeod, then stationed at Kamloops, to Governor Simpson, he seems to refer to this pass, when he says that he has learned from the Shinpoor Indians, who hunted at the head of North Thompson river, that there is a pass leading through both mountain ranges which would give an easier access to New Caledonia than by way of Peace river. The two ranges would be the Rockies and the Cariboo mountains, the latter being a continuation of the Selkirk mountains northwesterly past Fort George. The route through Yellowhead pass would probably have been explored partially from either end before through traffic began. The first record of its actual use for trade is George Macdougall's report of his taking the express from New Caledonia that way in the spring of 1827. The pass does not seem to have gained much favour. It led to nowhere on the west side except to the northerly posts of New Caledonia, or down the North Thompson, and the latter called for a long overland route, and led only to Kamloops, never an important centre of the fur trade.

Yellowhead pass is a notable example of the difference of the requirements to make a railway pass and a pass for early transportation. Although Athabaska and Yellowhead passes are only 40 miles apart in an air line, they lead in entirely different directions, the former southwest to the Columbia valley, and the latter northwesterly,—a very good gateway to the northerly Pacific, but the traders did not want to go there. Athabaska far outshone Yellowhead in its importance to the fur trade, and to early exploration. So that, after a few years Yellowhead was little used, and the route to the northern posts reverted to the original one by Peace river. Howse pass, after Thompson's setback, was not again used as a through route to the Columbia.

For many years after the events referred to, we have no record of any additional passes being used by white men. The entire absence of any reference to the southern passes is very noticeable. There was but little travel in that region, partly because fur bearing animals were very scarce, and chiefly because of the warlike character of the southerly Indians. In fact they, and not the mountains, were the real barrier in that locality between east and west, so much so that, long before white men had crossed the southern passes, the fur trade had outflanked the barrier in that region, by way of the northern passes, and had advanced far to the south on the other side. Not until 1841 do we find that a southern pass was used. That was the year in which Sir George Simpson commenced his great journey around the world, and he then crossed a pass to which he gives no name, but which soon became known by his own name. In his evidence before the parliamentary committee in 1857, Sir George said that he had crossed the mountains at three different points. These must have been Peace River, Athabaska and Simpson passes. That such a traveller should, at that late date, have used only these three routes, shows how travel concentrated on a very few passes.

Simpson's journey through the pass of his own name is the first record we have of its use. He tells us himself that he came south from Edmonton to Gull Lake, and then travelled up Red Deer and Little Red Deer rivers. When Hector was exploring, in the year 1858, about 15 miles to the north of Morley, he states that he stopped at one of Simpson's camps, and he learned this from one of his men who had accompanied Simpson on his journey. After leaving the upper waters of Little Red Deer river, in the region mentioned, Simpson went through Devil's Gap, and passed Lake Minnewanka, which he named Peechee lake after his guide. He says they then crossed two branches of Bow river, and on 2nd August, 1841, he reached what he calls the traverse of Bow river, and crossed at the lower

of two traverses which were two miles apart. Simpson says they were the first white men to travel through Devil's Gap.

It has been claimed that Rundle, the missionary, was the first white man to reach the site of Banff, and that he camped at the foot of Cascade mountain in August, 1841. If the claim rests on that date, it cannot be sustained, as Simpson was there before him. When Simpson was on his first day out from Edmonton, Rundle met him on his way to Edmonton from Gull lake, so that he was not with Simpson on this journey to Banff.

After travelling for seven hours from Bow river, Simpson reached the pass which bears his name. He then went down Vermilion and Kootenay rivers, following the present Windermere road, and over Sinclair pass on the local divide. When he was camped the day before he reached the modern Radium Springs, he remarks that the only two routes, by which they could have crossed the mountains in that region, converged at his camp.

In the same summer a party of emigrants left Red River settlement, in charge of James Sinclair, on their way across the mountains to Fort Colville, on the Columbia, about 30 miles south of Rossland. The Hudson's Bay Co. were there developing farming and raising stock on a large scale. The emigrants had left Red River a month before Simpson, but he passed them just west of Carlton, and he says that they followed his route all the way westward. He records that there were twenty-three families, all happy and well, he said, when he passed them, and some of them even younger than the expedition itself. Simpson also tells that when the emigrants reached Bow river they were treacherously deserted by their guide, but that they met an Indian, named Bras Croche, who, as he knew the mountains better than Simpson's own guide Peechee, took them by a pass to the south of the one Simpson travelled, and which he says was infinitely the better of the two. Further, he mentions that the emigrants rejoined his route at the camp before Windermere. The only pass which would agree with all this is Whiteman's pass, some 25 miles, in an air line, to the southeast of Simpson pass. It is at the head of a branch of Spray river, and the route up to it seems to have been in those days, as now, from the Bow river at Canmore. The only other possibility would be Kananaskis pass, and the route from it to the west would not have joined Simpson's own route where he indicates. Whiteman's pass is 7,112 feet, some 200 feet higher than Simpson pass.

It is very strange that so little attention has been given to this emigration. Archibald McDonald, then in charge and later chief factor at Fort Colville, in a letter to his friend Ermatinger, says that the emigrants, 130 souls, reached there just a month after Simpson, with James Sinclair in command. The small notice given to this journey is probably due to the subsequent transfer (for that is the only word to use) of the emigrants' new home to the United States.

Simpson's remarks about the two passes show that they were only then learning about the southern passes. He seems to have maintained his preference for Whiteman pass, for a few years later, in 1845, two parties who would naturally have been influenced by his opinion, crossed by that pass. At that time the Oregon question was causing serious friction between Great Britain and the United States, and two young officers, Warre and Vavasour, were sent by the then commander of the forces in Canada to report on the feasibility of taking troops across the West. They accompanied Simpson from Montreal to Red River, and from there he sent them on, by way of the North Saskatchewan, to Edmonton, and then south to Bow river. They subsequently made their report, and Warre published a volume of sketches. Sir George Simpson reported that the officers went over the most southerly British pass, about in latitude 51. degrees. This latitude really comes between Simpson and Whiteman passes, but Simpson himself, as we have seen from his remarks, could not have described his own pass as the most southerly one. Whiteman was the most southerly pass known to exist at that time.

Later in the same summer, 1845, Father De Smet, an Oregon missionary, is believed to have used Whiteman pass. He proceeded to Rocky Mountain House, no doubt by the old Indian trail from Old Bow Fort to that establishment, then he went to Edmonton, and next summer went south again by Athabaska pass. In the meantime, Warre and Vavasour had gone down the Columbia, and to Victoria, and returning by the great river, reached Athabaska pass just as De Smet was going over it. It is

not easy to say what brought an Oregon missionary to the Hudson's Bay Company's territory at that one and only time. De Smet states that at the summit of the pass by which he crossed easterly over the mountains, he erected a cross, which he called "The Cross of Peace." It cannot be a mere coincidence that this journey should have occurred in the year of such strained relations between the two countries.

James Sinclair made his last journey over the mountains in 1854, when he again conducted a party of emigrants from Red River, a larger one than he had brought in 1841. Some of their carts were found four years later by the Palliser expedition, near the mouth of Kananaskis river, from which it is inferred they went by Kananaskis pass. Two years later, Sinclair was killed by the Indians at Walla Walla. His daughter, Mrs. Cowan, died only last year at Winnipeg.

The Palliser expedition, organized in 1857, was the first systematic effort to ascertain the locations and characteristics of the Rocky Mountain passes in the more southerly territory. At the preceding parliamentary enquiry practically nothing about the passes came out. Even Isbister, who was very anxious to see the country opened up, could specify only four passes, Peace River, Athabaska, Howse and Simpson, and his knowledge of the last was very vague and inaccurate. Palliser says that, when he started, hardly anything was known about the mountains, even by the Indians, due, he thinks, to the want of game. Whatever we may suspect the Hudson's Bay Co. men had learned, and were keeping to themselves, it is quite probable that the four passes named, with the addition of Yellowhead and Whiteman, were the only ones generally known to exist and Yellowhead and Howse had then been long abandoned.

When the Palliser expedition reached the foot of the mountains in 1858, three parties were formed. Palliser himself searched for Kananaskis, while he sent Hector further up Bow river and Blakiston was sent to the south to find the elusive Kootenay pass, for it was then a matter of dispute whether it was north or south of the boundary. All were successful in their searches. Palliser considered that Kananaskis was important, but based this idea on a very erroneous estimate of its altitude. He must have been greatly misled by the easy grade up Kananaskis river, as he refers the rise to the elevation at Old Bow Fort, and his record at that place is excellent, practically what it is, 4,100 feet. At the head of the river there are two tributaries, one coming from the northwest, and one from the west, and they form two passes, one almost due south of the other, and four miles apart. It seems to have been generally assumed, and especially in the report of the Alberta-British Columbia boundary survey, that Pallister crossed the north pass, but this assumption appears to be a mistake. His altitude is so much in error that it really tells nothing. The actual height of the north pass is 7,682 feet, and that of the south pass is 7,439, while Palliser records the pass as 5,700 feet. But his latitude is a different matter. Although he does not record any observation on the actual summit, his observations a few hours before and after crossing agree very much better with the south pass than with the north one.

Hector went over Vermilion pass, and came back by Kicking Horse pass. As he was ascending Kicking Horse river, on his way up to the pass, he and his small party were in serious danger of starvation. He gives no hint that he had ever heard of the existence of the pass before he set out. Are we to suppose Hector would have gone down the west side from Vermilion and have travelled the round to reach the Kicking Horse river on the west side, in complete ignorance of any pass in front of him? It was hardly a case where he would have had time to retrace his steps, if he had found himself faced with an impassable barrier against his advance when he reached the head of Kicking Horse river. The conclusion seems to be that in this case, as in almost every other case, information as to the existence of the pass had been given by the Indians before the white man crossed it. This particular pass, situated as it is, at the head of a small tributary of Bow river, is an example of a fairly numerous class in which the best pass does not occur at the head of the main stream. Possibly this is due to the main stream frequently owing its size to the fact that it heads in glaciers.

Blakiston, on his part, went south along the outer foothills past Crowsnest, and then up to North Kootenay pass, which was also crossed, but later in the season and from the west, by Palliser. This historic pass is another example of a duplex summit, the two being separated by a local

hill, 600 feet above the passes. The north one, which contains the trail, is 6,774 feet, and is 25 feet higher than the other. It can readily be reached, on the west side, from Corbin railway station, partly by wagon road and partly by pack trail, the last few hundred feet to the pass on that side being a very steep grade. On the east it is reached by trail up Carbondale rjver, a stream which unites with Castle river, and then joins Oldman river, on its south side near Cowley. Blakiston, who crossed it 21st August, 1858, claims to have been the first white man to have done so. He returned east by South Kootenay pass, 6,903 feet, which is eight miles north of the boundary. Although he makes no claim, his is the first recorded crossing. This pass should be distinguished from one still further south through which there is a wagon road, the real name of which is Akamina pass, but which is often locally called South Kootenay. It is an interesting question whether the first white man to have crossed some of these southern passes may not really have been Hugh Monroe, who was one of the builders of Old Bow Fort, and who later became a wanderer with the southern Indians.

It will have been gathered from what has previously been said that, when the tide of exploration from the east reached the Rocky Mountains, it first broke through by the far north route of Peace River. The next outlet was the natural one by way of the head of North Saskatchewan river, as that river had, by its navigability, brought the traders all the way from Lake Winnipeg to Edmonton and beyond, and its upper course ran through a good fur district. Then came the block by the Indians at Howse pass, and the resultant exploration of Athabaska pass. This pass, by leading over to the head of the great bend of the Columbia, enabled the traders to go around the Selkirk mountains in much the same way as the Peace River and Parsnip River took them past the Rockies. They then had access to the Pacific by the Columbia, and an outlet down stream, by the Parsnip and Peace rivers, for the fur packs from New Caledonia, and they were more or less satisfied. Even if the Indians had not blocked Howse pass, it would likely have been abandoned for Athabaska pass in a few years. The southern Indians were intractable, and we must further remember that, after 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company were in command, and their outlet was by way of the north end of Lake Winnipeg and York Factory. If they had used any southern passes, they would have had to take fur north in any event.

The result of all was that the south country was almost neglected. On the few occasions when a southern pass was used, the route taken from Red River Settlement was northwesterly to Edmonton, and then south. This failed to utilize the much shorter distance which a southern pass could have afforded, if a direct route from the east had been practicable. If the Blackfeet had not blocked the way, Bow river and the South Saskatchewan in conjunction with one of the south passes, would have formed a good express route from the country southwest of the mountains.

And not only the fur traders, but all the other travellers neglected the south, as they naturally followed the northwesterly route marked out by the succession of trading posts. That country became known; the rest was unknown. So there can be little surprise if, independently of the merits of the case, the northwesterly route along the North Saskatchewan was the only one to receive any attention at all, when a railway was first seriously considered. With one notable exception, there seems to have been no discussion of the matter at all, once the surveys got well under way.

The idea of a railway across British North America dates back to before confederation, and almost to the time when railways were first established in eastern Canada. In 1857, John Ross, formerly attorney-general, and then at the head of the Grand Trunk railway, said it was the general opinion, even among leading men of the United States, that British America offered the best route for a transcontinental railway. Ross urged its construction as an imperial work, as it would afford a through connection for the China trade. Even then, however, opinions were strongly divided, but the idea gathered force with time. It is only fanciful to say this man or that man originated the idea, or that the final construction was due to the enterprise, or as some like to term it, the prophetic vision, of a few men. The first transcontinental railway was a product of the times.

The first official surveys with the object of finding a suitable route for the railway across the mountains were commenced in 1871, but for some

time before that year there were two men near the western end, who had done some unofficial investigation. Their part is chiefly of interest because, as they had both lived in British Columbia for the previous thirteen years, they view the barrier of the mountains from the west side. These two men were Walter Moberly and Alfred Waddington. Moberly, who did much travelling in connection with public works, was always looking for a possible route, probably from a more independent standpoint than Waddington, as the latter had committed himself to a terminus at Bute Inlet, from which he had surveyed, at his own expense, a wagon route towards the upper Fraser valley. They were strong opponents in regard to the proper pass through the Rocky Mountains which should be adopted. To the last day of his life, and many years after the railway had been built, Moberly favored Howse pass, while Waddington was equally strenuous in favor of the Yellowhead. If the Yellowhead route were used, Moberly considered the inevitable result would be that branch lines would be built from the United States to serve southern territory. The danger of such competition in those days had not been sufficiently realised, and worse might have happened. For before the railway was built, one of the United States senators, when urging the more speedy construction of the Northern Pacific railway,. said that as soon as they had it built, they could run branches up into Canada, and then that part of the West was as good as annexed. It is very easy to say such a thing would not have happened, but we are not in a position to assert that it would not have happened if Yellowhead had been adopted. The connection between eastern and western Canada was weak in those years. We know the enormous opposition which developed in regard to expenditure for the railway. If, then, the main line had ben built along the North Saskatchewan river, where would the money have come from to build another railway further to the south to satisfy the inevitable demands of those who had ranching and other interests there? Would not the offer of American railways to build branch lines up into the southern territory have been irresistible in view of the demands of the southern interests that something be done to serve them? The change of route from the north to the south was sudden. Who knows but that one of the many reasons for the government turning the whole business over to a company in 1880, after they had spent a couple of millions on surveys, was that the government itself had become apprehensive about the northern route, and was looking for a way of escape? Certainly the celerity with which the new company abandoned all the northern surveys, gives color to the idea that such a radical change of route had at least been considered before the government decided on the transfer.

Unquestionably the Yellowhead pass was the proper pass for the second transcontinental, but conditions were then very different. and there is much in favor of the view that it is well the advocates of Yellowhead did not have their way when the first railway went through.

In conclusion there are two matters to which it is desired to refer. One is an acknowledgment of the information obtained from the report and maps of the Alberta-British Columbia boundary Survey. The great value of the Report is due to the accuracy of its topographical and historical information, and the absence of those pages of statistics of angles and measurements, which are spread over many such reports, but which should have no place in a published report. The report is almost wholly the work of Mr. A. O. Wheeler, the Commissioner for British Columbia, and undoubtedly the foremost authority on the Rocky Mountains.

The other matter is a suggestion that Palliser's report, that is the narrative parts. should be reprinted. There are probably not a dozen copies in the Dominion. Re-arrangement of the various parts would be required, as well as a few explanatory notes and an index. It is not easy at present to find a particular reference. But such editing would be a small matter. The report stands alone, and there is nothing to take its place in the history of exploration in southern Alberta and along the mountains. It is quite remarkable how often a person, dealing with what may be called "the middle ages" of western history, finds himself referring to Palliser's report and the final map. as the only source of information. Even if only the parts referring to Alberta and the mountains were reprinted, it would be a public service, and surely the history of exploration of their own province should form part of the education of the rising generation, and get at least as much attention in schools, as this medley of political controversy which goes by the name of history.

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Military Man Urges Study of Defences Of Rocky Mt. Passes

(Special to The Albertan)

..EDMONTON, Dec. 9.—Speaking before a meeting of the Military Institute on Thursday on the subject of "Alberta's Defences," Capt. A. M. Calderon said there were 28 k nown passes through the Rockies. Many of these had gradual ascents from the Alberta side and steep from British Columbia. These could be easily defended, but those to which gradual ascents could be made from the British Columbia side would be more difficult.

Capt. Calderon urged that the Institute support the idea that the military mind be directed to the study of these passes and that as much information as possible be gathered, both

time before that year there were two men near the western end, who had done some unofficial investigation. Their part is chiefly of interest because, as they had both lived in British Columbia for the previous thirteen years, they view the barrier of the mountains from the west side. These two men were Walter Moberly and Alfred Waddington. Moberly, who did much travelling in connection with public works, was always looking for a possible route, probably from a more independent standpoint than Waddington, as the latter had committed himself to a terminus at Bute Inlet, from which he had surveyed, at his own expense, a wagon route towards the upper Fraser valley. They were strong opponents in regard to the proper pass through the Rocky Mountains which should be adopted. To the last day of his life, and many years after the railway had been built, Moberly favored Howse pass, while Waddington was equally strenuous in favor of the Yellowhead. If the Yellowhead route were used, Moberly considered the inevitable result would be that branch lines would be built from the United States to serve southern territory. The danger of such competition in those days had not been sufficiently realised, and worse might have happened. For before the railway was built, one of the United States senators, when urging [illegible] of the Northern Pacific railway, [illegible] could run branches up into Ca[illegible] as good as annexed. It is very [illegible] ppened, but we are not in a pos[illegible] ned if Yellowhead had been ad[illegible] and western Canada was wea[illegible] s opposition which developed [illegible] If, then, the main line had ben [illegible] where would the money have con[illegible] to the south to satisfy the inevi[illegible] g and other interests there? [illegible] to build branch lines up into t[illegible] n view of the demands of the s[illegible] to serve them? The change o[illegible] dden. Who knows but that one [illegible] nt turning the whole business [illegible] spent a couple of millions on [illegible] d become apprehensive about th[illegible] y of escape? Certainly the celer[illegible] d all the northern surveys, giv[illegible] hange of route had at least be[illegible] d on the transfer.

Un[illegible] e proper pass for the second [illegible] ery different, and there is mucl[illegible] dvocates of Yellowhead did not have their way when the first railway went through.

Shopping Bags at, each
Picture Post Cards at, p
Ink Stands at .....
Brass Tobacco Humidors
Xmas Cards .....
Quart Bottle of Stafford
Pint Bottle of Stafford
Pint Bottles of Carter's
A lot of Beautiful C
Bowls, Salad Bowls, Bon
Vases, Rose Bowls, Pitc
Cups and Saucers—thous
room to mention.
If you have not been
J. O. TR
Is Cutting the Prices

In conclusion there are two matters to which it is desired to refer. One is an acknowledgment of the information obtained from the report and maps of the Alberta-British Columbia boundary Survey. The great value of the Report is due to the accuracy of its topographical and historical information, and the absence of those pages of statistics of angles and measurements, which are spread over many such reports, but which should have no place in a published report. The report is almost wholly the work of Mr. A. O. Wheeler, the Commissioner for British Columbia, and undoubtedly the foremost authority on the Rocky Mountains.

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